



To: Members - Waterford & District Minor Hockey Association

From: Mr. Dwayne Schira, President – Waterford & District Minor Hockey Association
Mr. Pat Meahan, President – Port Dover Minor Hockey Association
Mr. Martin Jefferson, President – Simcoe & District Minor Hockey Association

Dear Waterford Members,

Waterford & District Minor Hockey Association, Port Dover Minor Hockey Association, and Simcoe & District Minor Hockey Association signed a “Partnership Agreement” on November 23, 2018 to form the Norfolk County Minor Hockey Association. On Monday, February 25, 2019 you will vote to ratify this agreement.

Our three minor hockey associations have the shared priority of offering our members a hockey program that maximizes development and enjoyment of the game. If we are successful in accomplishing this, we will see our players play hockey both longer and locally.

Currently, each of our associations has struggled to offer comprehensive hockey programming to our members across all hockey programs. In an attempt to address this concern, we feel it is time to consolidate the representative division in an effort to provide a spectrum of play that matches our players skills/abilities and desires. It is equally important that this consolidation not disrupt the underlying local league structure that is key to supporting this consolidation.

By entering the “Partnership Agreement” our Boards approved a cooperative model which we are confident will improve the hockey opportunities available to all players while maintaining the “hometown hockey” experience our members value and expect.

Please be assured that the Waterford & District Minor Hockey Association will continue to operate your local league program and represent the interests of all your members. It is our strong belief that by entering the Partnership Agreement your Association, as well as Port Dover and Simcoe’s, will be delivering a superior hockey program to our members.



Below, please find a high-level summary of how the Partnership Agreement will impact both local league and rep league operations. Overall, the intention is to work together to a) offer an improved suite of hockey opportunities that are sustainable and rewarding, and b) maintain each and every association's "hometown hockey" experience.

Local League Teams

- Local league teams will be operated by the local association (i.e. Waterford & District Minor Hockey Association)
- Waterford Minor Hockey will receive 100% of the player registration fees for local league players and will maintain its separate finances
- Waterford local league teams will continue to play as "Waterford Wildcats"
- Waterford arena will be the home ice for the Waterford local league teams. All Waterford local league home games and practices will be scheduled at the Waterford Facility with the understanding that there could be isolated occasions where games/practices are scheduled at another ice centre. This flexibility is necessary to accommodate demands for ice, including local teams that may seek additional practice/development time. On behalf of all associations, it is our intent to have our local teams operating (as they are today) within their own local arena.
- The Waterford, Simcoe and Port Dover local league teams will remain part of the OMHA Intertown Local League Association and continue to play against the teams within that system – just as you do today.
- The ice contract with Norfolk County will be a single contract under Norfolk Hockey for Hockey Canada insurance purposes.
- The ice schedulers from each association will compile their ice time request and submit it together. Otherwise, all local league ice scheduling will be completed by, and at the discretion of, each local association ice scheduler, just as it is done now.
- No local league players will be asked to play with a different association. Waterford members will play on Waterford teams.
- Registration fees are expected to be unaffected by the Partnership Agreement.
- Coaching and player development opportunities will continue to be organized and offered by the local associations. Cooperation with the other centres will be at the discretion of each local association.

Overall, we expect and will put great effort towards ensuring that local league players do not experience any negative consequences of the Partnership Agreement. In fact, through having teams of more consistent ability and the opportunity for associations to better cooperate on coach and player development initiatives, we expect the local league opportunities to only improve.



Representative Hockey

- Rep team programming will be run by the Norfolk County Minor Hockey Association (“Norfolk Hockey”)
- Norfolk Hockey’s Board will be comprised of 12 Directors, with 4 Directors from each local association
- It is anticipated that Norfolk Hockey will be an “A” centre and will offer minor and major teams within each hockey division (i.e. atom, peewee, etc.). This will be confirmed by the OMHA following formation.
- Additional Entry (AE) teams will be offered where supported by player numbers and ability, as determined by Norfolk Hockey.
- Rep teams will play out of all Waterford, Port Dover and Simcoe arenas
- Rep teams will be known as “Norfolk”, with a team name and colours to be selected later
- Rep player voting rights will be with their local association, so Waterford rep players will continue to be members of Waterford Minor Hockey
- The league (“loop”) that the rep teams will play in has not been determined, and is subject to discussion with the OMHA to determine which loop will be most appropriate and minimize travel time
- Coach and player selection committees will be formed with representation from all centres, as well as third-party participants, to ensure fair and unbiased selections.
- Brantford will continue to be our AAA affiliate

By combining our rep hockey program in this way, we are confident that not only will we be offering a more competitive level of hockey than is currently available in Norfolk, but more importantly the player ability on each team (rep, AE, and house) will be more consistent. If we are ultimately classified as an “A” centre by the OMHA, this aspect will be further enhanced where we will provide major and minor teams in all divisions. Major/Minor could be extended into AE teams however this will depend on the level of enrollment. This consistent player ability will enhance development and enjoyment at all levels.



Norfolk County Minor Hockey Association – Next Steps

The Partnership Agreement lays out the organizational framework of the Norfolk County Minor Hockey Association as well as the fundamental operational understandings reached between the existing associations. That said, following ratification the Norfolk Hockey Board, represented equally by all three associations, will draft and implement agreed coach selection and tryout procedures. Further, Norfolk Hockey will draft and approve its initial bylaws, manual of operations and similar internal documentation. In doing so the local association representatives will have the opportunity to address and remedy any concerns which have been raised during the ratification process of their local association.

While there is always a degree of uncertainty with change, the efforts of all three associations in developing the Partnership Agreement have been made to enhance the hockey programming and experience for our members. Nonetheless, if any association's members are not satisfied with the results they can exit the partnership and return to the way things are now anytime within the first two years. In addition, the OMHA requires the members of each local association to vote again at the completion of the second full season to determine whether they want to remain in the partnership.

We can advise that Simcoe and Port Dover's members have voted to ratify the Partnership Agreement, with the ratifying votes passing with 75% and 80% approval, respectively. We truly believe that the Partnership Agreement will result in a superior hockey program for all members. We heard your concerns clearly at the meeting of February 19, 2019 and felt it important that we respond to those concerns in writing so that you can make a proper and informed vote on Monday, February 25, 2019.



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dwayne Schira'.

Mr. Dwayne Schira

President, Waterford & District Minor Hockey Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pat Meahan'.

Mr. Pat Meahan

President, Port Dover Minor Hockey Association

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Martin Jefferson'.

Mr. Martin Jefferson

President, Simcoe & District Minor Hockey Association

“Your support can set forth a collaborative opportunity to improve hockey in each of our centres and for every child that chooses to step on the ice, to learn and play hockey. It needs to be positive for every child at every level – and that is the goal”