



M A S R C



**Manitoba Aboriginal Sports  
& Recreation Council**

**MIG Registration Open**

**MIG Logo Reveal**

**Nominate for \*NEW\* Decade  
Awards**

**January 2021**



**Tyrone Munroe (Garden Hill),  
Regional Wellness Manager  
Four Arrows Regional Health Authority**

**Creating a  
Safe Space**

**Virtual  
Sharing  
Circles**

**Equipment  
Deliveries**

## Getting Festive

December is usually a time to slow down, catch up on things we've been putting off, to enjoy the wonderful people we work with, and celebrate all that we have accomplished throughout the year. One thing's for sure, we did not slow down. December was busy for our MASRC staff, but we loved every moment of it.

From running multiple online sessions like our Sharing Circles and our new Creating a Safe Space with MASRC calls with our provincial sport organizations, to coordinating care packages and equipment deliveries throughout the province, we worked hard to make sure we continued to serve and support our communities.

As we wrap up 2020, we wanted to thank everyone who has worked with the MASRC this year in delivering sport and recreation programs, everyone who connected with us, and everyone who helped us grow our MASRC family. We are so excited for what 2021 will bring us.

## Thank You to Our Funders!



## Have any questions about this newsletter?

Contact Meaghen Fillion, *Communications Coordinator* at [fillion@masrc.com](mailto:fillion@masrc.com)



Keep an eye out for updates, athlete and community champion recognition and upcoming programming by following us on:

[www.masrc.com](http://www.masrc.com)



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## MASRC Opens MIG School Registration

The MASRC launched its online registration for the upcoming **Manitoba Indigenous Games (MIG): The Comeback** in May 2021. Any school in Manitoba can register for specific events that their Indigenous students (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) will be competing in.

### What are the events?\*\*:

- Alaskan High Kick
- Archery
- Basketball Challenge
- Biiig Hoop
- Foxtails & Targets
- Long Distance Run
- One-Foot High Kick
- Orienteering (Demo Sport)
- Screaming Eagle
- Strong Person Carry

*\*\*Sport information subject to change*

### How can the province prepare for the Games?

- Leading up to the Games, "How-to" videos and informational posters will be shared to help prepare for MIG events, such as "How-To Harvest and Prepare Your Materials to Build Your Own Bow!"
- The MASRC will coordinate training opportunities to teach staff and volunteers in all Manitoba Indigenous Games events, in partnership with the Frontier School Division (FSD) and the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre (MFNERC).

There will be no team sports. All sports/activities encourage proper social distancing and make it easy to follow health protocols for the safety of all participants.

Online registration is now open and technical packages are also available at [www.masrc.com/MIG](http://www.masrc.com/MIG).

If you have any questions, please contact:

Gabrielle Desrochers, Major Games Coordinator  
[masrcdesrochers@gmail.com](mailto:masrcdesrochers@gmail.com)

## New MIG Logo Revealed



Congratulations to Shanae Clarke from Norway House Cree Nation for winning our MIG Logo Design Contest!

The 2021 Manitoba Indigenous Games logo represents elements from all Indigenous people who live in Manitoba (First Nations, Métis, Inuit), the varying lands we live, the water we benefit from, and the participation.

To learn more about what this logo represents, go to [www.masrc.com/mig](http://www.masrc.com/mig)

The MASRC would like to thank all artists who submitted their logo concepts. We truly have talented artists in our province.



## Indigenous Decade Awards 2011-2020

### \*Deadline Approaching\*

Each year the MASRC honours athletes, coaches, and volunteers who demonstrate great determination, leadership, and giving back to their community.

This year our annual awards will be celebrating a decade! With the cancellation of most sports this year due to Covid, it's an opportunity to celebrate a career award rather than a season award.

The award recipients are chosen by following a strict set of guidelines and are selected through the Award/Scholarship Selection Committee.

Nominate an athlete, coach or volunteer that has had a successful showing or impact on the provincial, national, or international stage. Submit your nomination by completing a form that can be found on our website at [masrc.com/awards](http://masrc.com/awards). **Deadline is January 14, 2021.**



## Want to Donate Equipment?

We are running low on some equipment and requests continue to roll in as families are searching for ways to stay active. We are searching for the following donations:

- Hockey skates (adult sizes 4-14)
- Winter sleds
- Hockey sticks

*\*Must be in good condition. Cannot be broken or cracked.*

During Covid, donations can be dropped off at the following locations:

**MASRC Office Higgins** - 37 Higgins Ave, Winnipeg  
**MASRC Office Pacific** - 145 Pacific Ave, Winnipeg

**Need equipment?** You can find the application on our website at [masrc.com/warehouse-equipment](http://masrc.com/warehouse-equipment) or e-mail Tara George at [tara.george@sportmanitoba.ca](mailto:tara.george@sportmanitoba.ca).

All low-income families are welcome to apply. This program is not only for Indigenous families.



## Athlete of the Month



### Ryan Monias

“Ryan is a hard working athlete, dedicated to hockey, striving to be in the best physical shape he can be. Although he plays many sports including volleyball and lacrosse, hockey is his passion. He had even made the Manitoba U19 lacrosse team for NAIG 2019. He has graduated high school and is currently focused on his athletic career in Winkler Manitoba. He is one of two indigenous players on the Winkler Flyers team and is excited to be playing in the MJHL. Ryan is polite, responsible, and hard working. Being on a team creates lots of opportunities to be a role model for younger kids in the community. Ryan is a Cross Lake Band Member and grew up in Thompson. He spent the two previous seasons in Thompson as a Midget AAA Norman Northstar. He has a great personality and little kids look up to him. He always makes sure to say hi or high five them to make them feel important. He is committed to focusing on his hockey career to see where it takes him.”

Congratulations on being MASRC’s athlete of the month! Keep showing them what you got!

Do you want to nominate someone to be our next athlete of the month? Our online nomination form can be found on [masrc.com/awards](https://masrc.com/awards).

## Community Champion of the Month

### Ruth Nepinak & Roger Tagoona

“Congratulations to Ruth Nepinak & Roger Tagoona from Skownan First Nation (Roger is originally from Rankin Inlet, Nunavut). Ruth is a great young leader in her community. She leads a women’s bootcamp in the community, she also has a group of high school boys who reach out to her to play basketball. She recently started a community basketball league for 2 age groups. Ruth continues to lead by example and create opportunities for sports and recreation and different ways for community members to stay active and promote healthy living. Her ability to connect with the community shows in her programs. Keep up the good work Ruth

Roger has coached hockey and leads dryland training in the community. He hosts and leads youth soccer practices and training every week. He is doing great things in the community to help provide a safe and healthy space for the youth of their community.”

Do you want to nominate a champion in your community? Fill out our online form on [masrc.com/awards](https://masrc.com/awards) or by send an e-mail to Meaghen at [fillion@masrc.com](mailto:fillion@masrc.com).





## Wellness Hour

Distance could not keep our staff from staying connected and treating ourselves to some activities that bring us joy. Each week a staff is in charge of planning the wellness hour as an opportunity to share our interests and practicing our facilitation skills.

With a busy schedule, the MASRC staff found time to get well! We started off the month by painting some ornaments for our Christmas trees, then we collected some branches to create beautiful and unique wreaths and wrapped up December with our staff gift exchange and some virtual games.

We look forward to the new year and continuing to keep each other well during these times. We're always looking forward to Thursday afternoons.



## Connecting at a Distance

As we continue to work together to keep our communities safe, the MASRC staff have limited travel during these times, but this has not stopped us from connecting and making things happen!

This month we reached out to our contacts and communities who work with us to find out what their needs are as far as sport equipment. Our Sport for Social Development Facilitators and Sport Consultants prepared equipment and care packages and made some no contact deliveries to various communities like: Dakota Tipi, Waywayseecapo, Grand Rapids, Duck Bay, Winnipegosis, and Lundar. We are so grateful that we've been able to keep supporting the communities and the people who work so hard in creating sport and recreation opportunities. Let's keep moving and hope that one day soon we can do it together.



**If you are interested in joining the MASRC family and having our programs in your community, please contact Leah Ferguson at [leah.ferguson@masrc.com](mailto:leah.ferguson@masrc.com).**

# Building Relationships

## The Story of Cross Lake's Wrestling Team

Pimicikamak Territory in Manitoba, also known as Cross Lake, is located approximately 520 kilometres North of Winnipeg. With an on reserve population of over 6,000, Cross Lake is one of the largest Indigenous communities in Manitoba. It's the home community of NHL player Brady Keeper and many upcoming hockey players like Saige McKay, Carrigan Umpherville and Kennesha Miswaggon. Hockey is a very popular sport in the community, but what most people don't know is that Cross Lake is also the home of Manitoba's largest Indigenous wrestling club.

Leah Ferguson's first trip up to Cross Lake was in March of 2016 as a wrestling facilitator for the Manitoba Aboriginal Sports & Recreation Council (MASRC). This is where she first met Kendall Robinson. Right away it was easy to

recognize that there was a lot of talent and it was evident that wrestling had been a part of the community for a long time. "The kids knew how to work hard. They were a little shy at the beginning but once they got going, they knew how to push themselves. They knew how to wrestle to exhaustion and were really impressive athletically." said Leah. Even though the youth were super tired, they kept coming back every night and the participant numbers kept increasing.

Mel Whitesell, the Executive Director for the MASRC, gave Leah the direction to go up to Cross Lake 3 times a year for 2 years. While in the community, Leah got to meet some of the local business owners and one in particular, while Leah was explaining the purpose of her visit, jokingly said something along the lines of "Like yeah if we ever see you again, I guess that'll be cool".

This response was eye opening for Leah and she realized how many people must have come into the community as a response to the state of emergency declared surrounding the suicide epidemic, and how many of those people never returned. Leah became very committed to returning to the community and realized that it needed to be her who returned consistently for the next two years. This is how Leah was able to build a significant relationship with Kendall and a few other athletes.

Kendall Robinson first started wrestling in high school in 2003. Although he joined every sport, except for soccer and basketball,

wrestling remained his favourite. Fast forward through his successful athletic career to 5 years later and Kendall decided to give back and become the community's wrestling coach. Kendall's love for the sport and his desire to develop the youth and gain their respect has led to over a decade of coaching and changing lives. Since 2009, Kendall has coached over



100 athletes! When asked about her relationship with Kendall, Leah said "It's been nice to build sport with a friend up North. For me as a high-performance athlete, I obviously see building sport in a certain way and Kendall has a different approach and dynamic with the kids. The kids just love when he's on the mat. They think that it's so great. There's truly a high level of trust and care that they know they have with him." It is very important for Kendall, as a coach, to give the youth as many opportunities to compete outside of the community and to experience different levels of training.

One year, Kendall brought his group of wrestlers to Thompson for training and this is where Leah first met Herk Halcrow. "He was crazy athletic and it was his second wrestling practice ever. Herk didn't know anything about wrestling at the time, but when we



wrestled it made me nervous that he might score a point because he was so athletic and strong". That night, Herk had a dream about Leah. As he ran around the track, he spotted Leah and she asked him "Do you want to be great?" he replied "Yeah", she said "Well you're going to have to work hard." Since then, Herk committed to the sport and excelled in all aspects of his life. "I saw it as a challenge and I like challenges, so I just went for it." said Herk when asked why he joined wrestling. "Wrestling redirected my life. It became another puzzle piece I was missing". His passion to be great reminds Leah of kids from small towns who, deep down, know they can be great even though they haven't seen that stage or level of success. That year Herk Halcrow got second place at Provincials where he lost against one of the best wrestlers in Manitoba. Past experiences have taught him humility and that it's not about being the best right now, it's about taking these steps and cementing them so he can continue to make progress and won't be taken backwards.

When Dante Beardy first met Leah Ferguson, he was a little bit overweight and eager to learn more about wrestling. "He was a smart kid and always asked the good questions. Every time we would return, he just got fitter and fitter. To see his wrestling IQ grow was insane and you could tell he was interested in the technical aspect of wrestling." said Leah. "Wrestling has made me who I am today. It's hard to put into words. It helped me build my character, taught me how to be humble and to respect others at the beginning and at the end of the match no matter what happens." said Dante. The most admirable quality that Leah sees in Dante is his dedication to improve. "[It] was so cool to see because you actually see sport improving a young person's life in a tangible way. I think that Dante can be a lot like Kendall in terms of building that trust and the fun aspect that kids would probably have with him. He also has that commitment to learn about technique, I think he would be a lifelong learner." From Leah's perspective, a lot of the youth in Cross Lake would demonstrate this style of coaching because of Kendall's influence, that's what he is good at as a coach.

Loryn Evans is evidence of how Kendall's coaching style can unknowingly impact youth through sport. When Leah first met Loryn, she had no idea the kind of relationship it would grow into. Loryn was a super busy kid in a mentorship program and worked. She was trying to get good grades and wanted to go to university. She played all the sports and was trying to figure out a way to be successful at something. "She was wicked independent that way." said Leah. "When I first met Leah I was so starstruck. I still am. I just wanted to be like her. The way she carries herself and her resilience." said Loryn when asked about Leah. A little while later, Loryn

and Leah reconnected at RBC Training Grounds in Winnipeg. When talking to Loryn's mother, Leah mentioned the concept of having roommates and how Loryn doesn't have to live alone when she moves to Winnipeg. Loryn's mother understood it as an offer rather than a suggestion. When it came time for Loryn to move to the city, her mother said "Ask that lady! Go live with that lady!". A week before Loryn's first day of university, Loryn contacted Leah to ask if she could live with her. Loryn's been living with Leah and her husband for 3 years now.

Loryn's time in Winnipeg has given her an opportunity to discover her passion for working with little kids. She has become a really great grassroots multi-sport coach through her work with the MASRC and other jobs that involve sport and working with youth. (Loryn has also worked as a Canoe camp instructor and is now working as a youth addictions counsellor in Winnipeg). In her role as an assistant coach for the wrestling team at General Wolfe Junior High School in Winnipeg, she has seen an increase of Indigenous girls come out simply because they saw that there was an Indigenous female coach! It is clear that she is a teacher by nature and has a hard work ethic. She just needed an opportunity.

Working in Cross Lake has become a real reciprocal relationship. "Every time I went, someone would teach me something new or they would remind me of things to keep in mind when I was working with the kids." Leah's relationship with the community of Cross Lake has taught the MASRC as an organization about listening to the community, actually hearing them, and trying to execute what they're passionate about or what they actually want. "They've taught me how to observe and listen. Instead of trying to tell them what a good wrestling program is."

Cross Lake gave the MASRC the opportunity to have an up-and-coming sports program with a committed coach that the staff can work with and live the organization's mission and mandate. From there, being able to see their team grow at Provincials, seeing them at the Western Canada Games, or winning medals at the North American Indigenous Games, it just showed the organization that returning consistently and finding those key people, no matter what the sport is, and building those relationships is what mattered. Whether it's a biking program in Waywayseecappo, an archery program, or a walking program. "If there is that one consistent leader that we can just build a relationship with, it really can change a generation of youth."



# TRC 87

## TRC 87 Campaign

*Like to hear more stories like this one?*

The MASRC has finished a 2 month social media campaign highlighting local sport stories of Indigenous resilience to play an active role in the **Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action number 87**:

*We call upon all levels of government, in collaboration with Aboriginal peoples, sports halls of fame, and other relevant organizations, to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.*

We are currently working on different ways to highlight past and present Indigenous athletes, coaches, and leaders. We want to tell your story. **If you are interested in being interviewed, please e-mail Meaghen at [fillion@masrc.com](mailto:fillion@masrc.com).**

## NAIG Gear For Sale!

If you were selected as a Team Manitoba athlete, coach or mission staff for the 2020 NAIG, you can purchase your team merchandise. (This sale is not open for the public.)

You can purchase:

- Adidas jacket
- T-shirt
- Shorts
- Set of pins

**Only \$100\***

*\*Shipping is extra.*



If you are interested in purchasing NAIG gear, please contact Rhonda at [masrcinfo@sportmanitoba.ca](mailto:masrcinfo@sportmanitoba.ca)



**Stay connected with us through our social media and by frequently checking our website to stay updated on MIG and NAIG.**