



## **Bradford West Gwillimbury Minor Hockey Association**

123 Main Street, P.O. Box 383, Bradford, ON L3Z 2A9

### **BWGMHA Family Update - Creation of New AA Centre**

We believe this is an exciting time for the hockey families of both Innisfil Minor Hockey and Bradford Minor Hockey and are looking forward to working together to create the new South Simcoe Minor Hockey Association. The objective of the proposed merger is to create a dynamic new hockey association that enriches and strengthens the development of our athletes while offering the opportunity for players to compete at the appropriate skill level. Our associations have a shared goal to work together to ensure the creation of a strong, competitive organization to serve the needs of our members.

The members of both the Innisfil and Bradford Boards involved in the merger discussions are highly cognizant that we represent the best interests and wishes of our membership. It is our mandate throughout this process to be open and transparent as to the process and progress of these discussions.

#### **Structure of the New Association**

- Proposed Name: South Simcoe Minor Hockey Association
- The new association, if approved, would be operational for the 2023-24 Hockey season.
- The new association would merge the Representative programs for both organizations while allowing House and Local League programs to remain unchanged within their current organizations and keep their current format.
- The newly formed South Simcoe Minor Hockey Association would be classified as an OMHA AA Centre and would govern all Representative teams from AA through MD.

#### **Benefits of the Merger**

- Opportunity for more athletes to compete at an appropriate level commensurate of skill level.
- Athletes who currently have to leave Bradford or Innisfil to play AA hockey in other centres will have a local option to play.
- Both organizations will be able to keep their current house league, local league and rostered select programs preserving their local brand and allowing them to remain unique.
- Greater opportunities for improvement and expanding capabilities of players at the local level.
- Increased ability for organization to host specialised development clinics (e.g. goalie clinics, power skating, skills and drills)
- Larger pool of parent volunteers for tournament hosting, coaching clinics, & certification clinics.
- Local businesses and organizations will still be able to support home-town hockey by sponsoring local teams and athletes



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### **Contacts for Communications**

Bradford Minor Hockey:

Janice Tee, Director of Marketing E-mail: [marketing@bradfordbulldogs.com](mailto:marketing@bradfordbulldogs.com)

Innisfil Minor Hockey:

Jason Black, Director of Representative Hockey Email: [lmharephockey@gmail.com](mailto:lmharephockey@gmail.com)

### **Board Representatives Included in the discussion:**

Bradford Minor Hockey:

- Paul Dossey, Board President;
- Sarah Perry, Director of Tournaments;
- John Reilly, Vice President Hockey Operations;
- Janice Tee, Director of Marketing;
- Phil Vito, Vice President Hockey Programming.
- Alternate: Nicole Marinucci, Joe Bartley

Innisfil Minor Hockey:

- Tom Brennan, President;
- Jason Black, Director of Representative Hockey;
- Kevin Culhane, Director of Coaching;
- Karrie Copelli, Vice President;
- Wayne Robertson, Director of Communications.

## **Q&A**

### **TOPIC: Coaching and Player Selection**

**Question:** Who will choose the coaches for the new association rep teams?

**Answer:** Coaches will be chosen by a Selection Committee co-chaired by the Technical Director's from both associations and will include other board members who participate as part of the committee. It can also include external third-party independent assessors. The committee will have predefined criteria for selection. The committee will aim for equal representation of coaches from both organizations.

**Question:** What will the requirements for coach selection look like for AA teams?

**Answer:** Requirements for coach selection will be set by the Selection Committee and will follow, at a minimum, the qualifications required by Hockey Canada for each level of play.

**Question:** Will coaches be parents or non-parents?

**Answer:** Coaches will be selected by a Selection committee. The committee will be selecting the most qualified coach for the position who may be either a parent or non-parent.

**Question:** How will teams be picked for the new association? How will favouritism be controlled if the coach is from either Bradford or Innisfil on a given team?



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**Answer:** Teams will be chosen by the coach and a selection team with an aim to put on the ice the best possible team. There will be a board appointed independent assessor to evaluate and confirm all team selections.

**Question:** Will there be a 50 /50 split of athletes for each team from the two towns?

**Answer:** No, there will not be a mandatory 50/50 split of athletes from each association.

**Question:** My athlete has been playing in another centre as an NRP for the last few years - can he/she be grandfathered to play with the team they are currently playing for moving forward?

**Answer:** No, at the end of each year, all athletes are returned to their home centre. This means your athlete would need to try out for the newly formed South Simcoe Minor Hockey Association if approved for the 2023-24 hockey season.

**Question:** Seems to me that a change like this should start with the youngest rep age and be gradually implemented each year with that group. Forcing kids established on other teams for years now to come back is not in the interest of kids.

**Answer:** If the new AA centre is approved all age groups will be moved to AA as the new centre will be an AA centre and will follow the same rules and regulations as all other AA centre's in the OMHA.

**Question:** Will NRP players be allowed?

**Answer:** Yes, we will have the ability to accept NRP players in the newly created AA Centre as per OMHA regulations.

**Question:** Will a player have to be released from the AA team to play on the A team?

**Answer:** When a player is released from the AA team, they will automatically be eligible to try-out for the A team. Players released from the A team will be eligible to try out for the BB/MD team where there are enough players to create a competitive team.

### **General Questions**

**Question:** Where will the Rep teams practice and have games?

**Answer:** Throughout a season teams will have to rotate which arena they practice and have games in. Depending on the number of teams, each would take turns playing in Bradford and Innisfil for a period of time during the season depending on ice availability.

**Question:** Will the new organization have a new Board of Directors?



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**Answer:** Yes, the amalgamated centre will have an Interim Board of Directors for the first 2 years, composed of 6 Directors from each centre, including the Presidents.

There will also be three additional non-voting roles:

1. Treasurer
2. Board Secretary
3. Head Trainer and Risk Management Director

For a total of 15 roles to start. 10 of these roles will be voting roles. The Presidents will only vote in the event of a tie. After the interim period, a permanent board structure will be put in place.

**Question:** Who will be in our competitive loop?

**Answer:** The competitive loop will consist of the teams listed in the relevant loop according to the boundaries for York Simcoe Minor Hockey League. Teams will vary depending on the level i.e., AA, A, BB/MD, etc. All teams can be found on the YSMHL website [YORK SIMCOE MINOR HOCKEY LEAGUE \(ysmhl.net\)](http://YORKSIMCOE MINOR HOCKEY LEAGUE (ysmhl.net))

**Question:** How can we trust that a blind vote is going to be accurate? Is an independent body going to certify the vote?

**Answer:** For both organizations, the votes will be counted by three non-board members who do not have registered athletes within the association and will be communicated once the final votes are tallied. If possible, a representative from the OMHA will be in attendance to ensure accuracy.

**Question:** Will the merger mean more rep teams (i.e., A, AA, and AE)? Will house league have to travel between Bradford and Innisfil for games/practices? If we merge, could we have a local league for the younger ages?

**Answer:** Yes, a merger may mean more rep teams for certain ages. The new representative structure for teams available, if we have the number of players, is: AA, A, BB/MD.

House league and local league teams will play in their current structure under their own banners (Bulldogs and Winterhawks) as they do today. These will not be merged as part of the new centre.

**Question:** What would the home centre be or would it be a rotation of centres

**Answer:** It would be a rotation of centres for each team.

**Question:** If we (Bradford) decide not to merge with Innisfil as a "AA" centre will Bradford then resort back to an "A" centre or will Bradford proceed as an independent "AA" centre on its own?

**Answer:** Yes, if the merger does not go forward each centre would remain as an A centre.



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Bradford put forward an application to become an AA centre in the Spring 2022. The application was denied by the OMHA as we do not have the registration, or the win record required to be considered. For a team to be considered AA, a centre requires at a minimum 750 registered athletes. Bradford currently sits at approximately 550. The newly formed association would be approximately 1,000 athletes.

**Question:** How will the new name be chosen, and will it be voted on?

**Answer:** The association is planning to run a fun contest to name the team with input from the community.

**Question:** Will the practice locations be split evenly between Bradford & Innisfil.

**Answer:** Teams will aim to evenly distribute games and practices between Innisfil and Bradford, noting that it may not be possible for a 50/50 split in all cases for all teams depending on ice allocation.

**Question:** Will there be a completely new hockey association formed by merging, or will the Bradford/Innisfil association remain independent?

**Answer:** Yes, there will be a new hockey association formed for Representative hockey. Bradford and Innisfil will independently run their House and Local League programs as they are today with the same branding.

**Question:** If a player is currently playing at another centre such as NRP AA or AAA are they eligible to vote for a merge?

**Answer:** The families of all athletes whose home centre is Bradford or Innisfil will be eligible to vote.

**Question:** Will there be any financial ties between the new centre and the two existing ones?

**Answer:** No, the new representative centre will be a new entity.

**Question:** Why are we not pushing for OMHA to allow Innisfil and Bradford players to join either centre for this upcoming season? Maybe aa in Bradford and a in Innisfil.

**Answer:** The decision to move AA by either centre can only be made after a membership vote requiring a majority vote to pass. We do not have time to complete this before the start of the 2022-23 season.

**Question:** With all the issues surrounding hockey now, I am wondering if there would be plans to put together an "ethics committee" of sorts, to oversee activities within the board? This would allow for more transparency which could give families better peace of mind, whether it be financial, discriminatory, or any other questionable behaviours occurring within the centre. The families need to be heard and reassured!



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**Answer:** The board would have a Risk Management role that is accountable to investigate any complaints or issues within the association. All activities will be fully transparent to all members.

**Question:** How would it work when our membership is double the size of Innisfil. Bradford is still growing and developing which means our membership can still grow, Innisfil is stagnant in its growth now.

**Answer:** The membership within Bradford is not double that of Innisfil. The Bradford athlete membership is about 550 while Innisfil is about 450.

**Question:** Who will be the home AAA centre?

**Answer:** The AAA centre for each hometown will remain unchanged. The home centre for Innisfil residents will be Barrie AAA, the home centre for Bradford residents will be York Simcoe AAA.

**Question:** Tournaments are a significant source of financial benefit to Bradford. How will tournament funds be allocated in the future? If tournament funds are NOT allocated to the new association, what financial impact should families expect for rep hockey ?

**Answer:** Each centre will be moving 2 Representative Tournaments from the current associations over to the new Association for a total of 4 Representative Tournaments.

**Question:** In age groups with very high participation levels, would we consider fielding more than one A team (in addition to AA team)?

**Answer:** The new Centre would field one team each of AA, A, BB/MD. If we have the additional membership and talent to consider other teams at each level we can apply to the OMHA to have these teams considered for entry.

**Question:** When will the association vote happen?

**Answer:** The vote is scheduled for October 12, 2022. More details will be posted on the vote in the coming weeks.