**QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

**Why Amalgamate?**

Amalgamation means:

All players playing at a level that is appropriate for their capability.

Rep and LL teams at all age divisions with appropriately placed players.

Greater opportunities for improvement and expanding capabilities of players at the local level.

Increased ability for organization to host specialized development clinics (e.g., goalie clinics, power skating, skills and drills)

Larger pool of parent volunteers for tournament hosting, coaching clinics, & certification clinics.

Most importantly - children enjoying playing hockey with peers, and children and learning and developing at an appropriate level.

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What will the new association be called?**

If the vote is yes, a subcommittee will be created to handle the submission of ideas for names and logos. Both centres are very open to having the membership make recommendations which can be considered.

**Is the amalgamation happening automatically?**

No. The decision to amalgamate or not to amalgamate is the responsibility of each voting member of both Belmont and Aylmer Minor Hockey.

**How does amalgamation happen?**

Both Belmont and Aylmer Minor Hockey Association would need a majority vote of 67% or greater from their respective members to proceed with the amalgamation.

**If the vote is yes to amalgamate, when does it start?**

We would aim to be officially amalgamated for the start of the 2023-2024 season.

**If the vote is no then what happens?**

If either organization has less than the required yes votes (67% of the vote) the opportunity to restart or continue amalgamation talks is lost for a minimum of 2 years (per OMHA regulations).

**Who can vote?**

One vote is allowed per registered family unit that has a player whose home centre is Belmont or Aylmer

In the case of a split family only the parent at the registered address of the player can vote.

**Where will my player have practice?**

Throughout a season teams will have to rotate which arena they practice and have games at. Depending on the number of teams in an age division, each team would take turns playing in both centres for a period of time during the season.

**What will the centre point be for the new organization?**

TBD

**What if I am in a right of choice area according to the new centre point?**

Right of choice will open up for any member within the designated area to re-sign or leave the new organization. Once a right of choice player signs onto the organization they are considered a life time member.

**If the Partnership is approved, where will my Rep child be playing?**

The New Minor Hockey Association will be working towards a fair and balanced allocation of Rep Teams amongst the two centres, so that all communities share in being able to host Rep Team games and practices. The specific assignment of ice time for Rep Teams will depend upon ice scheduling availability, the size of the ice pad, and the age/division of the particular team. This could involve Rep teams being based out of a specific arena for the season, or a rotation of ice times among the facilities throughout the season.

**If the Partnership is approved, where will my Local League child be playing?**

One of the primary goals of this Partnership is to maintain the same high quality Local League experience for our community based recreational teams. This means that the Local League Teams continue to play out of their community arenas as part of their traditional Local League teams.

**Will representative play Shamrock or Southern Counties?**

TBD.

**Why amalgamate with our neighbouring centres?**

As each centres demographics continue to change; we’re looking for ways to offer the best solutions that will allow hockey to continue to thrive in our communities.  Amalgamation would help each association offer a hockey program that maximizes player development and fun in part by fielding teams comprised of players with consistent ability at every level.

**Will the new centre have its own Board of Directors?**

Yes, the amalgamated centre will have a Board comprised of an equal number of Directors from each centre.

**How will coaches be selected?**

Initially coaches will be selected by a committee comprised of people from each centre, until such time the boards are completely integrated together.

**How will rep teams be selected?**

The teams will be selected by the Coach plus unbiased, independent evaluators.

**Will there be a fixed number of Players from each Association on each Rep team?**

No, it is not realistic to set fixed player numbers from each Association. Player selection will be based on player ability/skill. This ensures consistency in talent/skill amongst selected player groups and provides for strong/competitive team structures that are fun and exciting to play within.

**When will we find out if the Amalgamation is approved?**

The proposed Amalgamation will eventually be presented to the OMHA when all the requirements are completed to provide the best quality application

Shared Pilot Q & A

**Why a pilot project, which pretty much is an amalgamation to all effects is going to be implemented without any membership consultation?**

The pilot project is being used to allow for the membership to see what an amalgamation would feel and look like. A couple more town halls and a membership vote will be forthcoming to gauge the interest of the membership. The AMHA would never make a decision as large as this without consultation of our membership, at the previous town hall the talk of amalgamation was very well received and the two boards are just trying to do what is best to try to save small town hockey.

**Would Aylmer rep teams practice in Aylmer only or Belmont too?**

The Rep teams formed under the pilot project would play under the East Elgin Minor Hockey (EEMHA) name and logo. Teams would play and practice in both Aylmer and Belmont.

**Will new uniforms be needed?**

New uniforms will not be necessary but both boards feel that playing under a new name and logo would require new jerseys.

**What is the difference between the pilot and the original amalgamation plan?**

The difference between the pilot and the original amalgamation is that nothing is set in stone and if the members of either association vote it down, then we will both revert back to pre-pilot status. It essentially allows for both associations members to see and feel what an amalgamation would be like.

**Are coaches now going to have to be a mix of Aylmer and Belmont parents? How will the coaches be fairly chosen without bias? If a Belmont coach is chosen, how will you guarantee that a team is picked without bias for Belmont?**

Coaches will be selected by the new board of the EEMHA consisting of 6 AMHA and 6 BMHA members. Team tryouts will have independent evaluators to aid the discussions of who is on each team.

**The last communication to members was that amalgamation was not happening this year, with more details that would be provided, however now we are entering a pilot project that sounds like amalgamation.**

The OMHA deadline for amalgamation was fast approaching when we last had updated the members and the boards of the associations asked the OMHA for a pilot project for one year in order to allow for the membership to experience what an amalgamation would feel like without formally entering into an amalgamation.

**What are the benefits/drawbacks to AMHA players/teams to enter the pilot project?**

The benefits of AMHA players/teams entering into this pilot would be that those that make the Rep teams would be a part of a higher skilled team because the combination of both associations will allow for the best players to play and represent the pilot project teams, the potential drawbacks would be those that may have been one of the last few to make an AMHA team may not make the combined team but they will be able to play with like skilled players at the local league level and be able to represent AMHA in the LMLL and potentially represent the EEMHA on a Roster Select team made up of players from both BMHA and AMHA.

**Has this pilot already been decided?**

The pilot has been approved by the OMHA and both boards have decided to go ahead with it for the 2023/24 season to give both memberships a feel for the potential amalgamation.

**Will there be a Q/A session or sheet provided with more details about the pilot, so parents/players have all the facts?**

The Q/A sheet will be updated with all questions and answers as they are completed.

**It is important for the board to be transparent and share information with its members before decisions are made. This is a major structural change, where members and players who are being affected should have been consulted.**

The membership has been consulted along the way with the AMHA website, Town halls and Q/A form online. We have added any questions sent to us via email, text, word of mouth to the AMHA website Q/A sheet throughout the process.

**Another Q&A meeting or sheet should have been posted with additional facts and parents/players should have had an opportunity to weigh in on the pilot.**

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