

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oakville Rangers Welcome Government of Ontario Support For 2026 Winter Classic

\$100,000 investment will support Canada's largest minor hockey tournament

January 7, 2026

Oakville, ON — Today the Oakville Rangers Hockey Club announced \$100,000 in funding support from the Government of Ontario to help deliver the 2026 Winter Classic, an annual marquee event that brings together athletes, families, and fans from across the country to celebrate Canada's national winter sport.

"The Oakville Rangers are grateful for the Government of Ontario's support of the Winter Classic," said John Verdon, Oakville Rangers President and Tournament Director. "This investment recognizes the important role community sport plays in bringing people together, supporting youth development, and creating memorable experiences for players and fans."

Running from January 15 to 18, 2026, the Oakville Rangers Winter Classic is Canada's largest minor hockey tournament, featuring 488 teams from across the country competing at rinks in Oakville, Mississauga, Burlington, Milton and Flamborough. The event is expected to attract more than 32,000 participants and spectators, generating an estimated \$14.2 million in economic impact for the province.

"Sport tourism is a major economic driver for the province and a key part of our government's plan to protect Ontario's economy," said Neil Lumsden, Ontario's Minister of Sport. "When it comes to minor hockey tournaments, the Oakville Rangers Winter Classic is unmatched in Canada for its size and scale, and we are proud to support an event that welcomes tens of thousands of visitors, drives local economic growth, and gives young athletes the opportunity to compete on the national stage, right here at home."

Ontario's investment will help enhance the Winter Classic experience for participants and spectators while supporting event operations and community engagement. The tournament has become a signature event for the Oakville Rangers, highlighting high-

level competition and reinforcing the club's commitment to player development and community building.

The Oakville Rangers Winter Classic attracts teams and visitors from across Ontario, Canada, and from the international community—strengthening local tourism and showcasing Oakville and Ontario as premier destinations for sport hosting. The Oakville Rangers thank the Government of Ontario for its continued commitment to amateur sport and for helping ensure the Winter Classic continues to thrive for years to come.

Quotes

“This investment is great news for Oakville and reflects our government’s commitment to supporting sport and recreation and the positive impact it has on our communities. The Winter Classic brings people from near and far, which supports our local businesses, and gives everyone a chance to see all the wonderful things that Oakville has to offer.”

- **Stephen Crawford, MPP for Oakville**

“The \$100,000 investment from the Government of Ontario in the Oakville Rangers Winter Classic reflects our commitment to supporting community sport and the positive economic impact it delivers. This tournament provides young athletes with an incredible opportunity to compete, brings families and visitors to our region, and supports local businesses across Oakville, Burlington, and Halton. I am proud to support an event that strengthens our communities while showcasing our region as a premier destination for sport tourism.”

- **Effie Triantafilopoulos, MPP for Oakville North—Burlington**

“The Winter Classic has become one of Oakville’s signature events, and I want to thank Minister Lumsden and the Ontario Government for their support to help make this year’s event the best it can be. Hosting Canada’s largest minor hockey tournament reinforces Oakville’s reputation as a welcoming, vibrant community and a world-class destination for major sporting events.”

- **Rob Burton, Mayor of Oakville**

“From Oakville to Burlington to Milton, the Winter Classic delivers meaningful benefits for communities across Halton Region, and this provincial investment helps ensure those impacts are felt throughout the area. This funding will help support local jobs, strengthen regional tourism, and drive activity for hotels, restaurants, and shops across our communities.”

- **Gary Carr, Halton Regional Chair**

"Coming from a hockey family, I know firsthand how powerful this sport is in bringing people together. The Winter Classic provides a meaningful boost to Oakville's business community, and it's encouraging to see the Ontario government supporting this event. With thousands of visitors staying, dining, and shopping locally, the tournament highlights the important role major sporting events play in driving economic activity and supporting local businesses."

- France Fournier, President & CEO of the Oakville Chamber of Commerce

About the Oakville Rangers Hockey Club

The Oakville Rangers Hockey Club is a non-profit minor hockey organization operating under the Ontario Minor Hockey Association and are dedicated to developing skilled, confident, and respectful athletes. Through high-quality programming and strong community partnerships, the Rangers strive to grow the game of hockey while promoting excellence both on and off the ice.

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