

King Township Minor Hockey

Questions and Answers

Q. If the Partnership is approved, where will my Local League child be playing?

A. For the vast majority of players at the Local League Level (approximately 70%), very little will change in terms of location or the overall hockey experience. One of the primary goals of this Partnership is to maintain the same high quality Local League experience for our community based recreational teams. This means that the Local League Teams should continue to play out of their community arenas as part of their traditional Local League Schomberg Red Wing and NobleKing Knights teams – as close to home as possible, and with minimal travel inconvenience.

Q. If the Partnership is approved, where will my Rep child be playing?

A. In terms of the Rep Teams, the new King Township Minor Hockey Association will be working towards a fair allocation of Rep Teams amongst the available arenas in King Township, so that all communities in King share in being able to host Rep Team games and practices. The specific assignment of ice time for Rep Teams will depend upon ice scheduling availability, the size of the ice pad, and the age/division of the particular team. This could involve Rep teams being based out of a specific arena for the season, or a rotation of ice times among various Township facilities throughout the season.

Q. Will the new King Township Rep Teams have a new logo and colours?

A. Yes.

Q. How will the new Rep Team logo and colours be selected?

A. Both Local Associations believe that the King Rep Program should have a new logo, team name and colours that are distinct from the traditional team identities and colours used by the Local League Teams. The new Rep Program will invite Members to submit their ideas to the new Association for consideration, before making a decision.

Q. How will the Partnership affect player registration costs?

A. We currently anticipate that changes to player registration costs will be minimal in nature. As it stands now, the annual registration costs between the two Local Associations are very comparable to each other. The two Associations have agreed to work closely with one another in order to standardize ice time and program requirements for the Local League teams in order to help ensure that registration costs remain consistent between the Associations, and that players from all areas in the Township have comparable ice time and opportunities.

Q. How will the Partnership affect ice time?

A. The Partnership should not have a significant impact upon overall ice time from a player perspective. Current Local League registration costs generally allow for approximately one game and one practice per week, depending on the age level. However, from a larger business perspective, the Partnership creates advantages for both Associations as ice time purchases from King Township will now be centralized and administered at the Partnership level. This will essentially make King Township Minor Hockey the single largest purchaser of ice time in the entire municipality, providing the combined minor hockey organization with greater purchasing power and preferential rights over certain ice time slot over other user groups.

Q. With a larger pool of kids potentially interested in Rep hockey, how will the Partnership impact the ability of certain players to make a team?

A. Ultimately, the goal of any Rep Program is to ice the most competitive teams possible at each age Division. Over the past several years, both Schomberg and NobleKing have struggled to ice competitive Rep teams in every age division. Rep teams in both Associations have often been smaller in number than would normally be typical. Underage players have often been brought up in order to round out teams, and some players have been moved up to Rep teams in situations where that might have not been in that player's best interests from a skill development and ice time perspective. In addition, both Associations have been forced to collapse Rep teams in various age divisions where insufficient numbers have not made a viable team possible. Overall, we believe that this Partnership will help to create more opportunities for players, and not less – and those opportunities will be of a better quality. The available Rep teams will be more stable in terms of numbers, and more competitive on the ice, which will provide for a better quality hockey experience for all players. We will be able to have robust Rep Teams at both a minor and major level in all age divisions – with a healthy roster of kids, instead of teams that have been cut too small due to low numbers, or which have to rely on underage AP players to help teams get by. Will some players who previously made a Rep team perhaps be playing Local League under this model? Perhaps. But the main focus is to provide a fair

opportunity for all players to succeed, have fun and develop at a level appropriate to their skill.

Q. If players are not successful at making the “A” Level Rep Teams, will other development opportunities be available?

A. We don't want to rule out any development options for players – but at the same time, we cannot make any guarantees. As with every minor hockey decision, everything will depend upon the number of players in a particular age division, and the level of interest in more competitive hockey opportunities. In situations where there are birth years with significant player numbers and where there is a significant interest in more competitive hockey opportunities, the new King Association will be able to consider a potential “AE” level Rep Team, or even the possibility of Rostered Select opportunities for Local League Teams, to help provide additional development options to players who were not successful in making the Minor/Major “A” Teams. However, the primary focus of the new Rep Program should be on icing viable and competitive A Level teams first and foremost.

Q. Will Local League players from both NobleKing and Schomberg be eligible to be an Affiliated Player “AP” to a King Township Rep Team?

A. Yes – that is one of the advantages of this Partnership Model. Players from both Local League organizations will be eligible for AP opportunities.

Q. Will Teams have to play in a different loop?

A. No. The Local League teams will continue in their normal 10 Centre Local League Loop and the Rep Teams will continue to play in the regular York-Simcoe Rep Loop.

For certain Schomberg Rep Teams, which at times have been iced at an AE Level, the regular York-Simcoe “A” Loop will help keep Rep Teams closer to home, as previously, some of the AE Rep Loops have included various Lakeshore Centres such as Ajax, Pickering, Whitby and Peterborough – which created more challenging travel obligations for families.

Q. Will there have to be a fixed number of Schomberg Players or NobleKing Players on each Rep Team?

A. No. It is not realistic to set fixed player numbers from either Association. Our focus is to pick the best players possible for the Rep teams so that those teams will be able to compete at the highest level possible. Realistically, our approach has been to establish a fair and consistent Tryout Process that will help ensure all players from both Associations are getting a fair opportunity to make each Team, with players being assessed by an Evaluation Panel, in both skill based

and simulated game situations. We believe that players from both Associations have an equal shot at making these Teams and officials will be working hard to ensure that there is a fair opportunity for everyone to succeed.

Q. How will Coaches be selected?

- A.** The Schomberg and NobleKing Local League Associations will continue to select their Local League Coaches independently, as they have done in the past.

For the New King Rep Hockey Teams, both sides have negotiated the framework of a new Coaching Selection Policy that takes the strongest elements from the previous NobleKing Process and the Schomberg Process. The focus of this new Policy is to ensure that we are picking the best Coaches possible, while being fair with both sides. The Coaching Selection Committee will have equal representation from both Associations, and will involve the OMHA Coach Mentor to help lead interviews and the selection process. The criteria used will consider prior coaching experience, credentials, a formal panel interview and previous coaching reviews and assessments. We believe that this will provide all candidates with a fair opportunity for Coaching positions regardless of what Association they came from.

Q. Will Coaches be allowed to select their Bench Staff before Tryouts are finished?

- A.** No. During negotiations, it was important to both sides that parents with players participating in Tryouts not be on the ice during the Tryout process – to ensure that no player receives preferential treatment. Once the Coaches and the Evaluation Panel assess players and make final decisions, the Bench Staff will be selected. All Coaches and Members of Bench Staff will be subject to approval and ratification by the new King Township Hockey Board. The new Association will be strongly encouraging Coaches to select members of Bench Staff from across the King Township communities (where possible), to help ensure that no single community dominates the management of a particular Team.

Q. How will the Partnership impact “AAA” Player Affiliation?

- A.** For the time being, there will be no impact to AAA Affiliations. For at least the 2017-18 Season, players who are resident within the traditional Schomberg boundaries will affiliate to YS Express, and players within the traditional NobleKing boundaries will affiliate to the Richmond Hill Coyotes. The OMHA will conduct a review of this process in the future.

To provide additional protection, the Parties have negotiated a grandfathering clause. Players already on a AAA Team with either YSE or the Coyotes will be grandfathered as long as they remain on that team, and not impacted by any subsequent AAA affiliation changes that might take place in future years.

Q. If the Partnership is approved, when will Coaching Selection take place?

A. The negotiating committees from both Associations have been working hard to finalize the Coaching Selection Process for the 2017-18 season and most of the administrative details have been worked out. If the Partnership is approved, the application process for Rep Coaches will open on February 22, or as soon as possible thereafter. Based on the timetable negotiated, the application deadline will close on March 5, 2017. Preliminary screening interviews will take place on March 11 and 12, 2017, and final interviews will be conducted on March 25 and 26, 2017. The Parties plan to be in a position to announce new Rep Team coaches by April 10, 2017 well in advance of the Tryout Process. The Coaching Selection Committee will be comprised of an equal number of members from both Associations, along with the OMHA Coach Mentor.

Q. If the Partnership is approved, when will Rep Tryouts occur?

A. The negotiating committees have also been working through the details of the Rep Tryout Process. The Parties have decided to hold a total of 4 Tryout skates on April 22 & 23, and April 29 and 30. These Tryouts will consist of both individual skill assessment as well as simulated game play. Players will be assessed by both the Head Coach and by an Evaluation Panel to ensure that all players receive a fair opportunity to be considered. Both Associations agree on the importance of making player selections in the Spring after the Tryouts have been concluded, to avoid the uncertainty of players not knowing about decisions over the summer months. All players participating in Tryouts will be evaluated and assessed, so that in the event that a particular age Division has the necessary player numbers and talent pool to warrant a separate AE Team, the Tryout evaluations can be used for the purposes of subsequent player selections at that level.

Q. How will the Partnership impact “AA” Player Affiliation?

A. The Partnership has zero impact to “AA” Affiliations. The right of players to affiliate to a “AA” Program depends entirely on the player’s residential address, and the distance from that address to the registered “centre point” of the closest Centre offering “AA” hockey. Nothing in the King Township Minor Hockey Proposal impacts where players might be eligible to play “AA” hockey.

Q. How will the Partnership affect player movement rights?

A. Under current OMHA player movement rules, the new King Township Minor Hockey Association would be classified as an “A” level Rep Hockey Program. This means that players looking for more competitive hockey options will continue to have access to “Permission to Skate” requests for “AAA” Tryouts, and can also request a Non Resident Passport (NRP) in order to participate in

a “AA” Tryout. However, OMHA Regulations will not allow NRP’s to be issued for players looking to move laterally from one “A” Program to another “A” Program.

These rules apply to Rep Hockey only. Players at the recreational Local League level can play wherever they want, without residential restrictions.

Q. Will the OMHA Borders for King Township Minor Hockey be impacted?

A. Not in any significant way. For the most part, the existing borders of Schomberg and NobleKing are being combined, to create a new OMHA Territory for King Township Minor Hockey. Certain areas of concern, like the existing Schomberg zone north of Highway 9 (south of the 5 line) have been preserved and even expanded under this Partnership with new shared areas. In other areas, the new King Association stands to gain territory between Kettleby and Aurora. Importantly, the Partnership deal provides the protection of a grandfathering clause to ensure that any existing player with either Schomberg or NobleKing will not be impacted by any resulting border changes. In other words, no player will lose their existing rights.

The OMHA has hosted discussions with all the York Region Minor Hockey Centres regarding borders – with a desire to “clean up” certain grey zones where players in certain rural areas may be more closely associated with one community as opposed to another. The OMHA is looking at the possibility of creating certain “shared areas” where players might have the option of playing for different Associations. These conversations at the OMHA level are ongoing, but as it stands, the current direction will likely be of benefit to King Township Minor Hockey and its members.

Q. How will the Partnership impact the ability of Rep Teams to qualify for OMHA playoffs?

A. Both Associations have struggled when it comes to their Rep Teams having success in OMHA Playoffs. As a smaller “CC” Centre, Schomberg Teams have historically been lucky, because all “CC” Teams are automatically eligible for an OMHA playoff run. For NobleKing competing at an “A” level, only the top 4 York Simcoe Teams are eligible for OMHA playdowns. Losing the automatic playoff entry for Schomberg teams is not an easy thing to give up. But the reality is that even with the automatic playoff right at “CC”, most Schomberg Rep teams have struggled to compete and be successful in the OMHA’s. NobleKing Teams have also struggled to qualify for playoffs over the years. Both Associations understand that there is no easy answer to this, but that the best solution is still to combine their Rep players together and create a viable organization that at least has a fighting chance to ice stable and competitive teams where kids can have a quality hockey experience both during the regular season, and if they are strong enough to qualify, in the OMHA’s at an “A” Level. We are optimistic that a combined King organization will have a fair chance to compete!