

Folks,

You may have seen the recent press release from The Saint James facility in Springfield, concerning their new hockey program. If not, here is the link and a follow up media report:

<https://go.thestjames.co/ice-hockey3>

https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/the-st-james-launches-youth-hockey-academy-300642855.html?tc=eml_cleartime

As you may know, our NoVA Hockey Club has attempted to establish a relationship with the Saint James (TSJ) ever since their groundbreaking, late last year. We at NOVA have long thought that our organization would be better off with a long-term relationship with a rink that we could call our “home,” and had offered that to TSJ. We also believed that TSJ could leverage our experience to jump-start their programs. We met most recently last month with Tim Graham, their new hockey Club Director, and Joel Paige, their General Manager. As before, they were cordial and professional and were complimentary about our programs.

Unfortunately, their position has been firm that they intend on developing their own hockey program and do not intend on renting ice to any outside organization. Informal liaison with High School, Middle School and College teams indicates that those teams received the same position from TSJ. In short, we believe that for this next season, NoVA will neither be able to either rent ice nor use TSJ as a home rink. Our first and only focus during these conversations has been the welfare and development of our skaters and their families and will continue to be our focus of effort.

What The Saint James does offer to our community is options for our skaters. I infer that TSJ will offer high-end hockey options with availability of other activities to improve athleticism and skills. The teams that they create will no-doubt be looking to find other teams to play within the various regional league structures, although they currently are not affiliated with an organized league. Tim is credible and has a great reputation from his past success (reference the above links); we wish him well as he grows their program.

At NoVA, we can continue to offer our community is a safe, fun, affordable, and competitive hockey experience as part of both the Chesapeake Bay Hockey League (CBHL) and Capital Corridor Hockey League (CCHL). As always, our focus will be on development and inclusion of as many kids as possible onto our league structures. Our board has worked hard to improve our skaters’ experiences while we continue to pursue other ways of finding more ice time, with which we can grow our programs. We continue to engage actively with Fairfax County parks and Rec and the Friends of Fort Dupont organizations, to promote current plans at both rinks to add more ice and thus more time for our skaters. I invite and questions that you may have.

John Rader