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King Township hockey organizations open merging process

By Jake Courtepatte

King is one step closer to a jointly-run King Township minor hockey rep program for next season.

Executives from both the Schomberg Minor Hockey Association and NobleKing Minor Hockey Association last week approved last a motion to merge the two programs at the representative level, creating one organization for all of King Township.

NobleKing president Mike Baldesarra and Schomberg president Kelly Harbridge released a joint statement about the future merger.

?We are extremely pleased to report that the negotiating committees of both organizations have worked extremely hard on your behalf, completing in a matter of a few months a comprehensive framework and the necessary agreements to create King Township Minor Hockey. Our proposal to create King Township Minor Hockey is an innovative minor hockey organizational structure that is unique to the needs, geography and communities of our municipality.?

The merger is unique in that both centres will preserve both their Local and House League programs, allowing players at a recreational level to compete, as always, at a level they see fit.

?The original community based teams at the recreational Local level will remain the same, in order to preserve our rich hometown hockey traditions within the King Township villages,? said Harbridge. ?We believe it will offer the best of both worlds ? allowing our hometown hockey heritage to continue at the local community level, while cooperating with each other to create a more competitive and dynamic Rep hockey experience for those players wanting to compete at a higher level.?

?Our emphasis to our members is that this is not an amalgamation/merger per se, as a true merger destroys the original centres and only leaves one new entity going forward.?

The new King Township organization will be jointly run by both the Schomberg and NobleKing organizations, in a 50/50 manner.

?The newly created King Township Minor Hockey will be responsible for administering the competitive rep hockey program for the entire Township, managed by a joint board of directors,? said Harbridge.

All eligible players within King Township's recognized OMHA territory will be able to try out for the King Township rep teams.

It is initially anticipated that King Township will be categorized as an ?A? level hockey centre, although the final categorization remains to be seen.

Team name and official colours are yet to be determined depending on a final approval, though rules stipulate they be ?unique and distinct? from the current branding used by both the Schomberg and NobleKing organizations.

The final proposal for the plan is scheduled to come before both Schomberg and NobleKing executives on Feb. 21, where a vote will be held on whether to move forward with the plan.

More information on the plan can be found on both organizations websites at www.schombergminorhockey.com and www.noblekingminorhockey.com.