



## **COLLINGWOOD MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION**

To: Mayor Carrier and the Members of Collingwood Council;

I am writing today on behalf of the children that play minor hockey in Collingwood, their parents and the Board of Directors of the Association. We are asking the Town of Collingwood to give our program a much needed boost, and desperately needed help by assigning us more ice time, beginning with the 2008-2009 season.

The issue of available ice time at the Eddie Bush Arena has been at a critical level for Minor Hockey for the past several years. In short the town is too small for just one ice surface, but with out a second option at this time we need to address the situation within our current facility. Our organization is being stifled by not having enough ice time for the kids.

Ironically, the upcoming season was actually to be the one where we got relief with the opening of our new recreation complex. But, with out a new ice surface to relieve the pressures of scheduling, we need to find another solution. Ultimately that lies in covering or enclosing the outdoor rink, but right now we need more ice.

This season we have spent to date over 7 thousand dollars on acquiring ice out of town to help operate our program. We have even had to resort to booking out of town ice for home games, including Provincial playdown games.

We are requesting the town help us with the problem by addressing the scheduling of ice at the Eddie Bush Arena. There are several ice times that would help us greatly, if reassigned to Collingwood Minor Hockey.

During the week there are two areas where a reallocation of ice would help our scheduling. During the weekend there are also key times that would directly address our situation.

The first of the times we are looking at during the week are Tuesday nights at 8:30. That time was traditionally practice time for the Junior club, but now has been reassigned to adults. We value the Junior program as an inspiration to our kids, and would never ask to move into any of their ice time, but feel if it was to be reassigned we do need it. That hour would be beneficial to our older age groups for practice, and if half an hour was added on to the end of the time slot, give us a valuable option for game time.

The second time is Wednesday at 7:25. The addition of that time to our current Wednesday time would give us more options when scheduling with our local league teams. These are the house league level teams that participate in a small local travel group. Again adding an half an hour to the end of that time would give us even more options.

Sunday is the day where you can assist greatly, and have the greatest impact in the improvement of our program. Currently we don't get the use of the ice until noon. Preceding minor hockey are several adult rental groups. In order to have Sunday morning ice we are having young kids transported to Feversham. This of course is a very inconvenient option that quite frankly isn't working well. We would like to have Sunday mornings from 7 until noon allocated to our organization.

Sunday night is also an area we can also expand. We are requesting to extend our ice time to 9:30, again giving us more options for games within the older age group.

Our numbers have grown in recent years, and the growth has been in the youngest age group which bodes well for minor hockey. It also stresses the need for more ice time.

It was only a few years ago we were barely able to ice two novice house league teams which meant they had to travel in the local league circuit. Our novice house league is back to five teams and fortunately again only playing in Collingwood. We are projecting that we will have six teams next year.

Our atom house league will of course follow suit in growth as these players move into the next age group. We are projecting a four team atom group where we had only two teams just two seasons ago. With the number of teams growing to four we will again have that group only play at home. We anticipate eliminating travel for the youngest house league players will in turn spur growth.

The Sunday morning ice time will give Collingwood Minor Hockey an opportunity to solidify the numbers in our young age group to assure future growth and support for the older age groups.

With the addition of the Sunday ice we can have a solid schedule of Saturday morning practices and Sunday morning games for the house league at the novice and atom level. This will allow parents of younger children to better plan, as opposed to the current schedule where the day and time changes weekly.

The change will also allow us to strengthen our program for our youngest age group in the initiation program. This level is a two year introduction to hockey giving kids a chance to focus on skills. Of course the key to skill development is repetition, and consistency. With out being repetitive this of course will be achieved if we have both Saturday and Sunday mornings for their schedule.

The addition of Sunday morning ice also has the affect of allowing our scheduler more options in regard to practice times and games for the older groups. In many cases it will allow our Representative teams regular opportunities for a second practice session. Again practice is the key to success.

We do not have a "winning is the only thing" attitude in Collingwood Minor Hockey but we do have a belief that we should be giving our kids a chance to compete at their best every time they are on the ice. Our record in play downs this season shows we have not succeeded in that area.

Every team that has eliminated one of our "rep" teams in OMHA play downs this season has had the benefit of two practice times a week. Our teams can regularly have a minimum seven day delay between practices, and because of the scheduling problems can have as much as a 13 day gap. The only solution is of course more options for practice. This can't be properly achieved by hoping to be able to book out of town ice.

We would like to point out the success in the Collingwood Soccer program in support of our request for action. When they needed more field time because their program was growing the town responded, that of course has resulted in even more growth for their organization. They are a strong organization that can meet the needs of the kids in the program because of the availability of facilities.

We feel with that same kind of support, we can realize the same kind of success. And of course, as we work toward having our children lead healthier and more active lifestyles, the more they play, the more likely it is that a more active lifestyle becomes a normal part of their day.

We apologize for the length of this letter, but we wanted to try and cover all bases in showing our need for help at this time. If you have any questions or require more information feel free to contact us to arrange a meeting.

Yours in Hockey

Dale West  
President  
Collingwood Minor Hockey