

OMHA introduces new format for championships

By Brian Lockhart

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association has announced a new format for provincial championships this year.

OMHA executive introduced the changes to have playing involved in more meaningful hockey going into March.

Leading up to the OMHA championship weekend, there will be important new league championships in each area.

League playoffs will now be regional qualifying showdowns to see who move on to compete for the Red Hats. The Red Hats remain the ultimate minor hockey goal for players in Ontario.

At the beginning of the season, each league was assigned a tier based on the categories of teams playing within that league. This process was used for the purpose of determining the number of teams within each tier compared with the over- all number of teams in other areas.

This determined the number of teams that each league would send to the OMHA championships.

The league standings and the performance of the individual team determines which tier teams will compete at for an OMHA championship.

The 2022 OMHA championships will take place over three weekends.

Those weekends will continue April 1 to 3, and April 8 to 10.

Five locations have been chosen to host the championships. They include Barrie, Kingston, Oakville, Whitby, and Windsor.

Round-robin play will occur on the first two days, with the semi-finals and championships being decided on the Sunday of each weekend.

Consistent game-play formats will be followed at the U14 and below level, and the U15 and above level, regarding period lengths and floods.

"Our players, parents and volunteers have endured so much during the pandemic. We have been planning this for months and believe this is a great way to give them something special to look forward to and to ensure all our participants can be involved in more meaningful hockey right up to March and beyond," said Ian Taylor, Executive Director of the OMHA.

The new format has been designed to remove elimination style series and have more teams playing during the year for a longer period of time.