

## Spirit's league first in Canada to make full facemasks mandatory

When the Ontario Junior Hockey League held its annual general meeting in Mississauga last weekend, one of the topics raised was player safety. In particular, facial injuries.

In an effort to reduce the number of incidents, the league took a step to implement full facial protection starting in the 2017-18 campaign.

By virtue of this decision, which was voted on by the league's board of governors, the

OJHL will become the first member league in the Canadian Junior Hockey League to make full facemasks mandatory for their players.

To be eliminated are the half visors.

"Player safety at the junior level of the game of hockey is constantly being monitored and reviewed, and is a never-ending process," OJHL commissioner Marty Savoy said in a league press release. "The governors of the OJHL feel that their decision to move toward full facial protection is a decision that will improve the overall safety of our most important assets; the players of our league."

Also named at the annual general meeting

was a new OJHL board of directors.

Whitby Fury governor Scott McCrory will serve another term as chairman with Stuart Hyman of the Markham Royals serving once again as the first vice-chairman and Rob DeVincentis of the Milton Icehawks appointed as second vice-chairman.

Ken Burrows, Stouffville Spirit co-owner and general manager, will remain on the board as the North-East Conference director and newly-appointed is Bill Court of the Georgetown Raiders, who will serve as the South-West Conference director.

During the upcoming season, the Trenton

Golden Hawks will serve as host of the 2017 Dudley-Hewitt Cup, Central Canadian Junior 'A' Championship, and the Cobourg Cougars will host the 2017 RBC Cup, National Junior 'A' Championship.

Also this season, it was decided that the Buffalo Jr. Sabres will once again host the OJHL Governors' Showcase at the Harbor-Center from Sept. 26-28.

All OJHL member clubs will play two games at the showcase, providing an opportunity for scouts to view up-and-coming prospects in a single, central location.

- Michael Hayakawa

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