

# Hockey groups look to solve boundary issues

Local officials call upon Ontario Minor Hockey Association to fix problems

By Craig Campbell  
News Staff

A coalition of individual minor hockey associations from across Hamilton are working together — and separately — to try and convince the Ontario Minor Hockey Association to let them fix what they say are “archaic” boundary and residency rules that threaten the future of minor hockey in the city.

Dundas, Stoney Creek, and Flamborough associations, with support from the Hamilton Huskies, have each applied to change their member partner affiliation from the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) to Alliance Hockey. The Huskies, already an Alliance member, have also submitted a strategic alliance partnership agreement with Stoney Creek minor hockey, effective on the association's move to the Alliance.

At its core, the effort by the four

local associations is intended to improve access to minor hockey for kids across Hamilton. Currently, boys in Dundas cannot play competitive hockey in Ancaster, Stoney Creek, Flamborough, Westdale, or any other area of Hamilton, even if that means having to fold a team due to a lack of players. It's the same for each association and has already forced cancellation of teams because associations are unable to bring in available kids to fill out a roster. Meanwhile, kids who want to play at a higher level often can't — because that level may not be available in the association they are required to play in.

“The bureaucracy restricts the ability to move,” said Stoney Creek minor hockey president Steve Johnson.

Other minor sports in Hamilton — including girls hockey — do not have the same boundary and movement restrictions.

Representatives of the four asso-



A Hamilton minor hockey team celebrates during Super Saturday in this file photo.

ciations say that's led to some kids being forced to play house league, or leaving for nearby unsanctioned private minor hockey programs. In some cases, less qualified players are moved up to play rep so a team can exist.

“If you can stand and skate you can join a rep team in Dundas,” said Dave Ferris of the valley town's minor hockey organization.

Already this season, Dundas has folded three representative, or competitive, teams. Stoney Creek also has teams that had to be cancelled. Flamborough would have had to fold a team — if volunteers from two organizations had not successfully worked out a one-time, Band-Aid solution.

“I needed assistance last year before we started building our teams,” said Dundas minor hockey president Kristina Dodd. “I didn't get a response (from the OMHA). We needed help and we didn't get it.”

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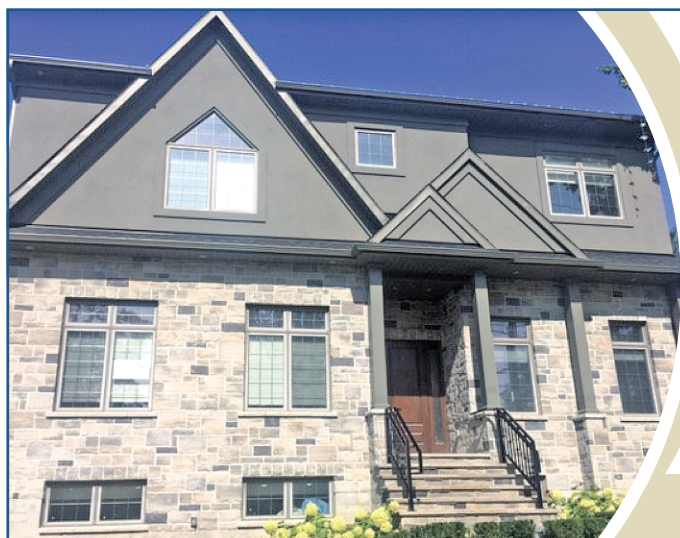
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# McCoys fall to Stoney Creek Generals

**By Larry Robertson**  
Special to The News

It was another tough night for the Dundas Real McCoys in Allan Cup Hockey action last Friday night.

Brad Bonello's goal early in the third period gave the McCoys a 5-5 tie with Stoney Creek Generals, only to have Matt Smith score three

times, including one into an empty net, to give the Generals a 9-6 victory.

Next action for the McCoys will be on Friday, Jan. 5, when they play Whitby Dunlops at Harry Howell Arena at 8 p.m.

"Stoney Creek is in first for a reason," said Don Robertson, McCoys president and general manager. "We

played well in spurts, but we need to get a full 60 minutes out of our players. When we get that we win, and when we don't we get the result that we got last Friday."

Matt Foy and Bonello had a goal and two assists each for the McCoys. Ryan Watson scored twice, while Jake Goldberg and Cam Watson added single goals.

# Blues end 2017 with win

**By Craig Campbell**  
News Staff

Jordie Morgan scored twice, while Zac Plumb and Ray Thompson each added a goal and two assists, as the Dundas Blues closed 2017 with a 7-4 win over Niagara, on Thursday, Dec. 28.

Dundas ended the calendar year in third place of the South Bloomfield Division of the Provincial Junior Hockey League, with a record of 17 wins, 14 losses and two ties. The Blues were three points ahead of fourth-place Port Dover, 17 points behind second-place Grimsby Peach Kings and 21 points behind division-leading Glanbrook Rangers.

The regular season continues on Thursday, Jan. 4 when Dundas hosts Simcoe at Westoby Ice Surface on Olympic Drive. Dundas travels to Port Dover on Sunday, Jan. 7.

One night after handing Glanbrook its second loss of the season on Dec. 21, the Blues travelled to Grimsby to meet the division's other dominating team.

But Dundas couldn't get its offence going against the Peach

Kings. After a scoreless first, in which Dundas goalie Jake Flemming stopped 11 shots and the Blues put seven pucks on net, Grimsby exploded in the second period.

The Peach Kings scored three unanswered goals and had 20 shots on net. Dundas managed just 20 shots the whole game, while Flemming made 40 saves in the 3-0 loss.

After six days off over Christmas, Dundas' offence reappeared against Niagara.

Niagara took a 2-0 lead in the first period, then it was all Dundas. Jamieson Buck and Stephen Bell scored to tie it up heading into the second frame.

Dundas scored four unanswered goals in the middle period — two from Morgan and one each from Thompson and Danny Attridge. Connor Pilon picked up two assists in the period.

Niagara closed the gap to 6-4 with eight minutes left in the third period with a short-handed goal and a power-play goal. Plumb found the net on a Dundas power play with just over five minutes left.

# Jan. 6 meeting focusing on challenges

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The individual associations started talking about the boundary and movement issues in the fall of 2016. Flamborough, in the OMHA, was struggling to fill a Midget AA team and the Huskies, in the Alliance, had extra players.

Huskies general manager Mike Spadafora said the effort to move a few players, giving them a chance to play and saving the Flamborough team, took four people — representatives of the two oversight bodies and the two local associations — and more than 25 emails back-and-forth to finally get it done.

"People started talking," Spadafora said.

Almost a year and a half ago, the

Hamilton Hockey Forum was born. All the associations wanted to allow that kind of movement on a more regular basis, without the big struggle and bureaucratic roadblocks. But the individual associations all said they haven't made any progress with the OMHA. They say their pleas appear to have fallen on deaf ears, so far.

A meeting has been set for Jan. 6, apparently including the OMHA, Alliance and local minor hockey associations, to discuss challenges facing local minor hockey.

In response to an emailed list of questions, OMHA executive director Ian Taylor issued a statement through a spokesperson.

"We have been actively meeting

with all OMHA centres within the city of Hamilton to better understand the challenges they are facing," Taylor said.

"Through this process, we have been working in conjunction with Alliance Hockey, the Ontario Hockey Federation and the City of Hamilton in how we can best address these challenges collectively."

But the local associations say their calls for changes have gone unanswered. Most are still waiting for any response to their various applications. They also don't understand what took so long to set up the January meeting.

"We're trying to ensure access to hockey," said Flamborough minor hockey president Dr. Ed Finoro.

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