

Women returning to ringette

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GUELPH

Most players at this weekend's Guelph Ringette Tournament had parents and siblings cheering them on from the stands but when the Open B division took to the ice, it was husbands and children doing the cheering.

Ringette isn't just for girls, as the women of Open B – aged 19 and over – were quick to prove.

Guelph had three teams participating in that age group, with players tending to fall into one of three categories: those in their early to mid-20s who never stopped playing the game, University of Guelph students looking to keep playing a sport not available on campus and women in their 30s and 40s who used to play, took several years off, then started playing again.

Tara Lazzari is in the first category. One of the best ringette players ever to come out of Guelph, Lazzari played three years with a AA team in Waterloo, helping them win two national championships in the late '90s.

"This is it now," said the 27-year-old Lazzari, whose post-game duties following a 2-2 tie against another Guelph team included finding a Timbit for the young son dangling from her hip.

"We get a lot of women who come back to the sport. They either didn't realize it was still around or they have daughters who are now starting to play and want to get back into it.

"They catch up pretty quick," Lazzari said of those returning to the game. "We have a couple of players who are in their second year since returning to the game and they're pretty much back to where they were before they stopped playing."

One of those returnees to the sport would be Tanya Bergstrom, Lazzari's teammate on the Guelph One team that competed on the weekend.

"I have time now," says Bergstrom when asked what brought her back to the sport.

"Actually this is my time," she adds, with emphasis on the "my."

Bergstrom played ringette for 11 years as a girl then took six years off before returning to the game.

"The first couple of months it was hard to get back into it. There are a lot



GEOFF ROBINS, GUELPH MERCURY

Jen Mezenburg of Guelph One (in blue) keeps the ring away from Guelph Three's Christina Rehbein during their Open B division game in the Guelph Ringette Tournament Sunday at the West End Community Centre.

of new rules now so it was hard to get used to them but after a while it was OK. It's actually more fun now than it used to be."

In a 2-2 draw between the Guelph One and Guelph Three teams Sunday, Kristine Bennett and Rachel Bryan scored for Guelph One, with Margie Dingwall and Katie Trafford replying for Guelph Three.

The 24th annual Guelph Ringette Tournament featured 77 teams from around the province competing in 17 different divisions. Guelph teams made it to the finals in six divisions.

BUNNY

The Connect Tech Bunny (S) squad won both its games in what was a round-robin only division.

They blanked Stayner 7-0 as Colleen Scott netted the hat trick and Jessica Mezenberg and Eva Carter each had two goals.

They also beat Mitchell 12-0, as Nicole Shaw had three, Jordyn Cousins, Jocelyn Mennen and Scott had two and Amanda Conibear, Jillian MacEachern and Dana Malleau had singles.

NOVICE C

Guelph dropped a 7-6 decision to Stayner in the final.

Abby Richardson and Katie Worthen each scored twice for Guelph, with Jacqueline Thomson and Meghan Purdie potting the other goals.

PETITE B

Guelph settled for silver, losing 7-0 to Tillsonburg in the final.

PETITE A

Guelph Metaca Petite A won gold, defeating Dorchester 5-2 in the final. Erin Heming scored the hat trick with singles coming from Danielle Kelton

and Lisa Ashworth.

JUNIOR C

The Guelph United Rentals Junior C squad avenged a round-robin loss by defeating Elora/Fergus 6-2 in the final.

Megan Good played great in net while Brianne Tapscott scored twice. Emilie Priamo, Amy Curtis, Melissa Matlashewski and Erin Mann added singles.

BELLE B

Guelph Prime Care Pharmacy won gold with a 3-2 win over Cambridge. Anne Marie Holohan, Laura Walker and Erika Spekkens were the goal scorers.

OPEN B

Two goals by Nicole Perkins lifted Guelph to a 4-3 win in the championship game over Jordan. Jen Mezenburg and Tara Lazzari added the other goals.