

Message from the Presidents of Southpoint MHA, Essex MHA and Erie Northshore MHA

Shared Boundary Initiative

Dear Members,

In recent years, Southpoint Minor Hockey (SMHA), Essex Minor Hockey (EMHA) and Erie Northshore Minor Hockey (ENMHA) have been negatively impacted by the changing landscape in minor hockey. These changes along with economic conditions in our region have affected the strength of our organizations. The increased player movement to AAA & AA, along with decreased enrollment have threatened the competitive viability of various age groups across the associations. Several solutions have been considered, including amalgamation & partnership, with little progress to this point.

On April 21st, SMHA, EMHA and ENMHA received a proposal for a two-year pilot project from the OMHA. This pilot project is unique, created by the OMHA in response to issues raised by associations in the Hamilton area. The issues brought forward in Hamilton echo concerns also raised by our local associations with the OMHA.

This pilot project allows SMHA, EMHA & ENMHA to operate with shared boundaries for the delivery of Rep hockey programming. Essentially, freedom of player movement between the associations is permitted. Together, the three organizations would ice AA, A, AE teams where numbers and ability permit. The three associations would collaborate together, working out details such as coach selection and player selection. Each association would have the option to continue with, or opt-out of, this pilot project after each season, allowing for open dialogue and co-ordination between our three memberships. Future direction, such as amalgamation, or a continuation of this pilot project beyond the initial proposed 2 years, would drive open discussion between our associations, and be open to comments, concerns, and discussion amongst our members.

The board of directors of SMHA, EMHA & ENMHA have voted to move forward with the Shared Boundary Initiative pilot project, beginning with the **2019-2020** season. A committee comprised of three board members from each association will begin meeting to finalize the details, ensuring appropriate steps are taken to improve accessibility and quality of hockey for the kids living within our combined borders.

It is important to note this endeavour does not impact IP and Local League programming in each association. In fact, it will help to promote additional communication and coordination between the associations, alleviating any issues and allowing for future

growth in the IP & Local League programs as well.

SMHA, ENMHA and EMHA discussed expediting this project for 2018-19, however concerns raised around rushing this forward, ultimately determined this upcoming season will proceed as currently assembled in each association. Further, the three associations in conjunction with the OMHA have agreed to work together to provide aid where possible under the existing OMHA rules & regulations for the 2018-19 season.

SMHA, EMHA and ENMHA are committed to working towards a strong and successful community based hockey offering, with the goal of allowing our kids to develop and succeed at the appropriate level for each of them individually, from AA to Local League. Under this pilot, the strength and longevity of our local associations will be maintained, while providing an opportunity for all kids to access the level of play they wish to pursue.

We are excited for the opportunities this pilot project presents, and very much look forward to planning the future of minor hockey in the communities of Leamington, Essex, Kingsville, Harrow & Wheatley.

Yours in hockey,

Greg Liebrock
President
Southpoint MHA



Shawn Carswell
President
Essex MHA



Dale Newby
President
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