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FUTURE STARS - From left, Shane Thompson, Wesley Blight and Steve Smith were gung-ho to 'strut their stuff' while at right, Brad Kouyoumjian negotiates the pylons at the Georgetown Minor Hockey Association Atom Rep team spring tryout session held Saturday at Gordon Alcott Memorial

Arena. (The lads removed their helmets for the photo session). With the prospect of Georgetown players becoming involved in 'AAA' Zone Rep teams, the GDMHA Rep teams spring tryout sessions gave the Rep hopefuls extra incentive to push just that much harder. (Herald photos by Colin Gibson)



"AAA" Zone Rep Teams

Zone concept a must if idea to catch on

By COLIN GIBSON
 Herald Sports editor

The Georgetown Minor Hockey Association wrapped up the Rep teams' spring tryout sessions Saturday at Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena as Minor Novice, Novice, Minor Atom, Aton and Minor Pee wee hopefuls took to the frozen pond for one last opportunity of impressing the respective coaches.

For players and coaches alike, the tryout sessions took on added importance with visions of 'AAA' Zone Rep teams dancing tantalizingly over the ice surface.

Acton players and coaches are having similar visions as it appears that all minor hockey players in Halton Hills will soon get the chance to play hockey at the 'AAA' level.

According to Jack White, chairman of the zone committee for the Ontario Minor Hockey Association, the 'AAA' zone team concept was hatched last year by the OMHA to provide all players registered with the OMHA "the opportunity to compete at the highest level dependent on their abilities."

As White explained in a telephone interview from his home in Grimsby, "The OMHA adopted the 'AAA' zone team concept last year, on a two-year experimental basis and final approval for the idea will, or will not, come at the 1991 OMHA annual meeting. We wanted to provide a program that would allow all players registered with us an opportunity to play high-calibre hockey."

According to White, four 'AAA' Zone Rep teams surfaced last year in what he described as "the Toronto corridor of Southern Ontario," and the concept was en-

thusiastically endorsed by all hockey centres involved.

Because of the initial success of the program last year, it was expanded and this year will be offered to at least two and possibly four or more areas for the upcoming 1990-91 season and future years.

The Tri-County Hockey League group and the Welland-Niagara area hockey group have officially been approached by the OMHA to form 'AAA' Zone Rep teams.

Other areas under consideration, although not officially approached, include Belleville and area and the Pickering-Ajax area.

White stated, that to his knowledge, the program has not officially been offered to the Hub City League which includes Acton, Guelph, Fergus and Elora.

"We are looking for areas with a base population of 65,000," said White, "to involve as many players as possible. Within the designated area, where the teams are based, would be up to the participating hockey centres. But it should be stressed, that regardless of where the teams are based, they are zone teams, not tied to one community."

As applied to the Tri-County Hockey League, it was expected that players from Georgetown, Milton and Flamborough would provide the core of players while Erin, Hillsburgh and Grangeville minor hockey associations would act as feeder systems for 'AAA' Zone Rep teams from Novice through Juvenile.

An interim committee of Tri-County Hockey League representatives was formed to look into the idea, with Georgetown's Wayne Pries acting as interim chairman.

In an effort to involve as many

area hockey centres as possible in the 'AAA' Zone Rep team program, invitations were extended to representatives from Acton, Dundas, Shelburne, Ancaster, Brampton, Burlington, Chinguacousy, Oakville, Stoney Creek and Streetsville to join the discussions.

According to Wayne Pries, initial discussions on the zone teams concept were "well-received" and a meeting has been scheduled for next Wednesday (April 25) at 7:30 p.m. at Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena at which time a formal committee will be elected to work directly with the OMHA on the 'AAA' Zone Rep teams concept.

A 'Timetable of Events' agenda has already been drawn up by the interim committee and the OMHA has set a deadline of May 20, at which time a decision must be rendered as to whether or not the Tri-County Hockey League will be able to operate 'AAA' Zone Rep teams for the upcoming 1990-91 hockey season.

To work properly, however, the various hockey centres must be totally cognizant of and willing to work with the zone team concept.

Regardless of where a team, at whatever level it is based, it is a zone team representing the area as a whole to provide high-calibre hockey for the area players.

Regardless of which leagues certain centres are involved with, within the area, the Zone Rep teams will operate independently to provide the high-calibre hockey opportunity.

To this end, tryouts for the Zone Rep teams will be open to all minor hockey players (House League and current Rep team players) and advertised as such.

Should the Tri-County Hockey League representatives vote to go

with the 'AAA' Zone Rep team idea for the upcoming season, it is expected that tryouts would be scheduled for the end of August and early September.

Concerns have also arisen about the affect 'AAA' Zone Rep teams would have on present area Rep teams currently graded 'AA' and lower.

One source close to the 'AAA' Zone Rep team discussions admitted that present Rep teams would suffer to a certain degree but that minor hockey programs, on the whole, would benefit.

"You can offer the whole package," he said, "from House League all the way to the best of the best. The players are the ones who will benefit and in turn, so would participating minor hockey associations."

Outgoing Georgetown Minor Hockey Association president,

Carson Mininch, has indicated that his association has voted overwhelmingly to support the 'AAA' Zone Rep team concept.

Recently acclaimed Acton Minor Hockey Association president Cathy Williams, was all for the 'AAA' Zone Rep team concept but would not commit her association at this point.

"It is in the discussion stage within our association," she said. "We have had a representative at the Tri-County meetings and we have also had a representative at Hub League discussions on the 'AAA' Zone Rep team idea."

"We are looking at what would be the best situation for our kids and the AMHA. We will weigh the pros and cons and decide what is best for us. However, we would not be adverse to joining the Tri-County Hockey group if that's what we felt was best for our organization."

Baseball group seeking players

The Georgetown Baseball Association has scheduled a 'late registration' session for tomorrow (Thursday) from 7 p.m. until 8 p.m. at Centennial Public School on Delrex Boulevard.

House League players ranging from Tyke (ages 5, 6 and 7) through Bantam, Midget and Juvenile (ages 14 through 18) are urged to register. The GBA is hoping to attract more players in the Bantam, Midget and Juvenile age range to form separate divisions for these age groups.

In addition, the late registration session is also open to prospective Rep team players in divisions ranging from Tyke through Junior.

Further information on the GBA late registration or the GBA in general, can be obtained by contacting Donna Blight at 877-8379.