

NHL now connected to Brampton hockey

By Brian Lockhart

The Brampton Beast have announced their affiliation with the Tampa Bay Lightning of the National Hockey League and the Syracuse Crunch of the American Hockey League.

The Brampton team will begin their inaugural season in September as a member club of the Central Hockey League ? a minor professional league.

?We take our developmental system very seriously and that is why we are here today,? observed former NHLer and current Vice President and General Manager of the Tampa Bay Lightning Steve Yzerman. ?We are looking forward to working with the Beast, and continuing our minor league successes as they embark on their inaugural season as the first-ever Canadian franchise in the Central Hockey League.?

The announcement took place last Thursday (Aug. 22) in Brampton with around 500 guests in attendance, including Brampton City representatives and executive members of all three organizations.

?The Brampton Beast is your team,? said team owner Gregg Rosen. ?This is your affiliation. This is a community team and we have a lot ahead of us. We are going to have a wonderful season.?

The Syracuse Crunch are entering their 20th season in the American Hockey League, winning two division titles, in 2002 and 2013. The Central Hockey League gets underway in October.

The Beast will play their first game ? the home opener ? Oct. 18, at Powerade Centre in Brampton. Game time is 7:30 p.m.