

Waihi Miners Inline Hockey Club History – 1995 to 2008

The Early Days - 1995 to 1997

1995

In the latter part of 1995 a group of skateboarders, surfers etc. got together once a week at the Drill Hall in Waihi and began playing roller hockey, about eight or nine skaters who were inspired by a couple of then local Canadian mine workers who had grown up playing ice hockey in Canada.

There were no sides or goals and very little protective gear if any was worn or even known of, cones were used as goals and timber was laid down one side to stop the puck escaping, players were always aware of the fire hose reels attached to the walls and remembered to duck or swerve to avoid collision with these.

1996

By the beginning of 1996 the number of skaters had doubled with ages ranging from 11 to 16, but at this stage the Miners Inline Hockey club had not been formed nor did we belong to the NZIHA, so we were not included in the central regions league draw. This did not deter the players as they would come along once a week and just enjoy a scrimmage against each other. We did play in a number of B grade tournaments throughout the year which were held in Tauranga, Hamilton and Auckland, normally as an under 16 side, even though the players ranged from 11 to 16 years of age.

1997

By 1997 the interest in roller hockey was growing fast, not just in Waihi but throughout the country with many new clubs formed, mainly in the provincial towns, and the Waihi Miners Inline Hockey Club was one of them. However there was a huge shortage of suitable rinks to play on and teams had to travel to the cities to play league games, increasing the costs of the sport.

The club attracted a large number of U/10 (under 10) and U/12 players this year and for the first time was able to field teams in the central region league. To be involved in the regions league is the ultimate club hockey, with the aim to come first or second in your grade within your region, this gives the team one of the eight spots available in each grade

at the Nationals, which is held every September. Many, many clubs, teams or players never make it to the Nationals throughout their hockey career.

The older players from 1996 joined Tauranga or Hamilton clubs so they could play league hockey in their age group.

Late 1997 the Drill Hall was demolished to make way for the new Events Centre...

Club Growth - 1998 to 2002

1998

1998 was a tough year for the club as the Drill Hall had been demolished and our trainings were held on the college tennis court, which did not have a suitable surface for hockey skates or stick and puck drills and totally weather dependant. Needless to say there was not a lot of training achieved through the winter. Once again Waihi Miners competed in the central league with the U/10 and U/12 grades. This season the U/10 team won a spot to the nationals which were held in Wanganui, a huge achievement for such a small club.

The Waihi Event Centre was opened in September and the club had new dasher boards made, which needed to be assembled before trainings and taken down and stored after the training night had finished. The rink is too small for league games or tournaments to be played here in Waihi.

1999

Throughout the 1999 season a large number of young novice and non-league players joined the club, gaining skills and hockey experience for the following seasons, the Miners competed in the central league with U/10 and U/12 grades, but missed out on national spots this year.

2000

The 2000 Miners competed in the U/10, U/12 and U/14 central region grades, with the U/10 and U/12 teams making the nationals. A great achievement getting two out of three teams to the Nationals, which were held in Taupo over eight days, with over 800 players taking part

2001

Again in 2001 the Miners competed in the U/10, U/12 and U/14 central region grades, with the U/10 and U/12 teams making the Nationals, held in Taupo again. The U/12 team won the Silver medal this year, the first national medal won by a Miners team.

2002

The club expanded in 2002 with teams competing in U/10, U/12, U/14 and U/16 grades with the U/10's, U/12's and U/14's making it to the Nationals held in Palmeston North. The U/10's won the Silver medal making this the second Nationals medal won by the Miners.

Getting noticed - 2003 to 2007

2003

By the beginning of the 2003 season the club had attracted a lot of attention with the teams qualifying for the Nationals and their successes at the tournament. Many players were now being selected for the Central regions representative teams. This exposure was now attracting players and coaches from other regions.

The Miners had teams compete in U/10, U/12, U/14, U/16, senior and women grades this season, with U/10, U/12, U/14, and the U/16 teams all qualifying for a Nationals place which were held in Wanganui. The U/12 Miners won the Gold medal this year, the first Gold for the club and the third medal to date.

2004

With NZIHA deciding to cut the U/10 grade from the league in 2004, and no non league or B grade being organised for the U/10's the clubs numbers dropped a little this year, which would impact on our playing numbers in the years to come. Miners were to compete in the U/12, U/14, U/20, seniors and social senior grades this season with U/12, U/14 and seniors qualifying for a Nationals place, which were held in New Plymouth. No medals this season, but three teams at Nationals was a great success for the Miners.

2005

The Miners competed well in 2005, fielding teams in the U/12, U/14, senior and senior social grades, but still no U/10 division or B grade allowed for, so no young players coming

through the grades. Qualifying for the Nationals, which were held in New Plymouth, were the U/12, U/14 and the senior side. The U/12's won the Bronze and the U/14's won the Gold medals this season, the club now has Five National medals to its credit. The Miners supplied 16 central region representative players this season, with 7 of those playing in the U/14 grade, which also won the inter-regional Gold medal. ***No club in the country has ever, nor since, supplied that number of players to a representative team before and won the Gold medal.***

2006

The club was starting to feel the effects of no U/10's or B grade players coming through the grades in 2006, with numbers beginning to decline. Miners competed in the U/12, U/14 and U/20 grades with U/14 and U/20 grades qualifying for the Nationals played at New Plymouth. The U/14's won the Silver medal and a Bronze for the U/20's. This was a remarkable achievement for the U/20's as the team was made up from 5 first year U/16's, 3 first year U/18's and 1 U/20 players. ***The club now had seven National medals.***

2007

Three teams competed in the 2007 league, U/12, U/14 and U/18. The Nationals were held at Tauranga this year, and for the first time two rinks were set up, with all grades competing over four days instead of the usual eight. The U/14's and U/18's competed with U/14 winning the Silver and the U/18's winning a Bronze. ***The Miners had now won nne National medals.***

2008

Club numbers are on the increase in 2008 with the NZIHA realising the importance of the under 10 grade being able to compete throughout the region. The Miners are competing in the U/10, U/12, U/16 and senior grades this season.

The Nationals were held in Tauranga again this year with the U/12, U/16 and seniors qualifying to play at a national level. The Seniors played in the finals, but lost to Kapiti Rangers bringing home the Silver medal. ***The club now boasts 10 medals from the Nationals.***