

OMHATM

THE ONTARIO MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

#HOCKEYISFUN

**A COMMITMENT TO
MENTAL HEALTH**

**FREE EQUIPMENT TO
GROW THE GAME**

**A LOOK BACK AT THE
2023-2024
SEASON**

PLAYING LIKE A CHAMPION STARTS BY EATING LIKE ONE.



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REAL EGGS.

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2023-24

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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REGIONAL DIRECTOR: GREIG BAXTER

REGIONAL DIRECTOR: ADAM PARENT

REGIONAL DIRECTOR: ANDY COOKE

REGIONAL DIRECTOR: SUZANNE TERPSTRA

REGIONAL DIRECTOR: PAUL SEBASTIAN



WELCOME

Thank you for being a part of another exciting season across the Ontario Minor Hockey Association.

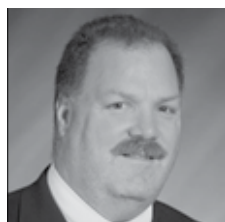
We were constantly reminded that #HockeyIsFun by all of the smiling faces, fist bumps and support in the stands to show everyone just how much love we have for our game.

The dedication of our minor hockey parents, volunteers, coaches, officials, trainers, managers and administrators made this a reality as they ensured a meaningful experience for all players.

Every season we see the stories of how important hockey is to our communities. Through food drives, charity initiatives and other volunteer activities, the life skills that hockey teaches are in full display in how our teams showcase themselves off of the ice.

Today's minor hockey players are our sport's future leaders. Let's continue to work together to create a safe, welcoming space for everyone in our game.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to make our game the best it can be!



CRAIG LANE

PRESIDENT



IAN TAYLOR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE GAME
PATRICIA HARTLEY ADMINISTRATORS AWARD

EVA IVETAC

Stoney Creek Minor Hockey Association



Patricia Hartley
Administrators Award

The Patricia Hartley Administrators Award is given in recognition of exemplary service in the field of sports administration. This award reflects the achievements of a local executive board member or volunteer staff person who worked toward the efficient operation of an association and the betterment of hockey.

Eva Ivetac has served on the Board of Directors for Stoney Creek Minor Hockey for a remarkable 18 years, many of which as a non-parent volunteer. During her tenure, she has been a driving force behind the success of the Rep and House League divisions. Her contributions have been extensive, including holding various important roles over the years. Furthermore, she's also taken the lead in organizing key Association events, including year-end banquets, Christmas parades, tryouts, fitting days, registration, and super Saturday events. Her dedication to ensuring every child has a fulfilling and enjoyable hockey season is apparent in the countless hours she has devoted to the organization.

"She's the first one at the rink and the last one to leave. She's the first one to say 'I will do it.' She is completely selfless in every capacity that I've ever seen."

Steve Johnson, President, Stoney Creek Minor Hockey Association

RECENT RECIPIENTS

2023

Jamie Hunsburger
 Kincardine Minor
 Hockey Association

2022

Jeff Hassim
 Garden City Kiwanis

2021

Jane Zelko
 Essex Minor
 Hockey Association

2020

Cheryl Carrier
 Quinte West Minor
 Hockey Association

2019

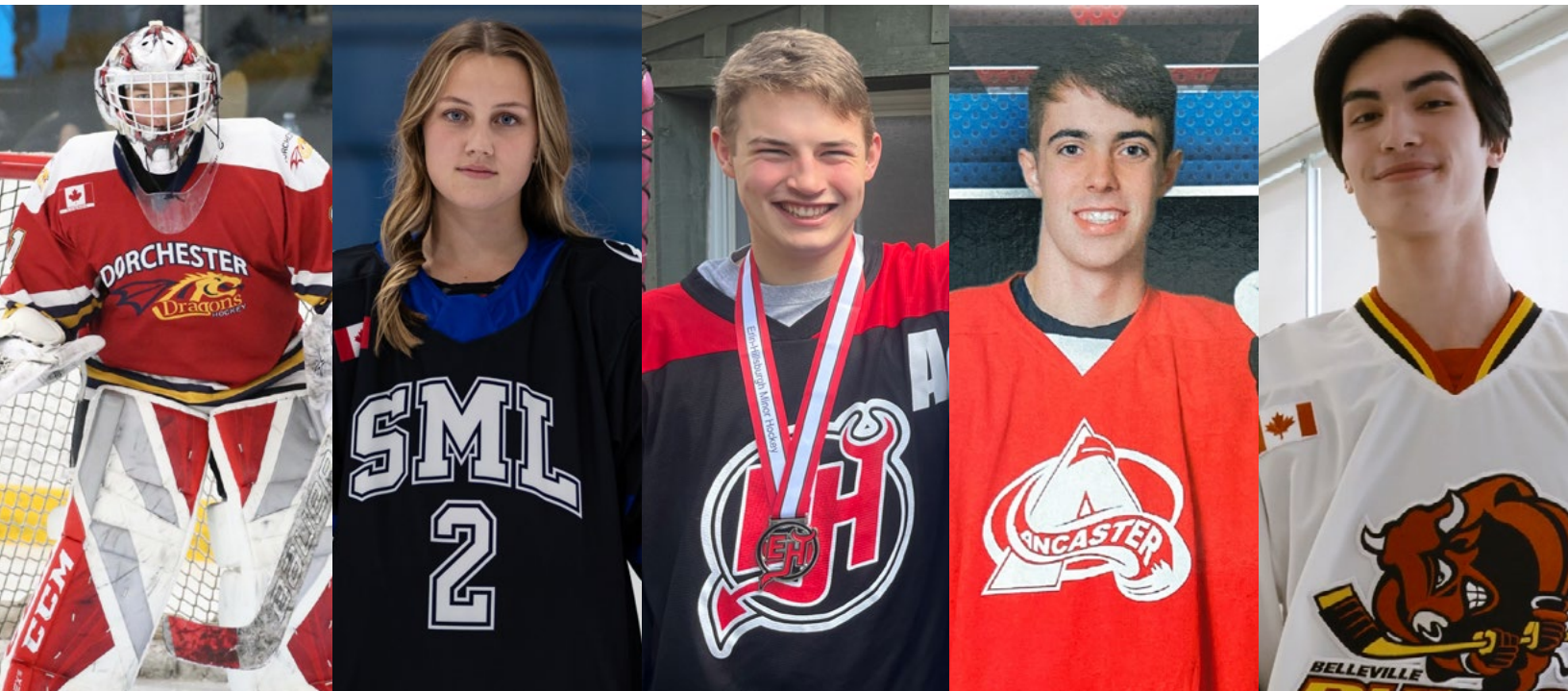
Colleen McGinnis
 Elmvale Minor
 Hockey Association



MORE THAN A PLAYER

OMHA-DAIRY FARMERS OF ONTARIO AND WALLY SCOTT BURSARY PROGRAM

JUSTIN BARNES (DORCHESTER), GILLIAN DINSMORE (HOWICK), FERGUSON GROVES (ERIN-HILLSBURGH), ETHAN HAWRYLUK (ANCASTER), KEVIN LANE (BELLEVILLE), ETHAN LO (MARKHAM), DRAKE MOORE (ORO), ELLA RUSSELL (PORT STANLEY), CONNER SCHMIDT (ARTHUR), HADEN SMITH (MID-HURON)



Dairy Farmers of Ontario Bursary

“We are proud partners of the OMHA to help recognize eight outstanding student-athletes who excel on and off the ice,” said Cheryl Smith, Chief Executive Officer at Dairy Farmers of Ontario. “Through MilkUP, DFO awards each recipient with \$5,000 to go towards their post-secondary education. Congratulations to the winners, who are inspirations to their teammates, classmates and community and exemplify perseverance, originality and heart – MilkUP’s values, athletic ability while maintaining academic achievement.”

Players know first-hand the commitment needed to succeed at a high level on the ice and in the classroom. The Bursary Program is comprised of two awards – the Dairy Farmers of Ontario Bursary and the Wally Scott Bursary. It reflects the achievements of young hockey players who are committed to their community, athletic ability, and academic achievement. Each recipient receives financial support towards their post-secondary education. It provides minor hockey players recognition of their outstanding commitment to:

- **Community service:** assisting in building stronger and healthier communities
- **Athletics:** on-ice success/achievement, as well a passion for the game of hockey
- **Academics:** dedication to studies and attainment of high grades in the classroom

RECENT RECIPIENTS

2023

Natalie Bray
Kent

Laurel Graham
West Niagara

Will Langlois
Oakville

Jack Madden
Napanee

Hunter Maheu
Penetang

Owen Nichol
Newmarket

Cayleb Peitz
West Grey



MORE THAN A PLAYER

OMHA-DAIRY FARMERS OF ONTARIO AND WALLY SCOTT BURSARY PROGRAM

JUSTIN BARNES (DORCHESTER), GILLIAN DINSMORE (HOWICK), FERGUSON GROVES (ERIN-HILLSBURGH), ETHAN HAWRYLUK (ANCASTER), KEVIN LANE (BELLEVILLE), ETHAN LO (MARKHAM), DRAKE MOORE (ORO), ELLA RUSSELL (PORT STANLEY), CONNER SCHMIDT (ARTHUR), HADEN SMITH (MID-HURON)



Wally Scott Bursary

Over the decades Wally Scott's personal and professional interests in hockey have merged to the benefit of the OMHA. The award presented in his name recognizes his contributions and commitment to the OMHA and to the game of hockey. This award reflects the achievements of a young hockey player who is committed to his community and demonstrates athletic ability while maintaining academic achievement.

This year's recipients are examples of the hard work it takes to balance high grades, hockey, extracurriculars, part-time jobs and volunteering. From assisting at local fairs and festivals to coaching and officiating games, these players can use the life skills they've learned over the course of their time in minor hockey to continue their success at post-secondary and eventually their careers. These lessons in hockey like time management, teamwork and leadership will benefit them moving forward.

RECENT RECIPIENTS

2022

Mitchell Anderson
South Kent

Dani Karn
Embrow

Owen Oelschlagel
Centre Wellington

Alex Pedersen
Oakville

Tyler St. Louis
Ayr

Tristin Tsokos
Brighton

Rory Walinga
Guelph

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO PROGRAMMING
EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENT AWARD

MELISSA HENDRIKX

North Middlesex Minor Hockey Association



**Excellence in
Development Award**

An award established to recognize and honour individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to hockey development programming in minor hockey in the OMHA. Nominees can be from any area of hockey development, including Player development, Coaching, Officiating, Safety, and Program Administration.

Melissa’s dedication, care and loyalty to player development, combined with her years of coaching and behind-the-scenes work as an executive administrator, has provided years of fun, development and safety for the Jr. Stars. She has spent countless hours as a coach and a trainer putting in the effort to ensure every player’s individual needs are met, that the kids are safe on the ice and that everyone has fun while learning important skills. As Player Development Coordinator, she treated all the players as equals and also served on the Coaching Committee and as a Player Evaluator.

“One thing about Melissa, when she’s on the ice, she’s always smiling with the kids. She’s always encouraging them to push it and find that next level. But really it’s about having fun.”

Casey Wall, President, North Middlesex Minor Hockey

RECENT RECIPIENTS

2023

Derek Fitzmorris
Kent Minor
Hockey Association

2022

Ken Cadeau
Coldwater Minor
Hockey Association

2021

Kelly Hastings
Collingwood Minor
Hockey Association

2020

Matt Bell
Ennismore Minor
Hockey Association

2019

Wendy White
Newmarket Minor
Hockey Association

HONOURING DECADES OF SERVICE
OMHA HONOUR AWARD

DON COLLISON

South Muskoka Minor Hockey Association



OMHA Honour Award

The OMHA Honour Award was established to recognize a person who has made an outstanding voluntary contribution to minor hockey for a considerable period of time, doing so of his, or her, own free will and not as part of a job or position for which they receive monetary consideration.

Don Collison started coaching minor hockey in 1982, became an Official in 1984 and eventually the Supervisor of Officials and Assignor. He served as Referee in Chief in the Muskoka area and was also a member of the Discipline and Ethics Committee. Don became a life member for Bracebridge Minor Hockey during the 1997-98 season. He took it upon himself to personally mentor new Officials and skate beside them in their first games. He is the ultimate volunteer and his spirit and love for the game of hockey always ensured kids were able to continue playing.

“He gets the time requirement for Officials. He knows if it’s your first game to your last game, there is always a learning curve. He’s there to help and listen. You can ask him any question, any rule or situation, and he’s probably seen it over his 44 years.”

Chris Broadworth, South Muskoka Minor Hockey Association OMHA Director

RECENT RECIPIENTS

2023

Kirk Kelly
Newmarket Minor
Hockey Association

2022

Don Easter
Whitchurch-
Stouffville Minor
Hockey Association

2021

Neil Skirving
Hamilton Jr.
Bulldogs

2020

Rick Thomas
Parry Sound Minor
Hockey Association

2019

Wendy White
Newmarket Minor
Hockey Association

A LOOK BACK AT THE 2023 – 24 HOCKEY SEASON

AUGUST 2023

The **OMHA Development Seminar** begins efforts in the field, and OMHA personnel are gathered to share best practices, update on the newest sport technical information available, and depart the event energized to support our Membership.

This past season the OMHA delivered Virtual Online (Live), Recorded On-Demand and In-Person clinics for over 8,000 Coaches and Referees who were seeking to receive their qualifications. Close to 5,000 Trainers earned their HTCP Level 1 certification through the **Hockey Trainers Ontario** online learning.

Over 7,000 Team and Game Officials took the **Respect in Sport - Activity Leader Program** or Officials Program and nearly 9,000 parents were educated through the **Respect in Sport - Parent Program** to create a safe environment for all participants.



SEPTEMBER 2023

The puck drops on the **OMHA Regular Season** as a new year of hockey officially gets underway.

The **OMHA Referee School** provided new officials with an opportunity to acquire officiating skills and rule knowledge, while completing OMHA and Hockey Canada qualification requirements.

Over 170 sets of player and goalie equipment were given to over 70 associations across the OMHA as part of the **Player and Goalie Assist Program**, aimed to help eliminate the cost of purchasing equipment for families that are new to hockey.

The **Breakaway Podcast** returned. As one of minor hockey's only podcasts, this season of Breakaway featured discussions on practice plans, player development and growing the game.

OCTOBER 2023

The **Coach of the Month, Team of the Month and Volunteer of the Month** programs were launched, with winners selected and profiled throughout the season. Nominations from all over the province were submitted highlighting the fantastic work that all participants are doing across our associations.

The tenth annual **OMHA Essay Contest** presented by Respect in Sport was launched with this year's theme being 'Hockey Is Fun'. Vincent Pullo from Tecumseh-Shoreline was later announced as the grand prize winner. The contest is designed to engage players in an educational manner while encouraging them to express their thoughts on why hockey is a sport that all players can enjoy.

NOVEMBER 2023

Home Ice presented by Hudl returned for a fourth season, going behind the scenes of the York-Simcoe Express U16 AAA team as they balanced their lives on and off the ice.

The first set of this season's **U16 and U18 AAA Rankings** presented by Hudl are released. The Top 5 of each group are revealed throughout the year on a bi-weekly basis along with a list of Players to Watch.

DECEMBER 2023

The **AAA Showcase** presented by Hudl was hosted in Whitby, featuring all U14-U18 teams playing crossover East-West games under one roof.

Many OMHA teams volunteered their time over the holidays, participating in **Hockey Gives Back** to make their communities a better place through gift drives, food bank donations and other local initiatives.

JANUARY 2024

The **OMHA Bursary Program** presented by the Dairy Farmers of Ontario returned for the fifth season. The program, comprised of two bursaries, awards ten graduating students who succeed on the ice and in the classroom.



FEBRUARY 2024

Thank a Volunteer Week was celebrated, shining a spotlight on the thousands of volunteers across the province who are the lifeblood of minor hockey working behind the scenes.

MARCH 2023

Teams competed across the province in League Qualifiers to punch their ticket to the OMHA Championships.

The Oakville Rangers were crowned champions of the **OHL Cup** as the top U16 AAA team in all of Ontario.



APRIL 2024

#RedHats are handed out to 45 Champions at the **OMHA Championships** presented by Egg Farmers of Ontario. More than 350 teams competed in over 660 games across six locations over four weekends.

The third annual **U14 OHL Cup** presented by Dairy Farmers of Ontario took place in Kingston featuring 16 of the top U14 AAA teams from across the province.

The annual **Ontario Hockey League draft** saw the OMHA lead the way with 103 players selected including seven in the first round, led by first overall selection Ethan Belchetz. The **OHL Under-18 Priority Selection** was also held and led by Michael Newlove, the number one pick overall.

MAY 2024

The **Evening of Champions** is held at the Hockey Hall of Fame where the 45 OMHA Champions are invited for a private evening to explore the exhibits and interactive games.



WHAT DO KIDS LOVE ABOUT HOCKEY? WE ASKED THEM.

"IT'S A FUN SPORT. IT'S FUN TO PLAY, FUN TO LEARN. IT KEEPS YOU BUSY, SO YOU'RE NOT ALWAYS JUST AT HOME WATCHING TV. YOU CAN MAKE SO MANY FRIENDS."

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA), in partnership with Respect Group, released a new 'Respect in Hockey' video to remind parents and everyone involved in the game why kids love hockey and what respect means to them.

The video ties into the OMHA's #HockeyIsFun campaign. It continues from the summer registration push of the same name which encouraged new families to sign up for hockey.

The campaign re-emphasizes the shared core values of the OMHA and Respect Group for minor hockey – teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership and respect. The video, which features players as young as nine years old, has the participants speak candidly about what they love about hockey, but also what they may not like about parents yelling from the stands.

"Sometimes you get nervous because you think they're yelling at you for doing something wrong," said one of the players from Whitby. Another player said, "I wish they (parents) knew it was just a game and it's just for kids. They should understand it's just fun."

"SOMETIMES YOU GET NERVOUS BECAUSE YOU THINK THEY'RE YELLING AT YOU FOR DOING SOMETHING WRONG."

"This video is an important reminder of why kids love to play hockey, and also makes us all aware of how adults can impact the player's enjoyment of the game, both positively and negatively," said Ian Taylor, Executive Director of the OMHA. "Hockey is Fun! Let's do everything we can to keep it that way."

Respect Group was created by co-founders Sheldon Kennedy and Wayne McNeil to pursue their common passion: the prevention of bullying, abuse, harassment and discrimination (BAHD) behaviours. The OMHA and Respect Group have worked closely together for nearly a decade to make hockey a safe, fun and respectful game for everyone involved.

"I applaud the OMHA for their leadership in emphasizing and ensuring that the game is FUN," said Sheldon Kennedy, Co-Founder of Respect Group. "Now, more than ever, we need our kids to stay involved in sport and by keeping it fun means they will want to keep coming back!"

"I WISH PARENTS KNEW IT WAS JUST A GAME AND IT'S JUST FOR KIDS. THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND IT'S JUST FUN."

It is the responsibility of all of us to make hockey a welcoming and respectful place at every rink. Creating a positive environment is up to the effort of players, bench staff, on-ice officials and parents. Like the kids said in the video, "it's just a game."

We encourage all OMHA participants to [share the video](#) with their hockey communities.

COACH OF THE MONTH



THE
COACHES
SITE

This was the seventh season of awarding an OMHA Coach of the Month presented by The Coaches Site and we were overwhelmed with the amount of nominations received and all of the deserving coaches. Aimed to recognize the importance and dedication of coaches in the province, one coach was chosen each month and their work was profiled. Thank you to all of the bench staff who make minor hockey possible for our players!

OCTOBER

MATT PORWARKA – NAPANEE U18 LL

As a U18 team this could be the final year of minor hockey for some players. How are you trying to make it memorable?

I want to instill how much we love the game whether it be on or off the ice. I want the team to know that off the ice needs and developments are just as important during the off season. There are often humorous tales that we can share about the game and situations that help solidify relationships. Let's have fun at games and practices. I am a strong advocate of equal playing time to ensure all players feel valued and can communicate in an open and positive way. Hockey should be viewed as a fun competition that instills personal development and lifelong growth.

NOVEMBER

EMILY SARARAS – SOUTH HURON U13 D

What have you learned as a first time coach?

I have learned so much as a first time coach! The biggest takeaway has been how rewarding it is to see my team learn and grow. I had a hunch I would enjoy coaching but my expectations have far been exceeded. Other takeaways have been around the art of planning an effective practice, the importance of clear communication with the players, coaching staff, and parents, and that you need to remember to bring your home jersey's to a tournament (ha!). I can only assume I am still on the tip of the iceberg when it comes to learning as a coach and I am excited for the journey of continuing to learn and hone in on my coaching skills and strategy to show up as the best coach I can be for my team.

DECEMBER

JON FORBES – ERIN-HILLSBURGH U13 B

What has the team been able to teach you as a coach?

Coaching the team has reminded me of the joys of the game. You may be having a bad day but you get to go to the rink and play hockey with your friends. The players also remind me constantly that it is just a game. Good or bad, you can't let it take over your life. We may lose a game but eventually, once the sting has worn off, they are still laughing and having fun in the dressing room afterwards! Lastly, they've taught me humility. Going back to falling on the ice, if you can't laugh at yourself what can you do? Don't take yourself too seriously!

JANUARY

MARK ORLECKI – PETERBOROUGH U14 A

What are some ways you work with each player of different skill levels?

For me communication is the foundation for everything. Bi-weekly meetings with players are a great way to ensure each player is developing and more importantly plays a role in their own development. Tracking the development with a phased approach will ensure each athlete gets the right number of reps to scale the skill to where they (and you) want to get it. One of the proudest moments we can have as a coach is seeing that skill mature throughout a season and be applied during a game, it's pretty remarkable and rewarding to see that athlete come back to the bench smiling ear to ear.

FEBRUARY

KYLE ERB – TWIN CENTRE U9 LL

How do you create a love of the game with hockey's youngest players?

Hockey teaches you many important lessons that translate off the ice - teamwork, friendship, effort, and fair play. Most importantly win or lose we are all there to have fun and respect others. It is important for everyone involved in hockey whether it be players, coaches, or fans to keep that in mind. At the end of the day, it is a game, so go have fun with it!

MARCH

TREVOR COOK – SOUTH MUSKOKA U13 D

What are your responsibilities as an Assistant Coach as a part of the coaching staff?

You get to focus on player relationships and fun without the pressure of being a Head Coach. There is a lot of truth to that. As a previous head coach, I tried to emulate the support I had from my Assistant coach. He was amazing to work with and had set the bar high for me. My role on this team is to support, energize, and communicate with the players during practices and games. During games I am usually found with a board in my hand talking to the players and showing them visually what we need to accomplish and why. Practices are my favorite though. Being on skates and being active in the drills with the players allows time to break down movements to better understand how to teach them. Also, as an assistant I enjoy having the time to create a fun competitive atmosphere allowing the players to push themselves and each other. This includes occasionally challenging me to a drill or a race. I still hold the team record for the fastest lap!

OVER 170 SETS OF FREE EQUIPMENT HELPING NEW HOCKEY FAMILIES IN OMHA

RECIPIENT ASSOCIATIONS OF PLAYER AND GOALIE ASSIST PROGRAMS ANNOUNCED

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) is excited to announce the recipient communities across the province that received free equipment at the start of the season designed to encourage new hockey families to try out the sport.

The program, known as Player and Goalie Assist, selected Associations are given full sets of free CCM player and goalie equipment sized for U9 and Below age groups. A total of 76 Associations were selected to each receive a full set of goalie gear, and 10 Associations received 5 full sets of player gear, with 10 other Associations receiving both goalie and player gear.

These Assist programs make it easier for Associations to help bring in new hockey families to the sport without them facing any financial barriers or having to make the commitment of purchasing equipment. Each set of equipment can be used by the local Association at its discretion, either loaning it out for the season or giving directly to players to keep as needed.

Many of the recipient Associations are located in areas with varying socioeconomic backgrounds. In the town of Pelham, located in the Niagara area, it is a mix of families that live in rural and urban communities. That can bring its own set of challenges when it comes to player registration.

"There was a family in the community who inquired about registering their two young boys in minor hockey. When they found out the cost of equipment and registration, they decided to stick with ball hockey for another year," said Patrick Dooling the Treasurer of Pelham Minor Hockey. "The Player and Goalie Assist program will alleviate that barrier to them and allow those two kids to play (ice) hockey next year."



Pelham currently has a stash of used goalie equipment in varying condition in a storage area at the rink for players who may need to use it during the season. The collection currently doesn't have any player equipment. Receiving gear from the Player Assist program changes that.

"Other than lost and found gear and people that might donate hand me downs, we haven't had anything to provide families with an opportunity to get involved in hockey without a significant outlet," said Dooling. "This equipment will augment our goalie equipment stash with really nice player equipment and give five or six kids then chance to get into hockey."

Ian Blanchard, a convenor, believes the program can help grow the game in the community.

"Hopefully it keeps our numbers up and we keep more kids playing hockey for a longer amount of time and they continue to have fun and this can take the stress off of them," he said.

All Associations were encouraged to apply for the Assist programs. The OMHA runs the Player and Goalie Assist programs together, sending out the equipment at the start of the season to assist with registration.

"Programs like Player Assist and Goalie Assist are crucial in helping our Associations remove some of the challenges in bringing young players into the game," said OMHA Executive Director Ian Taylor. "We hope that these programs can help alleviate some stresses within our communities and encourage new families to try out hockey."

The full sets of equipment include:

Goalie Assist: catcher, blocker, chest protector, pads, stick, bag

Player Assist: shin pads, pants, shoulder pads, elbow pads, gloves, helmet, neck guard

ASSOCIATIONS RECEIVING FREE GOALIE EQUIPMENT

Acton House League	Lakefield	Peterborough
Amherstberg	Lambeth	Petroilia
Arthur	Lambton Shores	Port Stanley
Barrie	Langton	Richmond Hill
Brampton	Lindsay	Riverside
Brighton	Loyalist Township	Saugeen Shores
Caledonia	Lucan	Simcoe
Clarington Rec	Mariposa	South Oxford
Drayton	Mid-Huron	South Simcoe
Durham	Mooretown	St. George
Ennismore	Muskoka Rock	Stoney Creek
Erie Northshore	New Hamburg	Strathroy
Essa	Newcastle	Talbot
Flamborough	Niagara Falls	Tecumseh Shoreline
Gananoque	Niagara on the Lake	Thamesford
Garden City - Kiwanis	North Durham	Thornton
Greater Fort Erie	Northumberland	Twin Centre
Guelph	Oakville	Upper York
Highland Storm	Orillia	Wainfleet
Kincardine	Owen Sound	Wallace
King Township	Paris	West Niagara
Kingston	Parry Sound	Woodville

ASSOCIATIONS RECEIVING FREE PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Bancroft	Markham	Thorold
Bruce Peninsula	Millbrook	Wasaga Beach
Campbellford	Oshawa - OCHL	
Elmvale	St. Thomas	

ASSOCIATIONS RECEIVING FREE GOALIE AND FREE PLAYER EQUIPMENT

Dundas	Manvers	Wallaceburg
Frontenac	Pelham	Whitchurch-Stouffville
Grand Valley	Saugeen Valley	
Lefroy	South Muskoka	



OHL DRAFT

DRAFT RECAP



The Ontario Hockey League draft took place over two nights and saw minor hockey players get one step closer to realizing their NHL dreams. Seven players from the Ontario Minor Hockey Association were selected in the first round of the draft, led by first overall pick, forward Ethan Belchetz from the Oakville Rangers. This marks the second year in a row an OMHA player has been selected first overall, following Matthew Schaefer last year and joining Quinton Byfield in 2018 as recent top selections.

The OMHA led the way with 103 players selected from 19 teams. The U16 AAA Champion Barrie Jr. Colts saw 14 players chosen, followed by the OHL Cup Champion Oakville Rangers (12) and

Peterborough Minor Petes (10). Every OHL team selected at least one OMHA player.

The OHL Under-18 Priority Selection draft wrapped up on April 17 for players to be selected by OHL teams. The top pick from the OMHA was Halton Hurricanes netminder Michael Newlove, chosen first overall by the Windsor Spitfires. He follows in a long line of top overall selections in this draft's history to come from the OMHA, including former first overall picks Kevin Henstock, Aidan Spooner, Mitchell Weeks and Victor Hadfield. In total there were 10 OMHA players selected in the first round. The Ontario Minor Hockey Association had 16 players from nine teams picked.

U16 DRAFT

ROUND	PICK	NAME	OMHA TEAM	OHL TEAM
1	1	Ethan Belchetz	Oakville Rangers	Windsor Spitfires
1	3	Colin Fitzgerald	Peterborough Minor Petes	Peterborough Petes
1	9	Alex McLean	Barrie Jr. Colts	Guelph Storm
1	11	Nathan Amidovski	Barrie Jr. Colts	Ottawa 67s
1	15	Evan Headrick	Oakville Rangers	Kitchener Rangers
1	16	Ryder Carey	Oakville Rangers	North Bay Battalion
1	20	Logan Hawery	Barrie Jr. Colts	London Knights

U18 DRAFT

ROUND	PICK	NAME	OMHA TEAM	OHL TEAM
1	1	Michael Newlove	Halton Hurricanes	Windsor Spitfires
1	4	Jaden Flora	Niagara North Stars	Niagara IceDogs
1	5	Luc Gauvreau	Hamilton Steel	Barrie Colts
1	6	Isaac Oldenhof	Markham Waxers	Flint Firebirds
1	7	Trent Gates	Halton Hurricanes	Owen Sound Attack
1	9	Sam Mudie	Halton Hurricanes	Guelph Storm
1	14	Ben Austin	Oakville Rangers	Brantford Bulldogs
1	15	Erik Maki	Whitby Wildcats	Kitchener Rangers
1	17	Devon Ferroni	Hamilton Steel	Oshawa Generals
1	20	Kyle Henneberry	Halton Hurricanes	London Knights

"#HOCKEYISFUN"



The Ontario Minor Hockey Association is proud to announce the grand prize winner and finalists of the tenth annual Essay Contest presented by Respect in Sport. This year's theme was '#HockeyIsFun'. The contest was designed to engage players in an educational manner while encouraging them to express their thoughts on what life skills they learn from playing hockey.

Over 300 essays were submitted and the Ontario Minor Hockey Association in partnership with Respect in Sport want to thank everyone for their participation. Based on the quality, creativity and passion demonstrated in their submission, five finalists were selected with one of them emerging as our grand prize winner.

Vincent Pullo of Tecumseh-Shoreline Minor Hockey Association is this year's winner, who wrote about how his hockey team supports him and gives him confidence away from the rink. For being named winner, Vincent will receive a \$1000 worth of CCM Hockey Gear.

GRAND PRIZE WINNER



VINCENT PULLO
U11
TECUMSEH-SHORELINE EAGLES

Hockey is an amazing sport, and I think it's really fun! I am the only player from my school on my hockey team, but that's what makes it special. At first, I was nervous because I didn't know anyone. But guess what? It turned out to be awesome!

My teammates are cool, and they have always made me feel like I'm part of the team. We skate fast, pass the puck, and try to score goals. But the best part is, we learn to get better together. If I make a mistake, they don't get mad. They help me learn how to do better next time. We're like a family on ice!

Playing hockey has not only been fun but it's also made me more confident. The confidence isn't just about hockey, it's helping me at school too! I feel braver answering questions in class and talking to new friends.

We practice a lot, and every time we play, I feel more confident. Our coaches teach us how to play safely, have respect, and have fun. It doesn't really matter if we win or lose. Of course, winning is great, but what's more important is playing the sport I love and making new friends.

There's also something really cool about being in a game. Hearing my parents and other people cheer for us makes me super happy. They shout our names and clap, and it feels like I'm a big star in the NHL. We all work hard, fight through tough games, and share fist pumps and smiles, no matter what the score is.

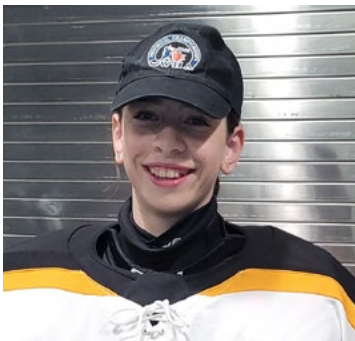
In hockey, every day is an adventure. I've made new friends, I'm getting stronger, more confident, and I always have fun. I think everyone should try playing hockey...it's the best!

FINALISTS



JACK VANDERGOOT
U11
MOUNT BRYDGES COUGARS

On my team, I get to make new friends. We get to travel away from home for tournaments which is the best! Even if we do not win, it's still a blast! At home, I get to play hockey with my family and friends in the basement. My dad put hockey nets down there so I can practice, but also play mini games with my family after school. In the summer, we put the nets on the driveway and play road hockey too! Hockey isn't just something that I can play to get exercise, but it is a game to enjoy with friends, family and teammates to have the most fun no matter what the weather is like!



ALAYNA BINSTOCK
U13
AURORA

One reason why hockey is so much fun is because it's a team sport. When I come to the rink it's always fun talking with my teammates and catching up, even if we just saw each other yesterday! In hockey, everyone needs to work together as one unit. When a goal is scored everyone celebrates, not just because we scored but because everyone worked hard and contributed. This is why teamwork makes games so much fun, everyone working together.



ADAM CHAUDRY
U10
MILTON

None of my friends from school play hockey, but that did not stop me from falling in love with the game. I get to skate on ice, chase a tiny puck with a stick, and go faster than I can ever run. It is like playing a super fast video game, but in real life! I play defense so I don't get to score but when my team scores it is an amazing feeling. I love how we all celebrate afterwards. But hockey isn't just about scoring goals but it is also about learning stuff that you might not learn in other games. My coaches tell me about teamwork and how it takes a team to win a game. This season has been tough. We haven't won any games but I have made new friends who I would have never met at school. My mom and dad say that hockey teaches me important lessons, like hard work and not giving up.



LUKE RUPKE
U15
AMHERSTBURG

This is my first year playing hockey and I think playing hockey is fun for many different reasons. One of the reasons I love hockey is that my teammates are very encouraging and supportive. Being the goalie can be hard and there is a lot of pressure, but we always have each other's back and always stand by one another. Hockey is fun to play on the ice and off the ice with your friends. Hockey can make fantastic friendships that can last for a lifetime when you meet new people and work together to be the best that you can be. Hockey is fun to play because everyone has an important role to play on their team. Whether it's being a forward, defenseman, or goalie like me, everyone plays an important role in helping the team win.



AN OMHA GRAD'S COMMITMENT TO MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

MCFADDEN'S MOVEMENT HELPS RAISE MONEY EACH SEASON TO LOCAL CAUSES

After losing a close friend while a high school student in Kincardine, Garrett McFadden made a commitment to mental health awareness moving forward.

It's a role he's taken on ever since he played in the OMHA with the Kinucks, later with the Grey-Bruce Highlanders, and onto the Ontario Hockey League and beyond.

After the tragedy, he said it was the first point in his life when he started to realize what mental health was and how it can impact everyone.

McFadden acknowledged his vision was really able to take off with the Guelph Storm, as the team was very active within the community and could support his initiative. Clear skies led to a successful McFadden's Movement Celebrity Charity Golf Classic in July. The third annual holding of the event, the fundraiser was held at Ariss Valley Golf & Country Club, just outside of Guelph.

"The guys were huge supporters of it all. A lot of them are still involved today, whether it's the golf tournament of whatever events we decide to do. There's a ton of support from my former teammates."

One of those former Storm teammates is Jason Dickinson, now an NHL veteran with the Chicago Blackhawks. He can see how much the cause is important to McFadden.

"Listening to him explain it to me, I could tell it meant something to him and I loved what he was preaching and what he wanted to do. I thought it was great. Every year since, it's grown and grown. He clearly cares about it."

A pro for a nearly decade, Dickinson explains the shift in how teams are approaching their support to mental health.

"When I first turned pro, there was basically nothing available. They could help you find somebody if you wanted help but there was nobody readily accessible," said Dickinson. "Now I'm hearing guys in the minors (AHL), the teams have full player development programs where it's all covered. They've definitely bought into the idea that a lot of these guys are struggling."

When he has the opportunity, McFadden spends his time talking to minor hockey teams and in schools. Proceeds raised by McFadden's Movement are donated to Wes 4 Youth and CMHA Waterloo-Wellington.

He wants the minor hockey players of today to look out for themselves and be good teammates and become familiar with the mental health resources that exist around them.

"If you can be a good influence on the people around you it's going to be a major help," said McFadden.

"Hockey is a team sport so you've grown up with people in your corner all along. There's no reason to try and do this on your own," said Dickinson.



Off the ice or on, whether you see them or not, there is an extremely dedicated group of parents, community members and administrators that give their time to keep minor hockey in motion and ensure a positive experience for our young athletes. From February 27th to March 5th, the OMHA celebrated everyone who spends their time enriching the lives of kids through hockey.

We recognize the impact that volunteers have in delivering minor hockey across the province. Volunteers are the lifeblood of minor hockey, and the OMHA takes great pride in having an outstanding group of volunteers across its centres. There are associations that rely on just a few volunteers to do the work of the many, and having one extra person contribute their time can help immensely.

From association administration to managing a team, to organizing community Hockey Gives Back events or creating a carpool schedule, these things all add up. Organizing registration, payment, scheduling and standings are all areas that volunteers dedicate their time to ensure that everything runs smoothly. While some of these actions may feel small, they are crucial to the big picture and are important pieces of the puzzle, and associations are always looking for parents who want to contribute and get engaged.

Thank a Volunteer Week was highlighted through volunteer video profiles, motivational tools showing the volunteer experience, and material-sharing for associations to call out submissions of thanks. Among the highlights included the reveal of this year's OMHA Development and Administrators Award winners, as well as the Coach of the Month for February.

VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association and Nothers teamed up for the Volunteer of the Month program – a 'Rookie' and a 'Veteran' volunteer were recognized each month through a profile highlighting their involvement in the game of hockey. A 'rookie' is someone new to their position within the last two years and a 'veteran' has been involved for more than two seasons.

Associations and parents were encouraged to nominate any volunteer in any role – administrator, coach, manager, fundraiser, to name a few – whoever they thought helped make minor hockey succeed at their rinks.

We were thrilled to see so many deserving nominations throughout the season that recognized the tireless work that goes into being a volunteer!



OCTOBER

ROOKIE
AIMEE BIZNET
NORTH MIDDLESEX

VETERAN
LINDA FEATHERBE
BRAMPTON

JANUARY

ROOKIE
BRENDEN GORAN
TWIN CENTRE

VETERAN
JASON SYMONDS
ORANGEVILLE

NOVEMBER

ROOKIE
MARK SWITZER
STRATHROY

VETERAN
AMY TEETER
CHATSWORTH AND DISTRICT

FEBRUARY

ROOKIE
STEVE KEOCH
GARDEN CITY – KIWANIS

VETERAN
JOHN REILLY
SOUTH SIMCOE

DECEMBER

ROOKIE
MATT VAN OSCH
HURON-BRUCE

VETERAN
MANDY HUMPHREY
LAMBETH

MARCH

ROOKIE
PAUL SORRENTI
SOUTH SIMCOE

VETERAN
CANDICE MILLER
WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE

WHERE ARE THEY NOW: BURSARY “HELPED TREMENDOUSLY”



Now in its fifth season, the OMHA-Dairy Farmers of Ontario Bursary program has awarded over \$100,000 worth of post-secondary bursaries to students across the province. The recipients from previous years are well into their studies, and we reached out to some to see how the bursary impacted them and how their schoolwork is going.

The OMHA Bursary Program is comprised of two awards – the Dairy Farmers of Ontario Bursary and the Wally Scott Bursary. It reflects the achievements of young hockey players who are committed to their community, athletic ability, and academic achievement. Each recipient will receive financial support toward their post-secondary education.

We chatted with:

[Chloe Ryder \(Kent Minor Hockey\) - 2020 Recipient](#)

[Vincent Robbenhaar \(Barrie Minor Hockey\) - 2020 Recipient](#)

[Aidan Proderick \(Loyalist Minor Hockey\) - 2021 Recipient](#)



CHLOE RYDER
KENT MINOR HOCKEY - 2020 RECIPIENT

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF YOUR CURRENT STUDIES?

Ryder: I am currently in my fourth year of Architectural studies at the McEwen School of Architecture at Laurentian University in Sudbury, Ontario.

Robbenhaar: I started my first year of Dental school at University of Toronto in September 2023. I was originally at Western University studying medical sciences with an honours specialization in biochemistry and applied during my third year of studies to Toronto. I was fortunate enough to be one of 15 students to get into the program after only three years of undergraduate education. I now join 95 other students in UofT's DDS class of 2027.

Proderick: I am currently in my second year of the Laurentian University Bachelor of Business Administration program offered at St. Lawrence College. I began my post-secondary

education at Queen's University but switched to St. Lawrence College after being offered a position in the BBA program and on both the varsity soccer and badminton teams.

HOW DID THE OMHA-DAIRY FARMERS OF ONTARIO BURSARY HELP YOU GET A HEAD START IN YOUR POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION?

Ryder: The Dairy Farmers of Ontario Bursary helped to pay for my tuition within my first year of University and alleviated some of the financial stress when paying for residence and living expenses within that first year. It gave me a head start by enabling me to save more money to be able to pay my tuition and living expenses for the subsequent years.

Robbenhaar: The bursary helped tremendously at the start of my first year in two distinct ways. Firstly, it was a huge financial benefit which helped to reduce my costs in my first year. Additionally, from a psychological standpoint, the bursary served as a valuable acknowledgement of my hard work, which gave me the confidence I needed to have a smooth and successful transition into my university journey.

Proderick: The bursary relieved a large portion of the financial stress that comes with attending postsecondary school. Specifically, it helped me greatly with paying tuition and allowed me to focus on preparing for the next chapter of my life without having to worry too much about finances. I am very grateful for the head start I was able to get thanks to the wonderful people at the Ontario Minor Hockey Association and Dairy Farmers of Ontario.

WHAT LIFE SKILLS DID YOU LEARN IN HOCKEY THAT HAVE HELPED YOU AS A STUDENT?

Ryder: Hockey taught me communication and leadership skills that have tremendously helped me as a student. Architecture is a collaborative field and requires one to be able to communicate and lead projects and ideas. Group work is a large part of this program and I have been able to utilize the skills that I have learned through hockey to be able to engage in collaborative and successful group projects. There have been many projects where creative ideas oppose one another and through my experiences in hockey I have been able to utilize skills learned to be able to communicate with group members to ensure everyone's ideas are heard and considered for the project.

Robbenhaar: One key life skill that I honed through hockey which helps as a student is resilience. In hockey, setbacks are

inevitable - whether it's a bad call, a tough loss, or an injury. Understanding that these challenges are part of the game helped to frame my mindset that to grow as a hockey player, I needed to be able to persist and do my best regardless of the hurdles ahead. These setbacks occur in life as a student as well. There were days when I didn't feel great about a test or felt I was falling behind in a course, but having the resilience to keep going and be disciplined enough to finish assignments or study hard proved very useful in cultivating academic success.



AIDEN PRODERICK
LOYALIST MINOR HOCKEY - 2021 RECIPIENT

Proderick: Through hockey I learned several invaluable skills that have helped me become the person and student that I am today. Of the many life skills that I obtained through hockey, the three that have proved to be the most beneficial as a student are teamwork, time-management, and emotional intelligence. As a hockey player and student, teamwork is a fundamental skill in facilitating a cohesive and successful environment where everyone is comfortable and can perform to the best of their ability. The school environment requires you to work with others who you may not know and that is when teamwork skills are of great benefit. Through balancing hockey with school, work, other sports, and leisurely activities I have learned to balance my time well. Effective time-management has been an imperative skill in post-secondary school where the workload is heavier than in high school. Lastly, the increasingly important skill of emotional intelligence in contemporary society has helped me in school. The hockey environment taught me to be respectful of others because although we may share the experience of hockey or school, everyone has different things going on in their lives outside of our shared practices. Emotional intelligence is an integral skill in all aspects of life and hockey taught me to practice empathy, active listening, and conflict resolution. The life skills that can be learned from hockey are boundless and they have helped me greatly as a student and as a person in general.

WHAT WAS THE BIGGEST SURPRISE FOR YOU IN UNIVERSITY?

Ryder: I think the biggest surprise for me in university was how self led the studies are. You can either choose to do the minimum course work or you can choose to explore certain topics further. As you are in charge of your own studies I have been able to further discover what I am passionate about in architecture. I have recognized that I am interested in adaptive reuse of architecture through some of my environmental and building systems classes. This has become my passion through architecture and what I am hoping to focus on throughout my Masters.

Robbenhaar: My biggest surprise for me when adapting to university life was figuring out how crucial finding a balance was. Sure there are many days where I need to study for hours on end, but scheduling some form of physical activity and social activity is imperative to helping me feel motivated throughout the week and to avoid burnout. Some of my favourite physical activities over the past few years have been running (I was actively involved in managing a run club at Western), hockey or one of the various intramural sports Western offered (I played ultimate frisbee, European handball, ball hockey, and basketball throughout my undergrad. These were all great experiences to meet lots of really cool people and have a lot of fun). Setting aside time to keep up and hang out with friends was equally as important for overall mental health and maintaining a social life. Having an upcoming activity or social event made studying much easier as I always felt I had something fun to look forward to.

Proderick: The biggest surprise for me when making the jump from high school to university were the 300 person lectures and the realization that it is much harder to get to an 8:30 a.m. class in university than it is in high school.

WHAT DO YOUR NEXT FEW YEARS LOOK LIKE?

Ryder: I am attending the McEwen School of Architecture here at Laurentian University for my Masters of Architecture beginning in September of 2024. This is a two year program with a thesis in year two that I am hoping to focus on adaptive reuse of Architecture while helping vulnerable populations.



VINCENT ROBBENHAAR
BARRIE MINOR HOCKEY - 2020 RECIPIENT

Robbenhaar: My Dental program at UofT is a 4-year program so I will be focusing on that until I graduate in late spring of 2027. Afterwards, I will likely work as an associate dentist to build experience and pay off all student debts while building some capital before I eventually pursue my ultimate goal of starting and managing my own dental practice.

Proderick: For the next two years I am going to focus on completing my BBA degree and seeking internship opportunities along the way within the realm of sports administration. I also look forward to competing for the St. Lawrence Surge men's soccer team and the badminton team at the college for the next two years. After graduating I will continue to narrow down my passion within sports administration and I intend to travel the world while I am still young. Obtaining a marketing position within the hockey industry is a route I have been considering.



The OMHA Team of the Month program presented by CoachThem was aimed at recognizing minor hockey teams in the province making an impact on the ice and in their communities who demonstrate all of the positives that hockey has to offer.

This award wasn't about going undefeated during the month or scoring hat tricks, it's about stories of teamwork and perseverance, leadership and being good role models in and around the rink. We heard the stories of food drives, helping a teammate, making new friends and having fun!

Three teams were selected every month, with each coach receiving a CoachThem prize pack.

NOVEMBER



MARIPOSA
U13 BLUE HL



WOOLWICH
U15 A



TALBOT
U15 C

FEBRUARY



ORANGEVILLE
U9 MD



WEST LORNE
U13 D



ARRAN-ELDERSLIE
U15 D

DECEMBER



MIDLAND
U9 MD



MILTON
U11 BB



LINDSAY
U11 TEAL LL

MARCH



LINDSAY
U11 B



WHITBY
U13 AA



NIAGARA FALLS
U11 B

JANUARY



BELLEVILLE
U9 HL



CAMPBELLFORD
U11 LL



STURGEON LAKE
U11 LL



Over 660 games took place at the 2024 OMHA Championships presented by Egg Farmers of Ontario, with more than 350 teams attending to crown 45 Champions across nine age groups at rinks in Brampton, Halton Hills, Kingston, Newmarket, Oakville and Whitby.

Skaters carved up the ice with huge smiles on their faces on the road to the #RedHats, the Ontario Minor Hockey Association's coveted prize for its champions. Leading up to the four OMHA Championship weekends were League championships and regional qualifying events where teams could punch their tickets to get to these OMHA Championship weekends.

Congratulations to all of the Champions, Finalists, and teams who participated!



QUINTE RED DEVILS
U10 AAA



HESPELER SHAMROCKS
U10 AA



RIVERSIDE RANGERS
U10 A



BARRIE JR. COLTS
U10 BB



HAMILTON STEEL
U11 AAA



BARRIE JR. COLTS
U11 AA



WELLAND TIGERS
U11 A



FLAMBOROUGH SABRES
U11 BB



WALKERTON CAPITALS
U11 TIER 1



MOUNT FOREST RAMS
U11 TIER 2



ILDERTON JETS
U11 TIER 3



BARRIE JR. COLTS
U12 AAA



WEST NIAGARA FLYING ACES
U12 AA



SOUTH OXFORD STORM
U12 A



BARRIE JR. COLTS
U12 BB



QUINTE RED DEVILS
U13 AAA



KING TOWNSHIP REBELLION
U13 AA



WOOLWICH WILDCATS
U13 A



ST. THOMAS STARS
U13 BB



KINCARDINE KINUCKS
U13 TIER 1



EAST LAMBTON EAGLES
U13 TIER 2



LAMBTON SHORES PREDATORS
U13 TIER 3



BARRIE JR. COLTS
U14 AAA



KINGSTON CANADIANS
U14 AA



WHITBY WILDCATS
U14 A



GUELPH JR. GRYPHONS
U14 BB



QUINTE RED DEVILS
U15 AAA



OSHAWA GENERALS
U15 AA



WOOLWICH WILDCATS
U15 A



GUELPH JR. GRYPHONS
U15 BB



ENNISMORE EAGLES
U15 TIER 1



TALBOT TRAILBLAZERS
U15 TIER 2



SOUTH HURON SABRES
U15 TIER 3



BARRIE JR. COLTS
U16 AAA



GUELPH JR. GRYPHONS
U16 AA



AJAX-PICKERING RAIDERS
U16 A



BARRIE JR. COLTS
U16 BB



MARKHAM WAXERS
U18 AAA



MILTON WINTERHAWKS
U18 AA



WELLAND TIGERS
U18 A



ERIN-HILLSBURGH DEVILS
U18 BB



ELMVALE COYOTES
U18 TIER 1



HIGHLAND STORM
U18 TIER 2



WEST LORNE COMETS
U18 TIER 3



LUCAN IRISH
U21

MilkUP

A source of Vitamin A for healthy bones & teeth.



Because they'll probably need it.

FuelUP with MilkUP



OMHA.NET

