

'Chicks' in the ring

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There's a bunch of chicks with sticks on the loose in Prince George.

Despite only being together for a couple of weeks, they've already gone down to Quesnel and laid out some funnies.

The Prince George women's ringette team, nicknamed Chicks With Sticks, are the first over-23 team in Prince George since anyone associated with the team can remember. And they're undefeated.

Their first action was in Quesnel recently where they hammered the home-town team 11-5 and 6-5.

Utilizing a mix of experience and exuberance, the locals' main goal is to have fun. Experience comes in the form of Meredith Bogle, who's played ringette in Prince George since she was a little girl, and former Newfoundland provincial-team player Joanne Caines.

Exuberance is provided by players like Lisa Irvine.

A converted hockey player, one of five on the team, Irvine says ringette is



Chris Bailey

a better team game.

"There's a lot of passing," she says. "I like it a lot compared to hockey."

Irvine got involved because her daughter likes to pass the ring around and she found herself sitting the stands wondering why it was so hard to spear that ring with the stick.

"I felt she should be able to get the ring so I thought I'd try it myself," says Irvine with a laugh.

Ringette is making somewhat of a comeback in Prince George and the women's team has a reflection of the sports' resurgence in popularity. The city has a full complement of teams from the Bunnies right up to the women's team, which is classified as

intermediate (over 23).

The local team was started to compete with other teams in Quesnel, Abbotsford, Nanaimo and Burnaby/New Westminster. While there are no provincials this year, Abbotsford hosts the Chicks on Ice tournament every April.

Currently the team practices every Monday with the Deb (Under-23) team, but after Christmas they hope to up that to more than one ice-time per week.

"The players are taking this seriously," says team manager Chris Bailey.

Things will get even more serious next year when Prince George hosts the national intermediate, deb, belle and junior championships. The tournament is scheduled for April 3 to 8, 2000.

• The local team has a sense of humour as well, hence their name and logo (a chick, holding a stick, emerging from a cracked egg shell). Quesnel's women's ringette team is known as Babes on Blades while one of the Abbotsford teams is called Chicks on Ice.