

# Hockey officials endorse move to limit games

Local minor hockey officials see merit in a Canadian Hockey Association initiative to limit the number of games rep level and house league teams can play during a season.

But they suggest the proposal would require changes in the thinking of coaches, players and parents, as well as an alteration of the existing Ontario rep level hockey schedule and playoff format.

The plan was initially introduced at last year's Open Ice Hockey Summit aimed at developing skills and a genuine love of the game in young players. It was endorsed by the Ontario Hockey Federation last month at a follow up meeting to the second annual Summit held in August of this year.

The OHF recently recommended the implementation of a formula that would see the ratio of practices to games fixed at two to one in favour of practices.

Andy Cartwright, president of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association, feels the CHA initiative is well intentioned.

"In a game a player will get on the ice for maybe 10 minutes. In a one-hour practice they are on the ice for the full hour."

He said WSMHA rep teams played a 26-game schedule last season, with 34 practices.

But rep teams also play in various tournaments throughout the season, in addition to what can be drawn out Ontario Minor Hockey Association playoff schedule. Also, practice time is sometimes used for games that have to be rescheduled due to such things as holidays.

Cartwright suggests spreading out the rep league schedule and having fewer rounds of playoffs might allow for a more appropriate games-to-practices ratio. He said several WSMHA teams had to finish their regular schedule just before Christmas last season.

Former WSMHA rep coach Bob McKinnon



Bruce Stapley

believes in the importance of practice, although he contends the OHF proposal of two practices for every game might be too stringent. He points the finger at coaches who enter their teams in 10 or more tournaments a season.

"These coaches are too obsessed, too competitive."

Cartwright agrees that such coaches are taking the fun out of the game.

"These coaches are focused only on winning and putting their players on the ice for 80 games or more. That's as many games as the pros play, and they don't have to go to school."

McKinnon, whose WSMHA rep teams have won two OMHA titles as well as a Lakeshore Division novice crown, averaged two league games and one practice a week with rep teams he coached. His teams would play on average five tournaments a year.

"I would have preferred to have one more practice and one less game a week."

McKinnon, now co-president of the Stouffville Spirit junior A team, agrees the crunch comes at playoff time.

"In the (OMHA) playoffs, a best-of-five series sometimes has to be over in one week so you could be playing five games as well as a practice. That can burn out a player."

He said teams that go all the way in the playoffs end up playing the equivalent of another

whole season in terms of the number of games played.

"Their schooling can fail when they play that much hockey. They're travelling to places like Leamington for an 8 p.m. game and their not getting home until midnight."

Jim Hassard, a former WSMHA house league convener, feels the CHA initiative is good.

"I have no problem with that," he said. "From a development standpoint, I'm a big advocate of practice time. Most of the (WSMHA) executive feel the same way, even though the kids want to play games."

Hassard acknowledged that like the rep program, house league practices are sometimes sacrificed for make up games. He said practices lack the lustre of games for many coaches, players and parents. Some coaches try to schedule exhibition games for practice sessions.

"In the older house league levels, some of the players will skip practices. But if you give up practices you give up the chance to develop the kids further."

Hassard said his wife, Sharon, a former professional skating instructor who has assisted as a coach with a novice Clippers team, is adamant about young players getting in practice time which includes time spent working on their skating skills.

"The minor novice rep teams that have arranged extra practice time have all improved significantly as this season progressed."

Hassard said an OMHA-backed practice program adopted by the WSMHA in recent years was positive in that it enabled large numbers of players to practice specific skills at various stations set up across the arena.

But parents and players became disenchanted when as many as three teams were sent out to practice at once due to a shortage of available ice time.


# Bantam goalies save the day

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one goal, two assists; Shawn Burns one goal; Kevin Cinnamon and Spiros Tsiopoulos each had two assists; Tyler McMaster, Andrew McKay, Fraser Smith, Brad Patterson and Dylan Harrison each had one assist.

Daniel Cherkas, another bantam call up, shared goaltending duties with McManus as regular goaltenders Scott Davis and Lucas Hunter found themselves on the injury list entering the tournament.


**CANADIAN TIRE**  
**PLAYERS OF THE GAME**



**BRIAN PEARL**

**OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE GAME**

Wide receiver Brian Pearl made a big contribution to the Markham District High School Marauders offence in Friday's 24-7 loss to the Newmarket High School Raiders. The 17-year-old Grade 12 hailed in two passes and made several good downfield blocks to assist in the Marauders' running game.



**SIKEY YASAMURA**




**DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE GAME**

Safety Mikey Yasamura was a busy player for the Markham District High School Marauders defence in Friday's 24-7 loss to the Newmarket High School Raiders. The 16-year-old Grade 11 student was credited with making seven tackles. Included in those were a couple of big stops to thwart the Raiders' running game.

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