



**ONTARIO MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION
GENERAL MEETING**

**DELEGATE INFORMATION
PACKAGE**

**JANUARY 23, 2011
DELTA MEADOWVALE RESORT
AND CONFERENCE CENTRE
6750 MISSISSAUGA ROAD
MISSISSAUGA, ONTARIO**



ONTARIO MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

GENERAL MEETING

JANUARY 23, 2011

A G E N D A

Call Order Wayne Pries

President's Welcome Wayne Pries

Made For Ontario:
Committee Presentation Rob Ring

Introduction of Resolutions Chair Wayne Pries

Notice of Motion SGM2011-01 George Meek

Closing Remarks Wayne Pries

MADE FOR ONTARIO COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Rob Ring, Chair

Good afternoon and welcome to this Special General Meeting, my name is Rob Ring and I am the current chairman of the OMHA Made for Ontario Committee.

At this time, I would like to introduce the committee who, during our discussions, has represented each and every one of you with your best interest in mind, whether you were from an E or a AAA association: Regional Executive Members from Area A: Craig Lane, Area B: Sue Michalski, Area D: Bill Leask, Area G: Dave Saunders, Area H: Michele Sguigna, Area K: Cheryl Brown, Past President: Pat Parlette, Manager of Registration: Martha Dickie and Executive Director: Richard Ropchan. Knowing the significance of this task, these committee members took their participation on this committee seriously and with commitment. They knew the discussions would be controversial and that some might regard the end result as unpopular, but they accepted the challenge and hopefully you will show your confidence in their integrity by supporting the motion which they worked so hard to prepare and present to you today.

Today, the OMHA Board is going to ask you to support a motion that, to say the least, might be somewhat more radical than any this Board has ever considered. Many of you will recall the implementation of AAA and Zone hockey and the struggles we encountered with its implementation. If you came here with a preconceived notion about this latest proposal for Hometown Hockey we ask that you remain open-minded and give it your honest consideration for the betterment of opportunities for our participants.

Over the past two years, the OMHA Made for Ontario Committee has worked diligently and honestly to come up with this motion that we are proposing today. The OMHA Board feels strongly that this motion is the most favourable compromise to a situation that we didn't create, but one that we feel needed to be addressed for the best interest of your association.

As many of you know, for quite awhile, the OMHA has felt considerable outside pressure to allow freer player movement. A number of events involving Hockey Canada, the OHF, and some of our Member Partners have indicated that it would only be a matter of time before more relaxed player movement regulations might be legislated by the hockey bodies higher up the ladder than us. The committee suggests that acceptance of this proposal by the passing of this motion will enable the OMHA to better manage its own affairs and direction with regard to this enhanced player movement model.

The most recent events that have taken place that have caused the OMHA some concern were when one Member Partner discussed the possibility of requesting that the OHF form A and AA Zones the same as the current AAA Zones. Also at OHF Minor Council meetings over this past season another Member Partner has talked about some form of player movement including totally free movement within the

OHF for players 13 years of age and older to their most current proposal that they tabled until the next OHF Minor Council meeting, which is for players to freely be able to tryout for any AAA Minor Bantam, Bantam, Minor Midget, Midget or AA Midget team within the OHF regardless of which Member Partner they are currently registered.

In November 2010 at the Semi-Annual Meeting in Toronto, Hockey Canada's officers again tried to bring to the floor Motion #7, which I will talk about later.

With cautious optimism, we are proposing amendments to our player movement regulations. We truly believe that it is better to establish our own destiny which will cause a minimal impact to existing associations, as opposed to having regulation changes potentially being forced upon us that may have significant impact on those existing associations. We feel that by being proactive, the OMHA will illustrate that not only is this Association willing to make changes but also that it is determined not to permit outside bodies to make those decisions for us.

We cannot think or hope that our current player movement regulations will never be changed against our wishes. We could be sadly mistaken to operate in that vacuum of false hope. Hockey is an evolving sport and should Hockey Canada and/or the OHF decide to alter the way things are done with respect to residential eligibility, they may make any changes permitted within their authority. Remember, the OMHA didn't agree with the proposed age change in 2002 and also in 2008: we didn't want the bodychecking to be removed from Atom hockey, but we all know that both of these things happened.

After much discussion and sometimes heated debate, your Ad Hoc Committee presents this motion for your consideration and reminds you and urges that we do not consider this to be a threat, but rather that it presents an opportunity for the OMHA and its membership to evolve with the hockey community in Canada by enhancing player opportunities within this great Association.

Our President, Wayne Pries, once wrote, "***The concept of greater player movement is inevitable. To meet this challenge, we need to develop a system for movement that meets the aims and objectives of the OMHA. We can't ignore this challenge and hope it goes away, it won't, it is a certainty.***"

At the Hockey Canada Semi-Annual Meeting in November 2008, it was apparent that Motion #7, if passed, would have a profound effect on Minor Hockey. The following was Motion #7 as it was presented:

It shall be the obligation/responsibility of all Branches under the authority of Hockey Canada, in their sole and unfettered discretion, to implement residency registration regulations for the formation of teams within their Branch. The residency registration regulation must allow for increased movement of players as the age of the player increases.

When Motion #7 was narrowly defeated by only 3 votes, this prompted a letter to all the Branch Presidents from the Hockey Canada Chairman, the late Al Morris, which stated,

“Dear Branch President,

I repeat part of my closing remarks at the Semi Annual meeting of last week.

Branches — congratulations — you've just taken on a new responsibility.

You gave the Officers instructions to bring forth ways to increase movement of players. We took two models, Saskatchewan and Quebec, and suggested that you look at them. I'm suggesting now that each Branch has to fit the philosophy of what was developed in Hamilton - that we have to create easier movement for players.

The intent was never to take control away from the Branches, but certainly with the way things went today you crowned yourself with the responsibility to make player movement easier according to what you need in your own Branch. When I look back at the Hamilton workshop the focus was not on what's good for the teams, what's good for the local hockey organization — the focus was what's good for the players. We have to keep that uppermost in our minds.

So I challenge each Branch to keep that philosophy, keep the players in mind and let's quit bullying players with our regulations...”

At the October 2008 meeting of the OHF Minor Council, the proposed Hockey Canada motions for the upcoming semi-annual meeting were reviewed to determine our recommended position for the OHF officers. With regard to Motion #7, the four Minor Member Partners were split, with two in support of the motion and two opposed. The Chairman of Minor Council declined to vote, opting to forward the issue to the full OHF Board for its determination. At the Board Meeting, the question on Motion #7 again resulted in a tie vote, with the President casting the deciding vote in support of the motion. The following motion was also proposed and carried at that same meeting:

Regardless of the outcome of Motion #7 at the Hockey Canada Semi-Annual Meeting, OHF Minor Council will actively continue its review of Minor Hockey residency within the OHF.

After this OHF Minor Council meeting a document titled, ‘Ontario Hockey Federation Made for Ontario Minor Hockey Plan’ was composed and distributed through the OHF office. This document was very detailed and it suggested a number of possible solutions of change to the current state of Minor Hockey within the OHF.

Two of the solutions that would have the most affect on the structure and the philosophy of the OMHA were streamlining of programs, and player movement. The following are sections from this document that pertain to these two items:

“...streamlining is to reduce the number of categories that exist. The continued movement would be to remove all categories below B at the competitive level. That would mean that the categories remaining would be AAA, AA, A, MD, B, Select, and House League. The removal of the competitive categories below B affects the OMHA predominantly and will require a refocus of the Hometown Hockey philosophy. It does not remove that philosophy, but modifies it to encourage Minor Hockey Associations to work together to produce teams.

The potential for movement should vary depending on age but also on development opportunities.

...many forms of movement could be developed including greater movement as the players get older. The purpose of movement is not for a team but rather for the player...”

In November 2008 at an OHF Board meeting it was authorized to obtain the services of Mediator, Kevin Burkett, to interview the four Minor Member Partners and then submit his recommendations of the direction the Made for Ontario Plan should go. On February 5, 2010 his report was finalized and following are some of the comments and recommendations Mr. Burkett made regarding player movement.

“...Article 6.4 requires the OHF to act where the best interests of minor hockey are being detrimentally affected. To repeat, if the directly affected member partners are unable to rationalize the delivery of minor hockey in southwestern Ontario, the OHF is duty bound to act.

One of these is the requirement to provide players with suitable development opportunities. Indeed, one of the objects of the OHF and its member partners, as set out in Article 4 of the OHF Constitution, is “to assist members in their pursuit of excellence by providing accessible and effective programs and services.” Hometown Hockey, for all its value, must not be allowed to stifle the development of individual players. Rather, the overall organizational arrangements must balance the existence of a healthy hometown hockey structure with the opportunity for players to compete at a level commensurate with their individual skills once they reach the age where the level of competition becomes a necessary ingredient in player development.

The adoption of the AAA zone system by the OMHA in the mid-1980s was an attempt to balance these imperatives and while the AAA zone system goes some way in this regard; it does not go far enough. A system under which a player who comes close to making a AAA zone team must then compete at a B, C, D or E level falls short of providing suitable development opportunity once the level of competition becomes a necessary ingredient in player development.

While it may not be possible to strike a perfect balance, it seems to me that a much better balance would be struck if, in addition to the AAA zone system, a corresponding AA zone system were to be implemented within the OMHA and Alliance for peewee and above. The introduction of a AA zone system at peewee and above would significantly improve player development through competition while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the hometown hockey structure.

For the reasons given, therefore, it is my recommendation that the OMHA establish a AA zone system at peewee and above that mirrors the AAA zone system already in place to commence with the 2011-12 season..."

Fortunately, this recommendation has not yet been implemented and we are not in support of any such fundamental change due to the drastic impact which might occur from such implementation.

Therefore, you the membership need to be aware that there exist many "outsiders" that don't have the same respect for the philosophy of Hometown Hockey that gives centres within the OMHA jurisdiction the ability to form Representative teams to compete against or with similarly classified entries and vie for an OMHA championship. These people would love nothing more than to have no restrictions on player movement, which would dramatically alter small town hockey as we know it.

From what took place during the fall of 2008 at OHF and Hockey Canada the OMHA Board decided to be proactive instead of being reactive. It puts one in mind of that old adage: "I don't mind progress unless it involves change!" It's darn difficult to have one without the other!

At the December 2008 meeting of the OMHA Board, then President, Marg Ensoll assembled an Ad Hoc Committee consisting of OMHA Board and staff members, to be chaired by Wayne Pries and tasked to develop a 'Made for Ontario Plan' for the OMHA.

One of the first orders of business for this adhoc committee was to establish a mission statement, which would be the guideline this committee would use throughout this process. The following statement was approved:

The OMHA, working in concert with the OHF Member Partners, will develop the methodology for greater player movement, while retaining the integrity of the Community based programs. To assess and review the current hockey landscape within the Ontario Minor Hockey Association and identify opportunities for potential change that will enhance the minor hockey experience of all members.

After a number of meetings the Made for Ontario Committee requested of the OMHA Board to convene an open membership, 'Town Hall' meeting. The purpose of this meeting was to listen to the concerns of the membership; as well as assessing

and reviewing the current hockey landscape within the OMHA and identify opportunities for potential change that could enhance the minor hockey experience of all members. This meeting was held on May 2, 2009 in Brampton with approximately 250 people in attendance. Valuable information and opinions were gathered from this meeting, which were discussed at length at subsequent committee meetings.

Prior to this Town Hall meeting an online questionnaire was posted on the OMHA website. A total of 1594 participants responded to this questionnaire. A number of questions were asked, but there were two that pertained most to player movement. The results of these questions were considered during the Ad Hoc Committee meetings.

These questions and results were as follows:

If increased player movement was allowed would you prefer player movement within defined areas only?

Yes	64%
No	29%
Unsure	7%

If increased player movement was allowed, would you prefer player movement without restrictions?

Yes	31%
No	61%
Unsure	7%

With the results of these questions in mind the Made for Ontario Committee tried to incorporate the wishes of the majority, which we feel has been accomplished. Therefore, this player movement proposal is only permitting a player the opportunity to tryout for one A or AA team nearest his residence and these teams are limited to *registering only three non-resident players*.

With these restrictions we are confident that the number of players that will be "lost" from their home centre teams will be extremely limited. Remember, a number of years ago when the AAA Zones were introduced many of our smaller centres proclaimed this would be the demise of their Rep hockey programs and we all know that even without any restrictions this did not happen.

Every delegate here today represents an OMHA Hometown Association of which he or she is very proud to be a member. Each delegate here today is likewise and rightfully proud of the players which have progressed through their association in the past. What we ask of you now is that when making your decision today, that each delegate consider his or her association with a view to the best development of your association's players and to consider that if that player might develop quicker by registering with a higher category team, remembering that the player has to be one of only three permitted, then shouldn't he be allowed to so advance with the opportunity this motion will provide?

We are pleased that, through the work of Facilitation and the integrity of all involved, the Alliance has accepted this OMHA model for player movement proposal and has agreed to work with us for the betterment of hockey and its participants. The Alliance and the OMHA have shared jurisdiction in a big part of southwestern Ontario and it only made sense for their players and ours to enjoy the same opportunities provided by this motion.

You may be rest assured that once passed; the OMHA Board will continually monitor the progress and ramifications of this motion with the centres, teams and players impacted.

The structure of the OMHA ensures that you, its members, will be entitled to review this motion and its impact annually and that there will be ample opportunity as we embark on this new model to make any appropriate adjustments necessary to have it work as intended for our associations.

The Ad Hoc Committee truly feels that your support for this proposal best satisfies not only the needs of the OMHA participants, but also that it presents a realistic compromise for those 'naysayers' who struggle to accept change and who would hinder our progress and evolution as the greatest minor hockey association in the world.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Notice of Motion #: *SGM2011-01*

Amendment To: Exemption to Play in Another Centre
Regulation Number: 3.5 NEW
Page Number: 84-85
Submitted By: OMHA Board
Signatures: Tom Leathong/Rob Ring

CURRENT WORDING

None

PROPOSED WORDING

Current Methods of Player Movement:

- a) The waiver system will continue for the AAA hockey program as per the current OMHA/Alliance regulations
- b) The current LOR regulations remain in effect
- c) Players from an association that is unable to roster a team in a season may move to the next nearest Centre per OMHA Regulation 3.5

Additional Method of Player Movement:

- a) Movement to AA or A is only permitted for participants Minor Pee Wee age and above
Note: To be eligible the player is required to be the Minor Pee Wee age (11 years old) or older as at December 31 of the current playing season; OMHA Regulation 3.6 is **NOT** applicable.
- b) Movement is only permitted to a higher level for players from A and below base category Centres
Note: There shall be **NO** lateral movement (i.e.: A to A, AA to AA)
- c) Alliance seeded Centres will be categorized as AA for the purpose of player movement for OMHA players from BB and below
- d) Maximum number of “Non Resident Players” (NRP) is three (3) per eligible team. Once a team has rostered an NRP then NO replacement NRP will be permitted.
- e) Other than at a player’s Home Centre, the number of tryouts is limited to two (2) other categories. For his first opportunity, a player has the right to choose to tryout at AAA as per OMHA regulations, but this tryout **is not** mandatory. The second opportunity, a player **must** try out for a AA team at a AAA or AA base category Centre or an A team at an A base category Centre. A player’s tryout will only be permitted for the base category team in a Centre, any exceptions are listed below.

Player Movement from Specific Base Categories:

1. A player from an OMHA **BB base category Centre and below** may try out for
 - a) AAA Zone as per the current regulations
 - b) One (1) AA team in a AAA or AA base category Centre nearest to his residence **OR**
one (1) A team in an A base category Centre nearest to his residence **AND**
 - c) Home Centre
2. A player from an OMHA **A base category Centre** may try out for
 - a) AAA Zone as per the current regulations
 - b) One (1) AA team in an OMHA AAA or AA base category Centre nearest his residence **AND**
 - c) Home Centre
3. A player from an OMHA **AA base category Centre without A programming** may try out for
 - a) AAA Zone as per the current regulations
 - b) Home Centre
 - c) If a player's AA Home Centre does not offer A programming the player, after trying out for his Home AA team, may tryout for one (1) OMHA A base category Centre nearest to his residence
4. A player from an OMHA **AA base category Centre with A programming** may tryout for
 - a) AAA Zone as per the current regulations
 - b) Home Centre

PROCESS FOR ATTENDING TRYOUTS

- a) As per current Regulations no tryouts or on or off-ice activities directly or indirectly (including skating parties, conditioning camps, refresher programs, etc.) may be conducted prior to the completion of the OHF Minor Hockey Championships. (OHF Regulation G)
- b) Eligible players, upon pre-registration with their Home Centre for the upcoming season, must request a Non Resident Player (NRP) Passport to be eligible for the process/tryout. The Home Centre verifies that the player is eligible by age/residence for their Home Centre and authorizes the NRP Passport.
- c) If the player attends his Home AAA Zone tryouts and is not offered a roster position he may then exercise the option to attend tryouts at a Centre as outlined under **Additional Method of Player Movement** and/or request an OHF AAA Waiver per current Regulations.
- d) If the player **chooses to exercise his option to try out for a AA or A Centre** as per **Additional Method of Player Movement**, that AA or A Centre must validate the player's attendance at tryouts on the NRP Passport.
- e) Should a player's next nearest Centre categorized at AA or A choose **NOT** to allow an NRP to try out the player may continue to exercise his options
- f) If the player is not offered a roster position at his chosen option of AA or A he **MUST** return to his Home Centre.

- g) If the player is offered a roster position at his chosen option of AA or A he **MUST** return to his Home Centre at the end of each season. (Permission is for one (1) season only)
- h) The NRP Passport is retained by the Centre/Team for which the player rosters and **MUST** be uploaded to the player's profile
- i) The Centre/Team with which the player rosters **MUST** notify the Home Centre by September 30th of the current season
- j) A team must offer a player the opportunity to sign a "Letter of Commitment" for the current season within 30 days of the commencement of the team's tryouts or September 15, whichever is earlier
- k) Any player signed after September 15 will require the agreement of the Home Centre, in writing
- l) A team cannot release a signed player after September 15, without the agreement of his Home Centre, in writing. Any such release shall be to the player's Home Centre only.
- m) A player requesting his release back to the Home Centre must do so, in writing, to the Rostering Centre and the Home Centre
- n) There will be no movement of players after November 1st unless agreed by the player's parents, the Rostering Centre and the Home Centre, in writing.
- o) Player Movement and the process will be reviewed yearly

RATIONALE

Recommendation of OMHA Made for Ontario Committee

RESULT: *Carried* *Carried as amended* *Defeated*

DISCUSSION / NOTES: