2015 Wheelchair Rugby Report

The 2014/15 Wheelchair Rugby program started it’s year with the second annual wheelchair rugby 101 clinic. The clinic was on Saturday September 27 at the Youth for Christ Centre, the clinic focused on sport nutrition, mental training, strength and conditioning and skills and drills. The Manitoba coach (Chris McCluskey) ran the skills and drills, after everyone was orientated to the game, we played rugby with the local refs (Bob Fisher and Jeff hurtig) officiating. There were students from the u of w kinesiology program at the clinic and they really enjoyed learning about the game of wheelchair rugby and how difficult it is to maneuver a rugby wheelchair. Everyone who participated really enjoyed the clinic and would like to thank Angela for all her hard work in organizing the clinic.

The rugby program started practices in October at the Duckworth centre on Mondays and Thursdays nights 8:30-10:00. The team practice hard for the month of October and November with Chris McCluckey as coach. This is Chris’s second year and he has shown to be a great coach who runs a tough practice. This year there were between 8 to 10 players at ever practice which shows that the rugby program has grown. This year is the first time in many years that we have had so many new girl players. We would like to welcome them to our program. Riki Entz, Michelle Reles, Chantelle Horel and Jenny Kowalson. The girls practice hard and crashed and bashed even harder and had lots of fun.

In October and November the Rugby team sold Grey cup pool tickets at the malls. The team raised over $1800. The money raised was used for travel and accommodations expenses for Regina. I would like to thank Angela for all the paper work needed to make the Grey Cup tickets fund raiser happen.

The Winnipeg 76ers traveled to Regina for it’s first tournament, At the tournament there were four teams: Calgary, Edmonton ,Saskatchewan and Winnipeg. This was the first tournament for the girls they played hard and kept up with the guys out there. Great job. The team played hard and ended up placing 3rd. After the tournament we practiced three more times and then took the month of December off, Many of the team worked out at the weight room at the Duckworth during the month of December and continued on working out Mondays and Wednesday until the end of the season. The weight room is great for the athletes in chairs, there are 8 machines that we can work out on and the team seem to really like working out together and getting stronger.

In January the rugby program started practicing again. Practicing hard twice a week.

At the being of February Sean Rand and Jenn Burnett hosted a bake sale out in Morris Manitoba at the local Arena during at MMJHL hockey game. Had a great turn out raised $1600 for the rugby program. Thank you Sean and Jenn for all the hard work. The team used the money raised to help pay for travel expenses to Calgary tournament.

At the end of February the team traveled to Calgary for their tournament. There were 5 teams: British Columbia, Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatchewan and Winnipeg. The teams played round robin, we played hard , learned lots and had a lots of close games. But by the end of the tournament we placed 4th.

During March and April the team continued to practice twice a week

Manitoba Wheelchair Sports and the Winnipeg 76ers hosted the Murder ball classic at the Duckworth Centre on April 18-19, This year there were 5 teams: British Columbia, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatchewan and Winnipeg, There were lots of fast action hard hitting and the occasional spill, but all the players had lots of fun. The 76ers played hard and had a couple of close games which we thought we had won but let slip through our hands and the 76ers ended up 4th. The tournament was a Hugh success, all the teams like coming to our tournament because we are a great host, have great meals for the athletes and a great venue to play rugby in.

The Winnipeg 76ers and all the members of the rugby program would like to thank Angela Lloyd and Ryan VanBerkel for all their hard work organizing the Murderball Classic. Thank you Angela for making the weekend run smoothly and for the great food. Ryan thank you for a great job on the transportation for the atheletes, everyone was very pleased with how transportation went.

On May 1 the Winnipeg 76ers and MWSA put on a Bud ,Spud and Steak fundraiser at the Polo Park (TYC Event Centre) there were T-shirt for sale, 50/50 draw , a Bottle draw and a silent auction. There was a great turn out, lots of family and friends, everyone had a great time. The club raised $3000. Would like to thank MWSA and all the business for their donations and time. The money raised will be used for travel expenses and equipment .

The team continue to practice through the month of May, the coach made the team really work hard at each and every practice. The team traveled to the Wheelchair Rugby Nationals Championships in Saskatoon at the end of May. The team drove up on Thursday and stayed on campus at the university of Saskatchewan. Friday Morning was our first game against Ontario, we played hard and the game was very close until the 4th then we ran out of steam and made a couple of mistakes and the game was all over, we lost. The second game we played was later on that day and we played against Alberta. We stated out strong traded point for point until half time then we started to make some mistakes and by the end of the third quarter we were down by 8. In the fourth we came back by a couple but it was too late and we lost .The next day we played the cross over game against Saskatchewan. We played hard but Saskatchewan was too strong and beat us. On Sunday Morning team Manitoba played against New Brunswick for 5th and 6th spot, the game started out close, trading point for point. By half time Manitoba was up by 5 and in control. In the second half some of the rookies came out on the court and played fantastic. We won the game and placed 5th , we were all disappointed about where we placed, but we had lots of fun and new players learned a lot. It was a great experience had by all.

The rugby team would like to thank Chris McCluskey for all his time and hard work he spent at the gym. We would also like to thank the equipment personal ( Bill Funk, Randy Maisey and Leon Farthing) for all their hard work at practices and at tournaments, we could not play rugby with out you guys, we could not keep our equipment in good running order.

The 76ers and all the players would like to thank MWSA for all their support and hard work to keep a very important program/sport available to people who have a disability and have no other sport to play. This program is not just about the sport, but the friendships you build and how people with a disability deal with their day to day issues.

Additionally:

-Rugby athletes worked at bingo throughout the year

-Winnipeg 76ers received $4500.00 (podium Club) from CWSA for training, tournaments hosting, facility cost and tournament travel

- two Rugby Officials ( Bob Fisher and Jeff Hertig)

- team workout in the weight room at the Duckworth centre all year

-Wheelchair rugby was featured at the MWSA Mini-Paralympic camp and the Have a go days at the Rehab Hospital

-The wheelchair rugby program would like to welcome Kim Champagne (Occupational therapist), at this years Wheelchair rugby Nationals, Kim become a certified rugby classifier and is the only rugby classifier in Manitoba.