

El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame 2025 Nomination for Cory Herman COACH/ADMINISTRATOR

Cory Herman was born in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, on January 16, 1975. He grew up in a small town in Saskatchewan, where he was raised on a farm. As a child in rural Saskatchewan, the number one activity aside from farming was hockey. He started playing at the age of three, and eventually worked his way up to playing college hockey at the University of Regina.

In 1999, he received an invitation to play for the El Paso Buzzards. He had never heard of El Paso, Texas, but decided to take the chance and accept the offer. He played for the Buzzards for two seasons, but his career was cut short after an injury that permanently suspended his hockey playing. He took up a position in the Buzzards' back office selling sponsorships and volunteered for the youth hockey program. In 2001, he took over the youth hockey program and started the El Paso Hockey Association (EPHA).

As the youth hockey program continued to grow, Cory decided to start a Junior Hockey team. He joined the Western Stated Hockey League (WSHL), and the El Paso Rhinos were started in 2006. Cory became head coach, and during their 14 years in the WSHL, they won 10 division championships, 4 Thorne Cup Championships, and 2 national titles.

In 2020, the El Paso Rhinos made the switch to the esteemed National American Hockey League (NAHL), and also added a Tier II team, also called the El Paso Rhinos, in the National American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL).

That same year, Herman retired from coaching in order to focus on business operations. As a head coach, he amassed nearly 700 wins, 2 national titles, 4 Thorne Cup Championships, and various Midwest Division Titles.

Also in 2020, Herman and the El Paso Rhinos won the national competition called Kraft Hockeyville, which is hosted by Kraft Foods and the National Hockey League (NHL). As part of their grand prize, Herman and the Rhinos were able to host the Dallas Stars and the Arizona Coyotes in a hockey game at their home rink, the El

Paso County Events Center. That was the first time two national teams of any sport have played each other in El Paso, and it all happened in the Rhinos' home rink.

From contacts he met through the Kraft Hockeyville process, Herman then was asked to work on an outdoor NHL Stadium Series game in Nashville, Tennessee. He then was asked to work an NHL Winter Classic game and another Stadium Series game. Following those events, he was officially asked to be part of the NHL outdoor ice crew, which very few people are a part of. He now works 2-3 outdoor NHL games per year in different locations across the US and Canada.

All the while, since its inception in 2001, the El Paso Hockey Association has grown to house several programs, including youth hockey, adult hockey, two figure skating clubs, public skating, military skating, special needs programs, and many more. There are currently over 600 kids in the youth program and over 200 participants within the two figure skating clubs. The EPHA serves over 1,000 families. Although most are local, the rink is home to people from all over the region, including Juarez, Las Cruces, Alamogordo, and beyond.

Furthermore, under Herman's guidance, the two Rhinos junior teams participate in over 200 community and charity events per year, with the ultimate goal of giving back to the community in any way they can. Not only that, Rhinos players have a program called Skate Mates, wherein they go to local schools weekly and read to children. They also have a close working relationship with the Boys and Girls Club, Child Crisis Center, and other local non-profits in the Sun City. Supporting the community that supports the Rhinos is very important to Herman and the Rhinos association.

The Rhinos have also hosted 2-4 training camps per summer in El Paso for the last 4 years, bringing in up to 300 players per camp. The sports tourism economic impact of these training camps is notable, and has been marked as second only to the Sun Bowl.

Cory has not only kept hockey alive in the Sun City, but he has grown the Rhinos and El Paso Hockey Association significantly in the past 22 years. His contributions to the city of El Paso are innumerable.

Without Herman, hockey in El Paso would not have survived following the Buzzards' end. He has shown his true dedication to hockey and to the City of El Paso by keeping the sport alive in such a non-traditional market.

Experience Timeline for Cory Herman

- ❑ 1999- Cory Herman moves to El Paso to play for the El Paso Buzzards
- ❑ 2001- Cory takes over the youth hockey program and establishes the El Paso Hockey Association
- ❑ 2006- Cory buys a franchise in the Western States Hockey League (WSHL) and the El Paso Rhinos are born. Cory is head coach
- ❑ 2007- Rhinos are the WSHL Midwest Division Champions
- ❑ 2008- Rhinos are the Midwest Division Champions and go on to win the Thorne Cup Championship
- ❑ 2009- Rhinos are the Midwest Division Champions
- ❑ 2011- Rhinos are Midwest Division Champions
- ❑ 2011- Rhinos are USA Hockey Tier III Junior Nationals Silver Medalists
- ❑ 2012- Rhinos are Midwest Division Champions
- ❑ 2013- Rhinos are Mountain Division Champions
- ❑ 2014- Rhinos are Mountain Division Champions and go on to win the Thorne Cup Championship
- ❑ 2014- The El Paso Rhinos win the National Championship
- ❑ 2015- Rhinos are Mountain Division Champions
- ❑ 2018- Rhinos are Mountain Division Champions and go on to win the Thorne Cup Championship
- ❑ 2019- Rhinos are Mountain Division Champions and go on to win the Thorne Cup Championship
- ❑ 2020- The El Paso Rhinos join the higher esteemed National American Hockey League and create a second team to join the National American 3 Hockey League
- ❑ 2020- Cory Herman retires from coaching to focus on the business side of the Rhinos
- ❑ 2020- The El Paso Rhinos win the Kraft Hockeyville title, a nationwide competition for most spirited hockey community

- 2021- The Rhinos host the Dallas Stars and Arizona Coyotes in an exhibition game, the first time two national teams of any sport have ever played each other in the Sun City. The Stanley Cup also traveled to El Paso!
- 2021- Cory is hired by the NHL ice crew to work on NHL outdoor games and becomes a part of the permanent ice crew
- 2023- The El Paso Figure Skating Club becomes World Champions
- 2023- Cory continues to build the various programs and has plans to expand the rink to include a second sheet of ice

https://www.elpasoinc.com/news/el_pasoan_of_year/cory-herman-head-coach-el-paso-rhinos/article_743da3fa-380d-11eb-a666-8bcc59710b01.html

Cory Herman, head coach, El Paso Rhinos

Dec 6, 2020



Illustration by Nacho Garcia

Cory Herman, head coach of the El Paso Rhinos, has turned the most unlikely sport to live in the Sun City into one of the most successful sports franchises in the region.

Herman came to El Paso in 1999 as a player with the El Paso Buzzards ice hockey team. That team ceased operations in 2003, and Herman founded the Rhinos in 2006.

Under the Western States Hockey League, the Rhinos won four Thorne Cup championships and made 13 playoff appearances. The team this year clinched its 14th consecutive trip to the playoffs and was a strong championship title contender before the coronavirus pandemic canceled the season.

Earlier this year, the team joined the North American 3 Hockey League, which means the Rhinos will have two teams starting in the 2021-22 season: One developmental team on the NA3HL, one of two Tier III junior leagues sanctioned by USA Hockey; and another in the North American Hockey League, which is sanctioned as a Tier II league – the highest level of junior hockey.

Under Herman's leadership, this desert city has rallied around his team of mostly out-of-towners, helping it win the 2020 Kraft Hockeyville contest and \$150,000 in upgrades for its rink at the El Paso County Coliseum Events Center. The win also means the team will host a National Hockey League exhibition game.

"When I first got here from Canada, El Paso reminded me of back home – the people are very caring and genuine. It wasn't a difficult transition at all," he told El Paso Inc. Magazine earlier this year.

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Who will be the El Pasoan of the Year?

Color of Hockey: El Paso set to host Hockeyville after year delay

Game between Stars, Coyotes expected to increase interest in sport in non-traditional market



By William Douglas @WDouglasNHL / NHL.com Staff Writer

September 26, 2021

William Douglas has been writing The Color of Hockey blog for the past nine years. Douglas joined NHL.com in March 2019 and writes about people of color in the sport. Today, as part of the NHL's celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, he profiles the El Paso County Events Center, winner of the Kraft Hockeyville USA 2020 title and the site of a preseason game between the Dallas Stars and Arizona Coyotes on Sunday.

The El Paso County Coliseum Events Center was home to rodeos, equestrian shows and cattle auctions. This week, the former cow palace-turned-skating rink in El Paso, Texas, is the site for Kraft Hockeyville USA 2020 and a preseason game between the Dallas Stars and Arizona Coyotes on Sunday (9 p.m. ET). Hundreds of communities entered but El Paso, a largely Hispanic city along the United States-Mexico border in west Texas, earned the title as 2020's most spirited hockey community in America after amassing the most votes online in the Kraft Hockeyville USA 2020 contest.

In addition to the preseason game, the Events Center won \$150,000 in rink upgrades and \$10,000 in equipment from the NHL Players' Association Goals & Dreams fund.

The preseason game was postponed in 2020 due to concerns surrounding the coronavirus.

Now the waiting is finished and El Paso, the Stars and Coyotes are ready to celebrate and showcase the Kraft Hockeyville designation as a testament to hockey's growth geographically and demographically.

"That's one of the biggest reasons when we transformed [the building] from an equestrian center ... we wanted to bring hockey here, to try to build youth hockey," said Cory Herman, a former minor-league forward who owns the El Paso Rhinos junior hockey teams and founded the El Paso Hockey Association.

"With this Hockeyville event coming, I really think that all our programs, from figure skating to learn to skate to learn to play hockey, are going to grow more because of it."





Stars and Coyotes officials said El Paso proves that hockey can succeed in so-called non-traditional markets and appeal to fans of color.

El Paso rests on the Rio Grande across from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. The city has 678,815 residents, according to 2020 U.S. Census figures, nearly 82 percent of whom are Hispanic.

"This says that Hispanics in Texas like hockey," Stars president and CEO Brad Alberts said of the Hockeyville title. "As more Hispanics get access to the game, both from kids growing up and playing it in our rinks and having access to starting the game, right on up to adults, and getting them out to games, I think that they are going to find that this is a sport they can feel comfortable watching and playing and enjoying."

Coyotes president and CEO Xavier Gutierrez said the game gives the NHL "a great opportunity to really say that it's a community, in terms of Latinos, that is very much top of mind, that we're looking to embrace, celebrate and connect with.

"It's clearly a fast-growing, ever more important community, both a demographic and economic force in America," Gutierrez said.

Gutierrez became the NHL's first Hispanic president and CEO in June 2020

The festivities begin Thursday, with the Stanley Cup making stops at the Events Center; Fort Bliss, the largest installation in the United States Army Forces Command; and at a community celebration in San Jacinto Plaza that former Coyotes players Shane Doan, Taylor Pyatt and David Scatchard are expected to attend.



Two Learn to Play sessions are scheduled at the Events Center on Saturday, with former Stars and Coyotes players on the ice as instructors, including Al Montoya, who was the NHL's first Cuban American player when he debuted with the Phoenix Coyotes during the 2008-09 season.

The goalie went 67-49-24 in 168 NHL games with the Coyotes, New York Islanders, Winnipeg Jets, Florida Panthers, Montreal Canadiens and Edmonton Oilers in a career that ended after the 2017-18 season. He's now the director of community outreach for the Stars.

"Hispanics want to be part of hockey, and what greater message could you send to the hockey community than winning Hockeyville?" Montoya said. "I think it's amazing. Even before accepting the job in Dallas, this was at the top of my list of something I wanted to be a part of."

Corey Heon, general manager of the Rhinos, said he still pinches himself about the Hockeyville designation and what the \$150,000 prize has meant to the Events Center.

"I never thought in a million years that we'd be in this situation," Heon said. "We've just always made the best of everything with what we had."



That's meant playing in a facility that was originally built with horses and cows in mind, not hockey players. The Events Center didn't have formal locker rooms when the Rhinos began playing there in 2006, forcing the team to initially use small circus tents pitched near the ice as changing facilities. Locker rooms were eventually built, including one made from a giant metal shipping container. Large holes in the Event Center's roof prevented it from having ice during summer months when outside temperatures can exceed 100 degrees. Antiquated lightbulbs illuminated the rink and made the ice sweat. Still, the Rhinos managed to produce powerhouse junior teams over the years, including back-to-back Western States Hockey League Thorne Cup champions in 2017-18 and 2018-19. The Kraft Hockeyville prize money went toward expanding the Event Center's entryways, replacing nearly 67 old lightbulbs with energy-efficient LED lighting, renovating two restrooms and repairing and insulating the roof, Herman said.



The Events Center had ice for the first time this summer, which meant hockey players and skaters didn't have to drive nearly four hours to Albuquerque, New Mexico, or seven hours to Amarillo, Texas, if they wanted ice time, Herman said.

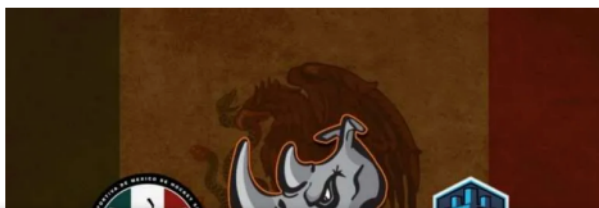
"We were also able to host all four of our Rhinos tryout camps here rather than going to Minnesota, Wisconsin, wherever," Herman said. "That was a huge deal for El Paso, too, because all these players were coming here to try out and stay in our hotels."

Stars and Coyotes officials hope the El Paso experience leads the NHL to cross the border to play a game in Mexico. Each organization and the Mexico Ice Hockey Federation have spoken with the League about the idea.

"We've had a couple of our clubs express interest in playing games in Mexico and we're certainly evaluating that and expect that we will pursue it at some point in time, whether it will be Mexico City or some other city in Mexico," NHL Deputy Commissioner Bill Daly said. "I think that's certainly on the horizon."

El Paso Rhinos announce expanded Mexico Hockey partnership

JUNE 11, 2021 / NATIONALTEAMSOFFICEHOCKEY



Source: [El Paso Herald-Post](#)

[Translate](#)

Officials with El Paso's championship winning hockey franchise - [the Rhinos](#) - announced this week that the club will expand their partnership with Mexico's national hockey organization as well as the Ice Hockey Workshop Group of Mexico.

"The Mexican and El Paso Hockey communities have similar roots. It's challenging to grow and develop in a non-traditional hockey market," shared El Paso Hockey Association and El Paso Owner Cory Herman. "So we think it's really important to come together and give every hockey player within our communities the opportunity to succeed."

Since 2019, the El Paso Hockey Association and the Rhinos have worked with the Mexican Ice Hockey Federation.

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After months of discussion and planning between Rhino General Manager Corey Heon and the Technical Director of the Mexican Ice Hockey Federation, Diego de la Garma, the U18 Mexican National team traveled to El Paso to play an exhibition game against the Rhinos in 2019.

The series was so successful and well received by both the El Paso and Mexican hockey communities that Heon and de la Garma decided it would be mutually beneficial to broaden the scope of the organizations' relationship.

Now, not only will the Rhinos work with the Mexican Hockey Federation, they will also collaborate with Ice Hockey Workshop (IHW), an ice hockey development program based in Mexico City.

"We are super excited to expand our working relationship with the de la Garmas, Ice Hockey Workshop and the Mexican Ice Hockey Federation. Our goal is to help further develop hockey in Latin America and help top players get to the next level. By working together, we create unique opportunities for our youth on both sides of the border. The future is bright," Heon said.

The Rhinos and Ice Hockey Workshop intend to host workshops, coaching clinics and camps for youth and junior players on both sides of the border. Rhino Country also plans to host the Mexican Ice Hockey Federation's Men's Mexican National Team, Women's Mexican National Team and youth national teams for exhibition games.

"It's a huge honor for us to be able to work with such a successful organization. It will really help our top players to take the next step and eventually develop Mexican hockey at the next level while promoting hockey within the Latin American community all over the United States," de la Garma explained.

To the excitement of both hockey communities, the bridge between Mexico and El Paso hockey is already being crossed. Last month, the Rhinos' NA3HL team announced they had tendered Said Ayala, a member of the U18 and U20 Mexican National teams as well as the Bufalos Metepec Club team.

Just two weeks ago, five Mexican Ice Hockey Federation players suited up for Rhino teams at the NAHL Mega Camp in Blaine, MN. Additionally, there is currently a former Lady Rhino in Mexico City vying for a spot on the Women's Mexican National Team.

El Paso juniors hockey team donates \$10,000 to help shooting victims



Photo: USA TODAY

Cam Smith, USA TODAY High School Sports

August 6, 2019 5:35 pm ET

The city of El Paso has been roiled in turmoil, recriminations and general shock since more than 20 people died in a mass shooting at a Walmart on Saturday. The incident, combined with an overnight outburst of gun violence in Dayton, Ohio has renewed debates about gun control and a variety of other potential contributing factors to gun violence.

Now, one of the sports teams that calls El Paso home is doing something about it, donating \$10,000 now and promising more later.

As reported by NHL.com, the El Paso Rhinos junior hockey club in the Western States Hockey League (with players as young as 18) announced that **it plans to donate the aforementioned \$10,000 sum to the El Paso Community Foundation** with the specific goal of aiding victims and their surviving families. The team also announced plans to auction off jerseys that it will wear during a pair of exhibition games against the U-20 Mexican national team in late September and donate the proceeds to the El Paso Community Foundation as well.

“It’s a pretty sad time in El Paso,” **Rhinos coach Cory Herman told NHL.com**. “Everybody is in shock right now. You just can’t believe it happened. It’s very, very sad. We wanted to do something to help.

“There were people from Mexico who died that day too. This is a loving city; well, it’s really the biggest small town you’ll ever visit. This is the type of place that if you’re broken down along side of the road, within a couple of minutes you have people stopping trying to help you. People are just in shock right now.”



Herman knows of what he speaks. He ended up in El Paso when he played there professionally at the end of his hockey career. He retired in 2000 but liked the city so much he decided to stay. Years later he helped found the El Paso Rhinos, and the rest, as they say, is history.

It will take much more than the relatively modest donation made by the Rhinos to stem the tide of demoralization and shock that has followed the mass shooting in the city. Still, the effort is a start, and it’s clear the Rhinos don’t plan to stop there.

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'Unbelievable experience' NHL teams' visit to El Paso providing big boost for Rhinos



Kraft Hockeyville

By [Brianna Chavez](#) [FOLLOW](#)

October 1, 2021 5:15 AM Published October 1, 2021 6:04 AM



EL PASO, Texas -- The countdown for the anticipated pre-season match up between the Arizona Coyotes and the Dallas Stars in El Paso is on.

It's a match, one-year in the making after the Covid-19 pandemic put the festivities on hold.

On Sunday, both teams will face off bringing [NHL to the Borderland](#) thanks to the Kraft Hockeyville contest.

"I think it's going to be an unbelievable experience for everybody that gets a attend practice or game and I'm just really really excited for the city," said Director of the El Paso Rhinos Cory Herman.

The Kraft Hockeyville festivities kicked off earlier this week. Fans were able to take pictures with the [historic Stanley Cup](#).

The online contest also awarded the El Paso Rhinos \$150,000 to renovate the El Paso County Event Center.

"We resealed the top of our roof and inside we insulated and sealed it all up," Herman said. "We built breezeways coming into the arena we wanted to kind of keep all the cold air in and the hot air out."

All the lighting in the arena was also replaced and the bathrooms completely renovated, just some of the improvements to help make what used to be a horse stable, an ice skating rink.

The renovations also give the Rhino's the opportunity to host open year-round youth hockey programs or figure skating programs.

It also gives them ability to host trails in the summer here in El Paso, instead of going to other cities.

Both teams will be arriving in El Paso Saturday, visiting several non-profits, the El Paso Children's Hospital, and will host a hockey clinic that is sold out.

Tickets are no longer available for Sunday's big game, but it will be live streamed through the NHL's website. You can watch it by [clicking here](#).

https://twitter.com/PR_NHL/status/1443262248940625920?

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thecitymagazineelp.com/el-pasos-men-in-sports/

Cory Herman – El Paso Rhinos Head Coach

Cory Herman has been a staple of hockey in El Paso since 1999 when he first arrived, while helping the Sun City embrace a sport he has immense passion for. Most recently, the El Paso Rhinos were by-and-large the most dominating club in the Western States Hockey League after posting a 49-1-1 record and claiming the WSHL Championship during a 3-2 victory over the Ogden

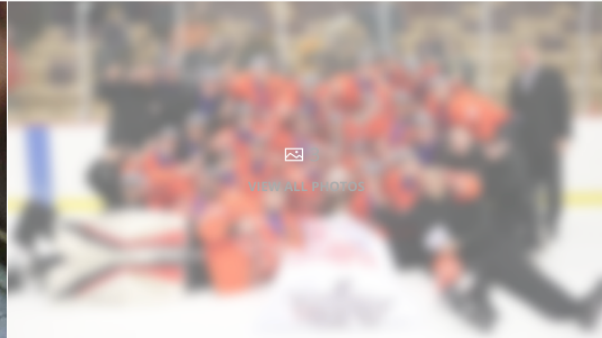
Mustangs on April 15, 2018. It was their third Thorn Cup for the Rhinos (2008, 2014). Herman played one season with the El Paso Buzzards before he founded the El Paso Rhinos junior hockey team in 2006. Herman's goal is to help youth hockey players achieve theirs by playing at higher levels of hockey, including the NCAA. Herman says the most important part of his job as head coach is practice. "Practice is where they learn everything," he says. But his team's success on the ice is not all that matters. The Rhinos are heavily involved with local charities and organizations, while also reaching out to schools all around El Paso.



El Paso Rhinos find new home with NAHL

by Patrick Chalvire

Tue, June 16th 2020, 10:19 AM MDT



El Paso Rhinos find new home with NAHL (KFOX 14/CBS 4)

Weeks after the El Paso Rhinos announced they would be competing in the Fall despite not being associated with a league, the North American Hockey League (NAHL) announced that its Board of Governors approved the membership application for the Rhinos.

The El Paso Rhinos will compete in the South Division beginning in the 2021-22 season and play out of the El Paso County Events Center.

The team will also join the North American 3 Hockey League (NA3HL) for the 2020-21 season. Subsequently, starting in 2021-22, the Rhinos will have teams in both the NA3HL and the North American Hockey League (NAHL).

“The Rhino franchise has modeled their objectives after the NAHL excellent level of play, commitment to players’ career advancement and personal development, and the league’s overall business professionalism. As an organization and ownership group, we believe that the step to the NAHL will facilitate the growth and development of the Rhinos’ program and athletes, and in turn, help the organization continue to expand and succeed in the years to come,” said Rhinos Owner and Head Coach Cory Herman.

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The NAHL has had a team in the Southern part of the United States since 1999 and the South Division first was formed in 2003. The division currently has eight teams competing in the NAHL: Amarillo Bulls (Amarillo, TX), Corpus Christi IceRays (Corpus Christi, TX), Kansas City Scouts (Shawnee, KS), Lone Star Brahmas (North Richland Hills, Texas), New Mexico Ice Wolves (Albuquerque, NM), Odessa Jackalopes (Odessa, TX), Shreveport Mudbugs (Shreveport, LA), and Wichita Falls Warriors (Wichita Falls, TX). El Paso will be the ninth team in the South Division of the NAHL starting in the 2021-22 season.

“We are excited to add a new team like El Paso to the NAHL footprint. We believe they have all the pieces in place for success, which includes great community support and involvement,” said NAHL Commissioner and President Mark Frankenfeld. “The growth of hockey in the South has played a large role in our league’s success and the addition of the

new
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ies to solidify the footprint and will create many nev
n, who will begin play in 2020-21, they have a great 101° 102° 101° ent.”

The NA3HL is also looking forward to adding its 32nd team to the league. “We are excited to continue our growth in the South Division with the addition of the El Paso Rhinos,” said NA3HL Commissioner Blake MacNicol. “The Rhinos have an established organization with a focus on player development and advancement, along with a rich tradition of community outreach and support. I think the passionate fans of the El Paso Rhinos will enjoy the brand of hockey the NA3HL will bring and also the new rivalries that will be established.”

The NA3HL is one of two USA Hockey-sanctioned Tier III Junior leagues and the NAHL is the only USA Hockey-sanctioned Tier II Junior league. The primary goals of both the NA3HL and the NAHL are to adequately train players and provide resources—namely coaching, exposure and developmental vehicles—that will help them secure NCAA hockey scholarships. Over the course of the last five seasons, over 1,500 NAHL players have made NCAA commitments and 30 have been drafted into the NHL.

Herman is eager to introduce such a high caliber of talent to El Paso. “The players in the NAHL are future NHL draft picks and Division I college hockey players. It’s very exciting for our program to have that level of hockey in El Paso.”

In 2020-21, the Rhinos will play in the NA3HL’s South Division of the where their opponent list will include teams from Georgia, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. Like the WSHL’s series and season format, three-game series will be played on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. The Rhinos also will play a 47-game regular-season, playoffs, and possibly in the FraserCup Championship Tournament, which crowns the NA3HL’s playoff champion.

MORE TO EXPLORE

Florida woman reportedly poured Mountain Dew on herself to remove DNA

To Whom it May Concern:

As I sit here thinking about the last 22 or so years... one thing definitely stands out. Yep, hockey. Hockey has been a major part of my family's life, Ty, our oldest began his passion for the game at age 3, that's right, age 3. Cory Herman laced up Ty's skates, turned over a 5 gallon bucket, put him on the ice... and the rest is history.

Ty, then briefly Kylie and then Trey all began the passion that is hockey, Rhino hockey to be more specific. Cory brought this Canadian ice game to our desert and we have been committed to the game, him, and the Rhinos ever since. Ty played from age 3, throughout primary school, then high school and eventually made the Rhino junior team led by Cory Herman himself. A kid, from the El Paso area, playing hockey with players from all over the world... pretty impressive, I'd say. Cory helped mold our boys into resilient, tough, respectful young men, with his demanding practice schedules and no-nonsense discipline on and off the ice. The expectations he set for his players has transcended into his players personal lives, making them overall better members of society. Ty was able to try his hand at college hockey after aging out of juniors, all because Cory gave him his first opportunity as a Rhino.

Not only has Cory had an impact on all of the players that have gone through the program but to the community of El Paso as well. He started this program from the ground up and it continues to grow and bring more and more people together every day. I can't think of anyone more deserving of the Sports Hall of Fame nomination. Cory brought this amazing world of hockey to our family and so many others in our community, and I for one am so very thankful to him.

- Kelly Erramouspe

I am writing to endorse the Nomination of Cory Herman to the El Paso Sports Hall of Fame.

Cory Herman, former head coach of the El Paso Rhinos hockey team, owns the El Paso Rhinos junior hockey teams and founded the El Paso Hockey Association.

Cory has turned the most unlikely sport to live in the Sun City into one of the most successful sports franchises in the region. Herman came to El Paso in 1999 as a player with the El Paso Buzzards ice hockey team. That team ceased operations in 2003, and in the same year, Herman started the El Paso Hockey Association by beginning with youth hockey programs. He later founded the El Paso Rhinos in 2006.

Under the Western States Hockey League, the Rhinos won four Thorne Cup championships and made 13 playoff appearances.

In 2020, the team joined the North American Hockey League and added a second team: One developmental team on the NA3HL, one of two Tier III junior leagues sanctioned by USA Hockey; and another in the North American Hockey League, which is sanctioned as a Tier II league – the highest level of junior hockey.

Under Herman's leadership, this desert city has rallied around hockey. Cory Herman has been a staple of hockey in El Paso since 1999 when he first arrived here from Canada, while helping the Sun City embrace a sport he has immense passion for. Herman played one season with the El Paso Buzzards before he founded the El Paso Hockey Association in 2001 and the El Paso Rhinos junior hockey team in 2006. Herman's goal is to help youth hockey players achieve theirs by playing at higher levels of hockey, including the NCAA.

Rhinos players are out in the community almost daily, mentoring youngsters through a local school program called Skate Mates. When they're not in classrooms or gymnasiums, Rhinos players are volunteering at the local Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA, coaching youth hockey and participating in learn-to-skate initiatives.

All Rhino players interact with the community and help grow hockey in El Paso. The junior team sells out about 95 percent of its home games, and the Rhinos

youth program has seen 2,900 percent growth since 2008. They've also added a Lady Rhinos program, a high school program and numerous learn-to-play events.

The community support has evolved into a booster club that feeds players after games and a web of billet families willing to support out-of-town players. The Rhinos are heavily involved with local charities and organizations, while also reaching out to schools all around El Paso.

In 2020, El Paso Rhinos fans helped the Rhinos win the national Kraft Hockeyville USA contest. Hundreds of communities entered, but El Paso earned the title as 2020's most spirited hockey community in America after amassing the most votes online in the Kraft Hockeyville USA 2020 contest. In addition to a preseason game, the Events Center won \$150,000 in rink upgrades and \$10,000 in equipment from the NHL Players' Association Goals & Dreams fund. The fan-driven win brought the Stars and Coyotes to El Paso to celebrate and showcase the Kraft Hockeyville designation as a testament to hockey's growth geographically and demographically in El Paso.

In 2021 the El Pasos Rhinos announced that the club will expand their partnership with Mexico's national hockey organization as well as the Ice Hockey Workshop Group of Mexico.

Cory Herman, the Rhinos' current CEO and former head coach who led the team to multiple championships, was a member of the ice maintenance crew at Boston's Fenway Park, for the NHL Winter Classic, as well as the outdoor NHL games in Nashville and North Carolina. Cory will continue to help the National Hockey League make ice for their hockey games along with his current role as CEO of the El Paso Rhinos hockey team.

Cory Herman deserves to be a member of the "El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame".

Thank you.

Lory Rogers
915-227-1314

Hi there,

I am writing to you all today because as Cory Herman's mother-in-law I would like to recommend him for the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame.

He is well deserving and so very humble. He has worked for years to bring this incredible sport to El Paso, first as a player for the Buzzards, and then starting his own organization to continue in the Sun City, which he dearly loves. This is hard work and he has brought his A game in creating a well renowned team and establishment.

He has had the biggest success with many Western State League Playoffs and Thorne Cup Champions. His organization has brought so many young players here through the years and all of these players live with billets families that take them in and treat them like their own. It is through so many people and families that makes this all a success. Cory never stops working, this is his whole life. The Arena is packed and so beautiful and always improving... It never stops year-round.

And it is not just hockey at the Arena, there is ice skating for all El Pasoans, figure skating and Hockey leagues of all ages year-round.

Cory has made El Paso his home and the Rhinos are the best of El Paso.

Thank you and I hope you will consider Cory Herman because he is amazing and kind and works so hard.

Sincerely,

Mindy Marcus
915-433-6338



To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing, with pleasure, to recommend Cory Herman's induction into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame. Cory Herman, the founder and owner of the El Paso Rhinos and the El Paso Hockey Association, is a former El Paso Buzzard hockey player and the former Head Coach of the Rhinos. He started the El Paso Hockey Association in the El Paso County Coliseum and eventually grew the program large enough to occupy the Coliseum's equestrian center—now the El Paso County Events Center. Since his playing career ended in 2001, Cory has worked tirelessly to ensure that hockey remains in El Paso.

Cory, along with his brothers and his father, turned a West Texas barn into an ice rink that serves individuals from all over the world. They laid the ice, built the locker rooms, and made hundreds of structural improvements with their own hands. Now, El Paso's rink is the only year-round ice rink between Albuquerque and Odessa. Currently, the rink welcomes 20,000 people a week through youth hockey, adult hockey, high school hockey, figure skating, public skating, free school field trips, and Rhino games. There are over 500 players in five youth hockey programs, 200 figure skaters in two figure skating programs, and over 200 adult players. The rink is home to two junior hockey teams in the North American Hockey League and North American 3 Hockey League, both USA Hockey sanctioned leagues. These teams include players from countries all over the world including Canada, the Czech Republic, Finland, and Mexico.

Cory's coaching career alone makes him worthy of praise and accolades. In 15 seasons, he amassed 667 wins, 10 division titles, four league championships, and one national championship. More impressively, in the organization's early days, Cory coached while simultaneously handling finances, marketing, sponsorship, ticket sales, and youth hockey almost single handedly. Although his role within the organization has changed over the years, Cory's work ethic has not. He can still be found driving the Zamboni, seeking new sponsors, ideating game promotions, and making rink repairs.

Cory's passion, experience, and hockey knowledge was even recognized by the NHL staff who helped the Rhinos host the Hockeyville USA game between the Dallas Stars and Arizona Coyotes in 2021. The NHL Facilities team invited Cory to become part of the Ice Crew that prepares and maintains the ice at NHL outdoor events. As he travels around North America preparing venues for some of the league's biggest games, Cory is constantly learning and seeking ways to improve the Rhinos' facility, game production, and business.

Because of Herman's vision and work-ethic, people around the world now identify El Paso as a hockey town. Players from around the globe move to the Sun City to chase their hockey dreams and tens of thousands of more individuals can point to El Paso on a map or say they've traveled here because of Rhino Hockey. Many of these individuals may have never experienced El Paso if it weren't for Cory Herman.



Having known Cory since I was six years old, I can attest that there is no individual who is kinder and harder working than Cory. His compassion, ambition, humility, and work ethic inspire and motivate me daily. I would not be the person I am today without his unwavering guidance and support. Cory, somehow, always finds time to remain a helpful mentor as well as a loving father, husband, son, and brother.

Cory Herman, a Saskatchewan native who now calls El Paso home, has changed the Borderland's identity and sports history forever. For that, he is incredibly deserving of induction into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame.

Thank you,

Tyler Deloach

Vice President

El Paso Rhinos

915-525-4023

Tdeloach@elpasorhinos.com

Corey Heon
President / El Paso Rhinos
4100 E. Paisano Dr.
El Paso, TX, 79902
cheon@elpasorhinos.com
915-491-4625
September 27, 2023

Dear Selection Committee,

I am writing to enthusiastically endorse Cory Herman for induction into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame. It is with great pleasure that I offer my highest recommendation for Cory Herman as a nominee for this prestigious honor.

I have had the distinct privilege of knowing Cory for the past 25 years, during which time I have witnessed his extraordinary contributions to the El Paso Hockey Association, the El Paso Rhinos Organization and the city of El Paso. His exceptional skills, unwavering dedication, and exemplary sportsmanship make him an ideal candidate for this recognition.

Cory was a standout athlete during his hockey career at both the Collegiate and Pro levels of hockey, demonstrating remarkable talent and determination. He consistently displayed remarkable leadership both on and off the field, serving as a role model for his teammates and peers. His commitment to excellence and tireless work ethic were instrumental in elevating the El Paso Hockey Association and El Paso Rhinos Organization to new levels.

Cory's impact extended beyond the ice and classroom. He was actively involved in community service, demonstrating a strong sense of social responsibility and a genuine desire to give back to his community. His contributions to local charitable organizations and volunteering efforts exemplify his character and values.

In summary, Cory Herman possesses all the qualities one would expect in an exceptional athlete and role model. His outstanding athletic achievements, commitment to academic excellence, and contributions to the community

make him a highly deserving candidate for induction into the EP Athletic Hall of Fame.

I wholeheartedly recommend Cory Herman for this prestigious honor and urge the Selection Committee to consider his nomination with the highest regard. His induction would be a fitting tribute to a truly exceptional individual who has made an indelible mark on the El Paso Hockey Association, the El Paso Rhinos Organization and the community.

Please feel free to reach out to me at cheon@elpasorhinos.com or 915-491-4625, if you require any additional information or have any questions regarding Cory's qualifications.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Corey Heon
President / El Paso Rhinos

Cory Herman has several titles. Currently he is the owner of the El Paso Rhinos. He's an entrepreneur, chicken coop handler, ex pro hockey player, coach, but the title that will always mean the most to me is dad. Cory Herman in technical terms is my ex step father. He was married to my mother for a majority of my childhood, but the two divorced by the time I was in college. The details of this matter because to better understand our relationship, I would like to go into the depths of who Cory Herman truly is. He is the man that walked me down the aisle, and continued to raise me even when there was no obligation to do so. He provided me everything I wanted in this life, even though it might be more like something out of Modern Family. As someone who has watched him from the beginning of his coaching career to the end, I could discuss every win and championship; how he annihilated every opposing team, but I prefer to speak on the impact he made on our community, the men who played for him, and the man who helped shape me into who I am today.

One of my earlier memories was eating breakfast with Cory and an older teammate Heo. There were a couple of kids who ran up to our table and asked for their autographs. At the time Cory was no longer playing hockey due to the pro team folding, but as a child you could only imagine how enamored I was to see someone I knew who was "famous." With the team folding and hockey slowly dissipating from our community, Cory transitioned from Player to Coach. This was the start of rebuilding hockey in El Paso Texas.

Cory took over a youth hockey program with about less than 40 kids. As the program grew so did the need for our own facility. I watched Cory and his brother David turn an equestrian barn into a functioning rink. In 2001 Cory purchased and coached The El Paso Rhinos. This is when the dream of creating a hockey community came to life.

The love for hockey grew and so did a hockey family of our own. The most loyal of fans became our family, and supported this dream to continue the growth of hockey. Win after win, championship after championship, Cory created a small hockey empire in the sun city. In 2020 the El Paso Rhinos won Hockeyville, meaning two NHL teams would play in the Rhino Barn. The barn that was once just a pile of dirt, was now hosting an NHL game. The same ice I learned how to skate on,

was now being used by some of the best hockey players in the world. The Herman family for the first time in El Paso history had a pro team play in the city of El Paso.

As an adult you tend to see your parents as more human than hero, but even in adulthood I still am impressed with all my father has accomplished. At 19 I broke the cardinal sin of dating a hockey player Michael Rivera, also ex captain of the El Paso Rhinos, who is now my husband. Through this relationship, Michael showed me a different perspective of the love he had for the Rhinos, along with meeting and spending time with the players that once played for my step father. Older rhino players would feel the need to talk about how Cory Herman impacted their life. They would tell me stories about their time in El Paso. A common denominator from most of the players was that Cory Herman was tough, but their time in El Paso was the greatest time of their life. Cory kept his players accountable and pushed them to be the very best. Several of these players are now coaches across the country. I do not think we will ever understand how far the impact Cory Herman has made, but I do know it is far beyond city limits. He embodies what every true leader does; he makes a difference and has shaped not only mine but thousands of lives across the country. Hockey does not just exist in El Paso, it is thriving thanks to Cory Herman.

--

Alexis Ramirez

Special Education Teacher

Charles Haskell Elementary

(405) 726-4247



October 6, 2023

To whom it may concern:

My name is Sandra Pelko, I am the Head coach and Director of El Paso Blades Skating Academy. I am pleased to write a letter on behalf of Mr. Cory Herman, who I have known for about 20 years. He is a member of the community who I have come to respect over the years because of what he has contributed to the city of El Paso, TX.

I came to know Mr. Cory Herman, when he started to propose an ice rink be built in El Paso. Once he did the impossible and was able to start hockey and skating programs in El Paso I helped and volunteered for his sessions as an ice monitor and later under his guidance I took over the figure skating program and I am the head coach for his Learn to skate program. I have been a witness of all the kids that have benefited from hockey and figure skating.

His dedication brought to El Paso the sport of hockey, in a town that had not seen a hockey game or an ice rink in a long time. He built a very successful hockey program and team and brought the love of hockey to a place where ice sports were not popular. He has two successful figure skating programs under the same building which is also a hard task. He continues to grow the love of hockey and other ice sports with only 1 sheet of ice and continues to have successful hockey teams and programs after all these years. I look forward to seeing the growth of hockey and other ice sports under his leadership and continue to value him as a leader and mentor.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra J. Pelko".

Sandra J. Pelko
El Paso Blades Skating Academy
Head Coach/ISI District 11 Director
915-525-4504
sndrpelko32@gmail.com

Ally Ye

allyye14@gmail.com

915-831-0599

El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame

Dear El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame Committee,

I am writing this letter of recommendation to wholeheartedly endorse Corey Herman for his outstanding contributions to my figure skating journey and his tireless efforts to introduce ice skating to the El Paso community.

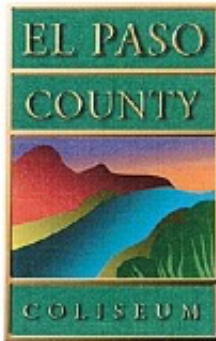
I have had the privilege of knowing Corey for several years, and during that time, his dedication to run a successful ice rink and guidance have played a pivotal role in shaping my figure skating career. Corey's unwavering support to my progress as a skater and now as a coach has been nothing short of exceptional. His mentorship, and encouragement have not only helped me hone my skills but have also instilled in me a deep passion for the sport.

Corey's influence extends beyond the rink. He has been instrumental in bringing ice skating, specifically ice hockey to El Paso, a region not traditionally associated with winter sports. His vision and determination have allowed countless individuals, like me, to discover the joy and beauty of figure skating or hockey in an unlikely setting. Corey's commitment to expanding access to this sport has opened doors for aspiring skaters and provided a platform for local talent to shine.

Through Corey's initiatives and dedication to promoting ice skating in El Paso, I have been able to pursue my passion for figure skating and share that passion with others. His leadership has been an inspiration to many, and his tireless efforts have undoubtedly enriched the lives of those who have had the privilege of skating under his guidance. Corey Herman is a dedicated, talented, and caring individual who has made an indelible impact on my life and the El Paso community as a whole. I wholeheartedly recommend him for any endeavor or opportunity, knowing that his commitment and passion will continue to inspire and uplift those around him.

Sincerely,

Ally Ye



January 4, 2024
Selection committee
El Paso athletic hall of fame
El Paso, Texas

Dear selection committee,

It is with greatest pleasure that I am writing this letter of recommendation in support of Cory Herman's nomination for the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame in the category of coach/administrator.

I've had the privilege of working with Cory for over 6 years and during this time he has become a great friend. Cory is an invaluable asset to the Hockey Community as his role of founder of the El Paso Hockey Association. His dedication and flexibility are proven by the many hours that he devoted himself to ensure the kids had a place where they could find their passion in ice hockey.

Cory has been synonymous with ice hockey for over two decades. He has been associated with supporting ice hockey in many ways. Since he was a player with the Buzzards, then as a visionary, by turning an equestrian center into a hockey rink; he created the El Paso Rhinos, coaching the team to several championships and becoming the most successful hockey program in the history of El Paso.

Cory is the only reason why the National Hockey League, (NHL) played an exhibition game in El Paso, the only time in the history of this city that this happened.

His legacy goes beyond ice hockey, because of his dream, several boys and girls have learned how to skate on ice and practice figure skating.

Cory is an amazing example of dedication and determination. He is a generous and caring person that truly care to make the sport grow in the Bordertown. I share this to underscore the deep respect that we have for our friends inducted in the El Paso Hall of Fame, and I firmly believe that Cory epitomizes the personal qualities and professional contributions that are worthy of recognition by being inducted in this prestigious group of people. Please consider Cory as the next inductee into the Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

Omar ropele
President
El Paso sports commission

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EL PASO, TX 79905-4324
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