

2009-2010 Cumberland Jr. Grads Competition Report

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I have not yet come across any report or data as to whether the Jr. Grads are becoming more or less competitive over time. In my eight years of exposure to minor hockey in the east end however, I have certainly experienced first hand how competitive most teams from Gloucester always appear to be whether at the house league level or the competitive level. Disgruntled parents will suggest “better coaching”, others will say “more ice time”, some will say “more kids” and still others have no idea why Gloucester always seems to be at or near the top of their respective divisions.

With this as a backdrop, I set out to compile and analyze the regular season results for all Jr. Grads teams – as well as to look at the player distribution in Ottawa. First of all, allow me to show you the sobering results of our collective teams along with their winning percentages:

Cumberland Jr. Grads:

<u>Year(s)</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>GP</u>	<u>Wins</u>	<u>Losses</u>	<u>Ties</u>	<u>Winning %</u>
2000	Min Atom B	32	19	8	5	0.672
2000	Min Atom A	28	11	8	9	0.554
1999	Maj Atom B	32	4	23	5	0.203
1999	Maj Atom A	28	4	20	4	0.214
1999	Maj Atom AA	28	10	14	4	0.429
1998	Min PW B	32	4	21	7	0.234
1998	Min PW A	28	6	17	5	0.304
1998	Min PW AA	28	16	7	5	0.661
1997	Maj PW B	32	6	22	4	0.250
1997	Maj PW A	28	13	14	1	0.482
1997	Maj PW AA	28	8	19	1	0.304
1996	Min Ban B	32	0	31	1	0.016
1996	Min Ban AA	28	6	18	4	0.286
1995	Maj Ban B	32	4	26	2	0.156
1995	Maj Ban AA	28	3	19	6	0.214
1994	Min Midg B	32	15	15	2	0.500
1994	Min Midg AA	28	12	10	6	0.536
1992,93	Maj Midg B	32	15	14	3	0.516
1992,93	Maj Midg AA	28	12	7	9	0.589
	TOTALS	564	168	313	83	0.371

At first glance, this chart isn't pretty. An overall winning percentage of 0.371 is not great, but there also needs to be an overlay applied to this chart which shows the number of kids playing hockey in the various districts. The number of players is extremely important as the greater the number of players to draw from; the more competitive our teams can be.

As an example, it has always struck me as odd that Blackburn Minor Hockey, Orleans Minor Hockey, Leitrim Minor Hockey, Metcalfe Minor Hockey, Russell Minor Hockey and Gloucester Centre all field house league "A" teams – and then from these five associations, form the Gloucester Rangers or Blackhawk's at the competitive level. Compare this to Cumberland – which only draws on Cumberland Minor Hockey.

Provided below is the distribution of players playing minor hockey in Ottawa. These numbers were provided to me directly by the ODMHA.

Player Distribution by District (excluding 588 kids playing AAA)

<u>District</u>	<u># of Players</u>
District 1 - Upper St. Lawrence	2,896
District 2 - Lower St. Lawrence	2,235
District 3 - Lower Ottawa Valley	1,699
District 4 - Rideau/Carleton	3,573
District 5 - Upper Ottawa Valley	2,310
District 9 - Gloucester	3,530
District 10 - Nepean	2,877
District 11 - Kanata	1,755
District 12 - Cumberland	1,817
Bytown District	3,189

No surprise, Gloucester is the biggest district...and surprise, surprise – we are nearly the smallest, with less than half the kids to draw from than Gloucester for our competitive teams. In fact, adding Cumberland and District 3 together and we end up with fewer kids than Gloucester. It is not my intention to suggest a merger with District 12 (we've already been there...); but rather to show why it is difficult for our kids to compete.

I have also compiled the results for our closest district – District 3 – which forms the Eastern Ontario Cobras at the competitive level. Aside from the pressures of a similarly small player pool (as well as a competing B league which draws some players – the PGL); the Cobras suffer the added problem of increased transportation given their geography. In order to ensure that they are able to field "some" competitive teams, they have chosen not to field AA teams at the Major Atom, and Pee wee levels (1997, 1998 and 1999). For those three birth years, their "A" teams are competitive in Ottawa; having dropped down a division.

In the four birth years of 1996, 1995, 1994 and 1993-92 (Bantam and Midget) where they have chosen to field AA teams, they are extremely uncompetitive. I provide their results as follows:

Eastern Ontario Cobras:

<u>Year(s)</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>GP</u>	<u>Wins</u>	<u>Losses</u>	<u>Ties</u>	<u>Winning %</u>
2000	Min Atom A	28	1	26	1	0.054
1999	Maj Atom A	28	23	4	1	0.839
1999	Maj Atom AA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1998	Min PW A	28	13	8	7	0.589
1998	Min PW AA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1997	Maj PW A	28	21	1	6	0.857
1997	Maj PW AA	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
1996	Min Ban AA	28	0	26	2	0.036
1995	Maj Ban AA	28	1	25	2	0.071
1994	Min Midg AA	28	0	26	2	0.036
1992,93	Maj Midg AA	28	14	8	6	0.607
	TOTALS	224	73	124	27	0.386

My final analysis was to look at District 11 Kanata which is similar in size. Here are the Blazers overall records for 2009-10:

Kanata Blazers:

<u>Year(s)</u>	<u>Team</u>	<u>GP</u>	<u>Wins</u>	<u>Losses</u>	<u>Ties</u>	<u>Winning %</u>
2000	Min Atom B	32	8	18	6	0.344
2000	Min Atom A	28	14	12	2	0.536
1999	Maj Atom B	32	9	13	10	0.438
1999	Maj Atom A	28	12	10	6	0.536
1999	Maj Atom AA	28	13	12	3	0.518
1998	Min PW B	32	7	21	4	0.281
1998	Min PW A	28	9	16	3	0.375
1998	Min PW AA	28	12	13	3	0.482
1997	Maj PW B	32	11	15	6	0.438
1997	Maj PW A	28	11	15	2	0.429
1997	Maj PW AA	28	17	1	10	0.786
1996	Min Ban B	32	26	6	0	0.813
1996	Min Ban AA	28	19	5	4	0.750
1995	Maj Ban B	32	14	17	1	0.453

1995	Maj Ban AA	28	22	0	6	0.893
1994	Min Midg B	32	19	6	7	0.703
1994	Min Midg AA	28	14	9	5	0.589
1992,93	Maj Midg B	32	15	15	2	0.500
1992,93	Maj Midg AA	28	11	14	3	0.446
	TOTALS	564	263	218	83	0.540

At first glance, you will note that they are materially better than the Jr. Grads across the board. What can cause this? First of all, at the Bantam and Midget levels; the Jr. Grads promote more players to forming the Eastern Ontario Wild than the Kanata Blazers do. This is because Kanata is bordered by another rural, heavily populated district just outside its borders who feed the Ottawa Valley Titans very well. In our situation, we are traditionally the biggest losers of players when AAA starts at Minor Bantam. Therefore, our Bantam and Midget teams are hit the hardest. When you remove the entire bantam and midget categories from a Cumberland/Kanata comparison; then the numbers aren't as skewed – we are nearly as competitive.

The other point to note as a differentiator is that Kanata does not use the FIT (fair ice time policy) as dictated in the Jr. Grads constitution. While there is no right or wrong answer with respect to this rule (I can argue equally for both its pros and cons); I will suggest that perhaps a compromise could be that we allow for a variation of FIT where there can be dalliances to the rule at the AA level for Bantam and Midget. I am sure that my suggestion can be improved upon – I put it out as a work in progress – all in the vein of (1) developing our kids, (2) being competitive as a hockey club and (3) ensuring that they are enjoying themselves.

Summary:

What we need to do going forward is be realistic about our teams given the demographics. We will have some birth years with an abundance of players from which we will field competitive teams – and other birth years where we will struggle. The problem will self correct over time as demographics creates more suburbs. Keep in mind however that these organic changes to player pools will take considerable time. Be realistic.

As an organization, if we are concerned about our teams' lack of competitiveness at certain levels thereby affecting kids' development and enjoyment; then we can explore internal options such as having players play up a year to add more kids to the pool (done in many, many other associations and cities) or decide that in certain birth years where we don't have an abundance of kids, we only field teams at a maximum "A" level. Perhaps we can petition district 12 to in turn petition the ODMHL to re-create an A league right through to Major Midget.