



May 1, 2019

**TO:** SMHA Membership  
**RE:** Update Regarding Amalgamation Discussions

---

Over the past few seasons, it is no secret that our Associations overall player numbers have been slowly decreasing. Even with the significant population growth in Shelburne (37% since 2014) and SMHA continually trying to increase player enrolment through programs like: Canadian Tire/Bauer First Shift and the creation of a Pre-School Division for 4 year olds (back in 2017), our numbers continue to decline YOY at the younger age groups (ie. Pre School, Initiation, Tyke and Novice).

Other challenges that SMHA is currently facing include: Increasing ice costs YOY at the CDRC, lack of available ice times at the CDRC (forcing us to rent 10 hours/week at neighbouring arenas due to other programs CDRC offers such as CanSkate, HTI and other ice rentals) and a steady decline of volunteers at both the Coaching and Executive levels. Neighbouring Centres are also seeing issues with towns like Grand Valley and Honeywood having recently lost their Rep status and Dundalk only fielding Rep teams at 3 of 5 age groups this past season.

As a result SMHA has been part of recent preliminary discussions with neighbouring centres (Flesherton, Dundalk, Honeywood, Grand Valley and more recently Orangeville). These conversations have been around how to improve registration numbers, how to improve the quality of hockey in our area and exploratory conversations around Amalgamation and/or a Rep Partnership.

Amalgamation is the process of combining one or more associations into one. There are currently three (3) possible options on how SMHA can approach this topic. After reading the below information on the possible options we would like everyone to complete a quick and anonymous survey on what direction you feel is best suited. The survey is strictly for feedback and information purposes.

**Option 1 - Standard Amalgamation:**

Meaning one or more Associations agree to dissolve their current Associations. The old Associations no longer exist. In return the Associations involved create a brand new Association for both Rep and Local League hockey. All funds would be put into the new Association. Home arenas would be shared amongst the new Association. Meaning Rep and Local League teams would play and practice in various arenas, meaning more travel for both Rep and Local League teams. This option will have the potential to improve quality of hockey for both Rep and Local League players as well as overall numbers. As an example: Stayner and Creemore are in the process of finalizing their official Amalgamation beginning in the 2019-20 Season.

### **Option 2 - Rep Partnership (Form of Amalgamation):**

In a Rep Partnership, Associations involved agree to dissolve the Rep programming only. Leaving the Local League Programming in place. This means hometown grass roots Local League Hockey will still exist the way it always has. Nothing changes besides potential player numbers, same Jerseys, same name, same arenas teams have always practiced and played out of. The major change would come at the Rep level. Associations involved would create a brand new Rep Association completely separate from the current Local League Associations involved in partnership. This Association would be Rep only. Any players of the current local league Associations involved in partnership would be eligible to try out for the new Rep Association. Rep team games and practices would be shared amongst various arenas. Meaning more travel for Rep (although all of our Rep teams currently have 1 out of town practice per week). This option also has the potential to improve quality of hockey for both Rep and Local League players. Numbers at the Local league level on a per team basis will also increase, as you will not be taking as many players from that age to play Rep, leaving more remaining Local League Players. The new Rep Association would consist of equal board representation from each partnered Local Association, ensuring decisions are made as equal as possible. Please keep in mind with this option that a Rep Partnership would not be possible with Honeywood and/or Grand Valley, as both of those Centres currently do not have a Rep Program.

### **Option 3 - Do Nothing/Leave Everything the Same:**

Do nothing. Leave everything the same. When speaking of Rep hockey as of now it does not start until Novice. With current changes to novice level hockey, Rep may not start until Atom in the coming years. With falling numbers it increases the odds of single entry teams. Which means parents and players will not always get a choice on whether or not their child can play Local League or try out for a Rep Team. Which in return means in some cases you have Rep players playing Local hockey and local players playing Rep Hockey reducing the overall quality and development of hockey in our area.

Both Amalgamation options eliminate this problem as players can play where they are best fitted to develop, therefore increasing the quality of hockey for all involved.

Thank you everyone for taking the time to read this and complete the survey on this very important topic.

Sincerely your SMHA amalgamation committee.