

Kit Kat Captain's Award



Nominated by the players and presented to the Captain who best displays leadership, sportsmanship, how to have fun and whose overall contribution leads to the betterment of the Women's Hockey League.

Anita Kovac #7 White Oak Paint

Named in honour of Anita Kovac (Kit Kat), a player and captain in the WHL from 2002-2007. In 2005 Kit Kat convinced her employer at White Oak Paint, Dan Travaglini, to sponsor a team. She co-captained that team for 3 seasons. Anita died February 2, 2009, at 37 years of age from a brain aneurysm. She would be thrilled to know that today's captains in the WHL continue to share the love of the game in the same fun, fair and passionate way that she did. Thanks for setting the tone, Kit Kat!

Worthy Recipients

**Not awarded in 2021,2022 – Covid*

2026 – Vicki MacMillan & Brooke Kennedy

- 2025 – Shelley Yokota & Christina Coutu
- 2024 – Kimberley Sharpe & Amy Peltonen
- 2023 – Sydney Duggan & Kaija Kokkinen
- 2020 – Lori Swan & Rachel Michaud
- 2019 – Alexis Rowat & Rebecca White
- 2018 – Cori Dyke & Cathy Luxton
- 2017 – Leanne Latondress & Niki Corcoran
- 2016 – Sarah White & Katy Cundari
- 2015 – Sara Caughill
- 2014 – Pam Jaehrling & Amy Jolicoeur
- 2013 – Lisa Dale & Adele Nanne
- 2012 – Nancy Dewling & Brenda Huibers AND
- 2012 – Val MacGillivray & Nancy Bringleson
- 2011 – Theresa Glover
- 2010 – Patti Lutz & Lisa O'Connor
- 2009 – Teri Bonnell & Adele Nanne

2026 NOMINEES

CORI DYKE & LISA BONDAR - ALGOMA BICYCLE

Courageous leader on and off the ice. Outstanding defence player. Rallying the team together. Inspiring every player. Leading with heart and strength. Intense passion with every stride. Skilled player, fair captain. Always skating with pride. - Annette Kazmierczak

SHELLEY YOKOTA & CHRISTINA COUTU - BIOPED

I'd like to nominate Shelley and Christina from BioPed. These two make hockey so much fun for everyone! They lead with positive vibes and are always coaching to help us grow as players. They have built a cohesive team that supports one another on and off the ice and is always laughing and cheering each other on. Thanks for making this another great year! Best Foot Forward :) - Nicole Reid

Bioped is a great team and so much fun. Always positive vibes in the changeroom. The captains are always encouraging us to do our best but to mostly have fun. You can always count on Shelley yelling from the bench cheering us on. - Andrea Breton

I would like to nominate Shelley Yokota for the KitKat Captain Award for her outstanding leadership, sportsmanship, and ability to make hockey fun. As a first-year newbie, she has been incredibly welcoming, encouraging, and patient while teaching new skills. She truly sets the tone for what makes our women's hockey league so special—supportive, inclusive, and driven by a love of the game. - Hillary Sinibaldi

They both lead by example with their positive, supportive attitudes and their unwavering effort on the ice. There is never any negativity, and both in the changeroom and on the ice, they stress the importance of having fun. They plan team parties and other activities that encourage us to get to know each other outside the rinks. These ladies aren't just amazing captains, they have become my rock-solid friends as well. - Melissa Luck

The fact that we have played most of our games with three full forward lines says it all! Christina and Shelley have put together an amazing group of women, who have so much fun and support each other that we just can't stay away! Their positive attitudes and fun spirit embody what a Fun League captain should be. - Karen Pritchard

As a first time skater and player, Shelley has made this one of the best experiences, best display of sportsmanship, how to have fun and whose overall contribution leads to the betterment of the Women's Hockey League, and certainly its retainment and excitement of new players. - Casey Mayhew

NIKKI CORCORAN & NICOLE EMOND - EAZY EXPRESS

My captains have helped me so much this year - teaching me the game, faceoff tips, positioning, and so much more. But above all, they've always prioritized fun, acceptance, and kindness. I'll never forget our first game when they made it clear that negativity and putting others down wouldn't be tolerated. I've grown so much this season, and I owe so much of that progress to them! - Nicole Conte

Niki and Nicole have made the team atmosphere really enjoyable from day 1 - the laughs on and off the ice have been therapeutic and made attending the games so much fun. They have been so supportive and checked in after tough games, and been so supportive of the entire unit. We may be cellar dwellers, but you would not know that from the camaraderie they have instilled in the team ethic - I have thoroughly enjoyed this season under their leadership. - Kirsty Atkinson

I would like to nominate Nikki captain of Eazy express for her leadership and dedication to the WHL. During the season she was incredibly supportive and mentored new players with kindness. Nikki ensured that every player was recognized for their efforts on the ice and embodied the core values of the women's hockey league; fun, friendship and respect. - Brooke Rutledge

I'd like to nominate my captains from Eazy Express, Nicole Emond and Niki Corcoran! They are both extremely supportive of all calibres of players. They offer advice for all areas of play and have encourage others to try new positions when we're down players. They make sure each game is fun and full of positivity! I appreciate all they've done for us ladies this season and hope to have them in future seasons! - Kiersten Villeneuve

I'd like to nominate Niki and Nicole from Easy Express for the Kit Kat Captains award. They lead with humor and fun and make everyone feel included both on the ice and in the locker room. They are very encouraging and patient and always quick to point out all of the things that individual players and the team together have done well both after victories and after tough losses. Their positive attitudes and player of the game speeches make us all feel like superheroes! - Allyson Brideaux

Our captains created an environment where all players felt supported and motivated, regardless of their skill set. They showed us what true leadership looks like, and for this, I nominate them for the Kit Kat Captain's Award. - Lori Ballstadt

VICKEY MACMILLAN & BROOKE KENNEDY - EYE DEAL OPTICAL

I would like to nominate Captain Brooke Kennedy and Co-captain Vicky MacMillan for the Kit Kat Award. This is Brooke's first year as a Captain and she and Vicky did an amazing job. They found the perfect balance of having fun and being competitive. They were positive, fun and made sure everyone felt included. They exemplify what the fun league is all about. - Monique Bouillon

I would like to nominate Vicky Irving and Brooke Kennedy for the Kit Kat Captain's Award. These girls have created such a fun team environment. I think our team has spent just as much time together off the ice as we have on it. Their knowledge of the game, their encouragement and positive attitudes really motivate everyone to do their best. I think the constant smiling and laughing on our bench really says so much. - Erica Seyler

Vicky and Brooke embody the spirit of the Kit Kat award! They are fun, fabulous captains that at each game bring together a group of women and inspire us to play our best, try new skills, but most importantly, have fun! Working together, they provide our team with hockey wisdom, skills, and a fantastic, fun energy in the dressing room and on the ice. I can't thank them enough for adding me to the team! - Lisa O'Connor

Brooke and Vicky are the heart of what the WHL is all about. Vicky has been an OG of the league from the start and was my first defence partner. She took me under her wing, taught me the position, and helped me build the confidence and skill that made hockey such a positive experience for me. I'm lucky to call her my friend. This is Brooke's first year as co-captain, and she brings our team together on and off the ice. She lights up the locker room and keeps us connected. - Liz Gieni

I'd like to nominate Brooke and Vicky for the Kit Kat award for their amazing balance of hockey knowledge and fun energy. They perfectly display what it means to be in the fun league by always encouraging their teammates, and facilitating a locker room and on ice environment that is comfortable, fun, and full of friendship. - Lexi Degregorio

SYDNEY DUGGAN & VICKI BAILEY - ICEBREAKERS

I would like to nominate our captains, Syd and Vic, for the Kit Kat Award. This is my second season playing with them, and for two years they have created a truly welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment. Their leadership goes far beyond the ice. Syd embodies commitment and community. Although she was unable to play for much of the season, she showed up consistently, often during late-night games, to support the team, offer tips, and provide much-needed moral support. Her presence was meaningful and deeply felt. Syd is passionate about getting people involved in the league and strengthening our hockey community. When she returned to the ice earlier this year, she made an immediate impact, putting goals in the net and reminding us all of her drive and heart. Vic is a gentle and grounding presence on our team. She checks in on everyone, whether someone has something going on in their life or if the weather is bad and we're running late to the rink. She remembers the small things you tell her and follows up, making people feel genuinely seen and cared for. She always has a solution ready and isn't afraid to step in when needed. Known affectionately as Mama Burger, Vic brings warmth, comfort, and quiet strength, fittingly anchoring our defensive line. Thank you, Syd and Vic, for another wonderful season. I am incredibly grateful for your leadership, your care, and the environment you've built. It has been an honour to spend another season as your teammate. - Morgan DeLuco

I would like to nominate my captains, Sydney and Vicki, from Icebreakers. Sydney is an incredible mentor who is always willing to share tips and tricks, explain the game, and help everyone improve. Because of her encouragement, I've learned so much about hockey and grown more confident on the ice. Vicki is the heart of our team — our “mama burger.” She supports and motivates us with her constant kindness, positive energy, and signature lavender essential oil scent that somehow makes everything feel calmer. She makes everyone feel seen and valued, both on and off the ice. Together, Sydney and Vicki have created an environment where I always feel accepted and excited to play. Being on the Icebreakers is something I genuinely look forward to, and that's entirely because of the supportive, inclusive culture they foster. - Amy Kasubeck

I would like to nominate my Icebreakers Captains, Sydney and Vicki, for the Kit Kat award. Sydney's overall commitment to the league as an executive plus a team captain is remarkable. Her sacrifice allows the opportunity for the rest of us. The same is true as team captains and the work required to make sure our team shows up ready to play. The icing on the cake is the inviting, inclusive, positive atmosphere Sydney and Vicki have created for the women on our team. It has been such a fun and meaningful experience and I'm so grateful to those who make it possible!! - Roxy Richards

I was kidnapped into this hockey life and Sydney and Vicki made me feel like family from day one. Sydney and Vic embody the values of the WHL, but more than that they embody fun, camaraderie, love of the game and acceptance. They fiercely love and support their teammates and all of the ladies of our league. Love you ladies! - Lucy Nardi

Syd and Vic both lead our Icebreakers team with so much warmth and generosity that the rink feels less like a competitive arena and more like the fun league we all signed up for. They're patient, encouraging, and somehow manage to hype us up whether we're scoring or just managing to stay on our feet. They celebrate our efforts just as passionately as our wins, and they always take the time to point out what we're doing well while offering honest, helpful tips on how to get even better. Their enthusiasm is infectious, and they truly believe hockey is for everyone—no matter the skill level. They've built a space where beginners feel safe to try, stumble, laugh, get up, and try again. And woven into their leadership is one of my most memorable moments of the whole year: the draft. I wasn't even sure if I was going to keep playing this season... and then there I was, the *last one called* by Vic while I was, “crying in my beer.” I'll never forget the two of us laughing as she called me from the door of the restaurant. What started as a discouraging season for me quickly became a reminder of how far I've come as a person and how close together we've come as a team. And let's be honest—I was also one of those people (as we discussed in the locker room!) who used to think Syd didn't like me. But now I know better... or at least I *hope* I do! Their leadership isn't

measured in goals or wins. For me, it was the moment I scored my first goal of the season and finally felt a bit of confidence settling in—helped along, of course, by the whoppers. They believe in every single one of us, and because of them, we're not just a team. We're our own little community—sometimes chaotic, always supportive, and definitely stronger because of Syd and Vic. #GoBurgers

- Jessica O'Donnell

I want to nominate Sydney and Vicki for being incredible leaders, not just captains. As a first time hockey player, they helped me learn and feel a part of a team from the moment I got the call to be a Burger Flipper. Being new to the Soo, this hockey team has made me feel at home, and it started with these two amazing ladies. Thank you!!

- Meagan Simmons

KIRA FRY & HADLEY REED - MAITLAND FORD

I would like to nominate my captains Kira and Hadley for the Kit Kat award. Their knowledge of the game has really helped all the players to grow and develop with positioning and hints on what to watch for and what to do. They take the time to answer questions and help the newbies with skating tips and stick handling. They are always encouraging whether we are winning or losing. They not only captain, they coach. They also compliment each other with Kira's calm demeanor and Hadley's passion. I just love being on this team!!!!

- Debra Edwards

MINDY DEGREGORIO & JENNIFER WALKER - NORTHERN NATURAL HEALTH

I would like to nominate our stellar captains Mindy and Jenny from Fun League. Whether it was pre-game, during the game or post game they were always genuine, supportive and lead by example. They always made myself feel valued along with other team members and this was evident by their encouragement on the bench. They also emphasized team work and fun rather than winning. They were also very sensitive to the needs of the players on our team as many went through some trying times in their lives. It was an absolute pleasure to be part of their team!!!! - Natalie Sageloly

KIMBERLEY SHARPE & JESSICA O'NEIL - RAPID CITY REPAIR

I would like to nominate Jes and Kim for the Kit Kat Captain's Award in recognition of their outstanding leadership as co-captains this season. They foster a positive, low-pressure environment that makes time on the ice enjoyable while building strong teamwork and inclusivity. Their lead-by-example approach has strengthened team culture and ensured every player feels supported and valued. Returning to Rapid City this season has been an incredible experience, and much of that is due to the welcoming, fun, and cohesive team Jes and Kim have built. They have brought together an amazing group of women who share a genuine love for the sport, making the team both competitive and a joy to be part of.

- Leah Senecal

Kim Sharpe and Jes O'Neil exemplify the spirit of the Kit Kat Award through their dedication to keeping the "fun" in Fun League hockey. As co-captains of Rapid City, they consistently encourage players to step outside their comfort zones, celebrate even the smallest on-ice victories, and maintain perspective on what truly matters: fostering a love for the game and keeping women engaged in hockey. Their leadership goes beyond the scoreboard. Kim and Jes create an environment where players feel supported, motivated, and excited to grow. They remind everyone that success isn't just measured by goals or wins, but by the joy of playing, learning, and being part of a community. Their positive energy, encouragement, and commitment to inclusion make Rapid City a team where fun, friendship, and hockey thrive together. For their outstanding dedication to promoting enjoyment, confidence, and lifelong participation in women's hockey, Kim Sharpe and Jes O'Neil are truly deserving of the Kit Kat Award.

- Amy Peltonen

I just want to thank both my captains Kim and Jes for a great year of hockey. To say a few words why I am nominating them for the Kit Kat Captains award. Both are quiet and steady, always positive and they never lose sight of why we are playing. Fair play, fun and support for all of us. Always

encouraging, never criticizing our team or the team we are playing. They are true sportswomen - Never boasting when we win and never complaining when we lose. Love playing for team Rapid City.
- Toni Pyykonen

TARA DUNN & SAM NAKASHIMA - SPOTLIGHT BEAUTY

My hockey captains, Tara and Sam, are truly worthy of this award. As leaders of the Spotlight Beauty Queens, they skate with elegance, lead with sparkle, and help our team shine. Whether we're dancing on ice or battling in pink gear, they always keep us poised, polished, and game-ready. Their confidence, encouragement, support, glamorous leadership and queen-level presence make our team royalty on and off the ice. 👑❤️
- Anastasia Van Wieren

I would like to submit a nomination for Tara Dunn and Sam Nakashima for the Kit Kat Captains award. This was my very first year ever playing hockey and I am so happy that I got picked by them. They have both been so amazingly welcoming and kindhearted. The kind and very helpful guidance for a newbie is so amazing. Even when they are giving much needed constructive feedback it was always done with the most positive attitude. I am grateful to have had this experience with them as our captain. They are definitely a big reason I will be coming back year after year.
- Ashley Gearing

EMILY PIRAINO & STACEY PIRAINO - TWIN

I nominate Emily & Stacey Piraino (Twin) for the Kit Kat Award. As a WHL newcomer, my nerves were eased from game one; they prioritized fun & inclusion, helping veterans & rookies grow. Early success, finishing strong by being adaptive in lineups & positions. Regardless of the scoreboard, their focus on camaraderie and laughter ensured every game felt like a win. They truly are a 'purr-fect' pair of captains.
- Jaana Aspegren