



Norfolk County Minor Hockey

Questions and Answers regarding the Memorandum of Understanding Offer to

Delhi Minor Hockey

Q. Why is the Norfolk County Minor Hockey Association proposing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Delhi Minor Hockey for the 2022-2023 Season?

- A.** The Norfolk County Minor Hockey Association realizes the need to close the programming gap that exists between its 'A' level hockey program and its associated local league hockey program. To address this gap, an overall improvement in membership numbers/players is required. The natural solution is to approach our neighboring hockey associations within the natural boundary of Norfolk County – respecting that as members and area taxpayers – we all contribute the collection of arenas within our tax area. To partner with associations outside of our natural municipal boundary would trigger the perception our County taxpayers are subsidizing hockey facilities for out of county/municipality players/teams. We are aware that the County is examining ways to increase its facility revenue and establishing an increase of county/municipality ice rates is a matter that we wish to avoid – hence staying and playing within our own supported facilities is one of guiding objectives.

The option of partnering with other 'out of County' associations is an option, but frankly we see no need to look beyond our neighbors within Norfolk County – to do so would be a last resort and not our first choice option.

Q. How does the Norfolk County Minor Hockey Association Board change under the MOU proposal?

- A.** The Norfolk County Minor Hockey Association's Board would be expanded from its current twelve (12) board members (four (4) each from Port Dover, Simcoe and Waterford) to sixteen (16) board members as we welcome aboard four (4) Delhi Minor Hockey Board members. This arrangement allows each Local Association to have an equal say in the management and oversight of Norfolk Minor Hockey.

Q. Does the MOU arrangement change the Norfolk 'A' status to 'AA'?

A. No. Under the MOU the Norfolk Minor Hockey Association would remain as an 'A' category hockey centre. The MOU arrangement would however improve the overall membership number for Norfolk Minor Hockey, allowing Norfolk to more readily offer the mid-level representative hockey program (BB/B level hockey) that is necessary (in the Board's opinion) to deliver a more responsive and scaled hockey program to its members.

Q. Would there be any changes under the MOU to the current Local Association operations?

A. No. The Local Associations would continue to exist and manage Local League hockey programs as it does today. Local Association representatives would also work collaboratively within the Norfolk County Minor Hockey Association to align and deliver player development and goalie training programs where it makes sense to do so. The 2021-2022 development and goalie training clinics were a success this past season and we plan to carry these forward and build upon them in the 2022-2023 season.

Q. If the MOU is accepted by Delhi, will Local League players continue to play out of their home ice centres?

A. Yes - One of the primary goals of the original Partnership arrangement was to maintain the same high quality Local League experience for our community-based recreational teams. This has not and will not change. Local League Teams (Pirates, Warriors, Wildcats and Rockets) continue to play out of their specific community arena.

Q. If the MOU is accepted by Delhi, are there any planned improvements to the Representative Hockey Program?

A. Yes - Norfolk County Minor Hockey would be expected to introduce mid-level representative (BB/B) hockey programming within its Atom, Peewee, Bantam and Midget divisions. This would be a much-welcomed adjustment to our program and quite frankly a much needed improvement that should ensure our success in the year forward.

Q. Will the Norfolk County Rep Teams continue to be the Norfolk Knights under the current colour selection (grey, white, gold and red)?

A. Yes. There will be no change to the Norfolk logo or colour selections.

- Q. How will an MOU Partnership affect ice time and registration fees?**
- A.** The Partnership agreement expects to deliver similar ice allocation per team and per category level as you experienced in the 2021-2022 season. As such, registration fees for the upcoming 2022-2023 season are expected to be in-line with last season's rates (mainly thanks to Norfolk County for freezing ice rental rates to that of last season – perhaps the forthcoming election played a part). The MOU arrangement would however introduce an additional programming level (BB/B) and an additional arena into the Norfolk Minor Hockey programming plan. Ice time allocated to BB/B programs is expected to be mid-way between the 'A' level (4 times per week) and Local League programming (2 times per week) and as such (noting that ice costs are the main driver for registration fees) registration costs for BB/B would be respectfully midway between 'A' and Local League levels.
- Q. With a larger pool of kids potentially interested in Rep hockey, how will the MOU arrangement impact the ability of certain players to make a team?**
- A.** We do not expect any noticeable impact to the volume of players trying out the 'A' level program. The MOU agreement would remove the Non-Resident Passport barrier for the Delhi players only, however those from other neighboring associations would remain restricted by the NRP limitation of three (3) NRP players per team. We do however expect that with the introduction of BB/B programming a number of our mid-level players will be attracted to and secure a place on these BB/B teams – allowing them to more appropriately advance in their skills and game play. The introduction of BB/B is not expected to have any negative impact on our local league programming and if/where we foresee issues/concerns emerging, adjustments will be made to protect the integrity of our local league programs.
- Q. Will players from surrounding areas continue to be eligible to tryout for the Norfolk County teams under the MOU agreement?**
- A.** Yes. Players from outside our territorial boundary will remain eligible to tryout at Peewee and above divisions within our revised and expanded representative programming structure. Such players will be considered "import players" and there will be a restriction imposed by the OMHA on the number of "import players" allowed per team. This limit will be later determined by the OMHA.
- Q. Will Local League players be eligible to be an Affiliated Player "AP" to a Norfolk Hockey 'A' or 'BB/B' Rep Team?**

- A.** Yes – players from Local League organizations would be eligible for AP opportunities within the 'A' and 'BB/' programming levels. That said, it is most likely that 'BB/B' players will AP to 'A' and Local League players would AP to 'BB/B'.

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

- A.** Local League teams will continue in their existing Southern Counties-Intertown loop, and therefore realize no change in travel. Last season Norfolk minor Hockey was assigned to the Niagara District Hockey League for its 'A' level hockey teams. We understand that the OMHA is undertaking its five (5) year review of association categories and loop assignments. We are awaiting the outcome of this review to determine/confirm our loop placement for the 2022-2023 season. The OMHA is being guided by objectives such as reduced travel time for families – thus we remain hopeful that our loop is adjusted for the upcoming season. With respect to BB/B teams, we will seek OMHA direction on the loop assignment for this division/category which could be Southern counties or a the similar assigned 'A' loop which typically has BB/B teams operating within it. We will advise as soon as we know.

Q. Will there be a fixed number of Players from each Local Association on each Rep 'A' and 'BB/B' team?

- A.** No. It is not realistic to set fixed player numbers from each Association. Player selection will be based on player ability/skill. This ensures consistency in talent/skill amongst selected player groups and provides for strong/competitive team structures that are fun and exciting to play within.

Norfolk Minor Hockey will have a Tryout Committee comprised of representatives of each Local Association. The Tryout Committee will establish a fair and consistent Tryout Process, including selecting a neutral Evaluation Panel to conduct objective player evaluations that will be used for the purposes of validating player selection. The focus is to ensure there is a fair opportunity for every player to succeed.

Q. How will Local League Coaches be selected?

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

Q. How will Rep 'A' and 'BB/B' Coaches be selected?

- A.** Norfolk Hockey will have a Coach Selection Committee with representation from each Local Association and if Delhi joins – they will have a seat on this committee. The Coaching Committee will follow its policy to manage the Coaching Selection Process, ensuring it is fair, free from bias, and promote the underlying goals of the Norfolk Hockey Association.

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

- A.** There will be no impact to AAA Affiliation. Our collective centers will continue to be affiliated with Brantford for “AAA” play.

Q. How will the MOU affect player movement rights?

- A.** As always, players at the recreational Local League level can play wherever they want, without residential restrictions.

For those members seeking 'A' Rep Hockey, Norfolk County Minor Hockey Association will be their home “A” association. Under the MOU agreement – members seeking 'BB/B' Rep Hockey will now be able to find such programming within their home 'A' centre of Norfolk Minor Hockey.

For those members seeking 'AAA' or 'AA' level hockey their options remain the same whereby those players secure those opportunities outside Norfolk Minor Hockey. We simply do not offer 'AAA' or 'AA' options at this time – perhaps that could change in the future.

Q. Will the OMHA Borders for Norfolk County Minor Hockey be impacted by the MOU arrangement for 2022-2023?

- A.** The centre point for Norfolk Minor Hockey would remain unchanged during the MOU period. The MOU offer simply allows Delhi Minor Hockey players to be shared with Norfolk Minor Hockey for the 2022-2023 season. This allowance is a true benefit to those players seeking access to “A” and “BB/B” competitive hockey programming. For those electing to skate with the Local Hockey League programs – the home local league centres of Port Dover (Pirates), Simcoe (Warriors), Waterford (Wildcats) and Delhi (Rockets) will remain in place and supported by their local associations as well as by Norfolk Minor Hockey.