



Oakville Rangers Hockey Club 2024 Annual Meeting Executive Report – Rep, AAA

Merger of SCTA and ETA into OMHA AAA

2023-24 was the debut of the merged SCTA and ETA leagues into OMHA West and OMHA East. This was the first phase of the OMHA re-organizing and branding itself into one league with the introduction of merged standings and cross-over games (between OMHA West [fka SCTA] and OMHA East [fka ETA]) for U14, U15, U16, and U18. The longer-term strategy is to improve the OMHA AAA brand through enhanced competition and easier access to events for the scouting community.

Season in Review

Oakville Rangers AAA enjoyed a very successful competitive season. 5 of our 8 AAA teams (U10-U18) finished 1st in the regular season OMHA West standings and we had 6 of our 8 teams qualify for the OMHA AAA Championships.

To culminate this success was our U16 AAA team capturing the OHL Cup, featuring the top 20 teams in Ontario and US, and had 12 players drafted into the OHL including 3 first round picks and 1st overall pick, Ethan Belchetz.

The accomplishment of our U16 team demonstrates what can be achieved by building a player-oriented, best-in-class, development program and implementing it over a number of years.

Along with having the benefit of talented athletes choosing to play in Oakville, the emphasis on high-quality coaching, seasonal planning and programming, which stems from the focus on coach selection and recruiting that began several years ago, is the foundation of this success.

As additional young, high-quality coaches have come into the ORHC the network of development resources for players (from assistant coaches to on-ice instructors and 3rd party development resources) has grown tremendously to the benefit of our players. We have another new high-water mark for coaches in our AAA system yet, from U8 – U18 AAA and this is paramount to success in player development.

Looking Forward

Although our AAA coaching group is strong, we need to continue making it a focus – both from recruiting and coach development perspective. Other organizations such as Burlington and Halton have begun prioritizing it and deepening their bench strength. Competition for high potential and experienced coaches will continue to increase over time, as will the competition from the GTHL. This may put some



upward pressure on coach compensation going forward. With the merger of the OMHA and as the quality of coaches across the league improves, the level of play in the OMHA should continue to get stronger over time.

Recruiting away of our top players by the GTHL continues to be a challenge. This is a particular risk as players move in-between U13 and U14 when the LOR movement regulations allow them to move to the GTHL with only a PTS form; a release is not needed. There is very little margin for error at U13 – this team needs to have strong positive momentum, be highly competitive with strong coaching and development to be able to minimize the risk of top player attrition.

In addition, the ORHC needs to continue building our AAA brand by selling the merits of our program and celebrating the successes of our teams and individual players. This can be done with increased efforts and resources put towards simple items like a hall of fame wall at Joshua Creek, painted branded locker rooms and increased media/social media support. We need to let people know that they can have best in class development, play on a highly competitive team and do this all while participating as a community-based athlete that presents so many additional intangible benefits which our competition in the GTHL cannot offer.

