

HISTORY OF THE FRIENDSHIP TOURNAMENT

In 1989 the city of Hachinohe, Japan celebrated it's 60th Anniversary. A group of gentlemen decided to host an **INTERNATIONAL PEE WEE ICE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT** (12 and 13 year olds) to bring the youth of the world together in a tournament with the emphasis on **FAIRPLAY, SPORTSMANSHIP** and **CULTURAL EXCHANGE**.

An invitation was sent to Canada, USA, Korea and Finland to participate in the first tournament in Japan. While in Japan, all agreed that the tournament should be held every two years, and St Paul, Minnesota offered to host the second tournament in 1991.

At the end of this tournament, the flag was handed to British Columbia to host the tournament in 1993 in Cranbrook Canada. Five international teams participated, with five Cranbrook teams and the rest from the Kootenays, BC and Alberta, a total of 16 teams. ***In 1995 the Tournament was hold in Christchurch***, 1997 in Aldergrove, BC and in 1999 it was hold in Canberra, Australia. In 2001 the players travelled to Tomokomai, Japan the in 2003 it was again held in St Paul, Minnesota. In 2005 the tournament was hosted by Cranbrook, BC, Canada. New Zealand was lucky enough to be granted the right to host in Dunedin in March 2007. Teams travelled from Japan, Canada, South Korea, the United States of America and Australia.

2009 1 was the 20th anniversary of the Friendship Tournament and as such all teams agreed that the tournament in that year should return to Hachinoe, the city where it all began. The Friendship tournament played an integral part of the City's 80th Anniversary celebrations.

The Friendship Tournament in 2011 will be held in Hudson, Wisconsin, USA.

Mr Kaneiri from Hachinohe, Japan, is the principal founder of the Friendship Tournament, and it is through his endeavours that the tournament continues, along with the **FRIENDSHIP** that is generated at each successive tournament.

The tournament is not a business/profit driven event, but rather a vehicle for young ice hockey players from different countries to play against each other in the spirit of **FRIENDSHIP** and **FAIRPLAY** while experiencing the culture of the host country. The players are all billeted with local families during the tournament.

The teams participating are not **NATIONAL** representative teams, but rather, teams consisting of players who would not necessarily get to play other international teams or visit and compete in a country overseas. They are players who play Ice hockey, not necessarily to win, but for the enjoyment of participating in their chosen sport and doing what kids do best, **HAVE FUN!**

The cultural interaction between players cannot be undervalued, and many players in the past have returned to New Zealand with a new understanding of people who are different in looks and cultures than themselves.