

## Minor Hockey gets back on the ice



Hockey is back in Aurora as the Minor Tigers took to the ice on September 21 to officially kick-off their 2020-2021 season, says Corby Saltzman, Marketing and Communications Director for Aurora Minor Hockey.

Following strenuous months of uncertainty and numerous conference calls discussing the return of the sport, the Aurora Minor Hockey Association (AMHA) has finally fit all the pieces of the puzzle together in order to get all hockey lovers back into the rink.

Much to the delight of many children returning to play, as well as coaches, Saltzman says the reception from the parents was ?fantastic.?

?When we announced confirmation of this season, our registration increased 10-fold. That's when we knew we made the right decision,? Saltzman wrote.

But this year is unlike other years, and as much as everyone is excited, the AMHA has had to adjust what was a standard season into something completely different.

Players will be set in ?their own bubbles? to mitigate interactions. That means no games against teams from other towns and vice-versa.

The AMHA has teamed up with Javelin, an all-in-one sports app which provides a COVID-19 health-checklist for players and parents to fill out. It is mandatory for all players and parents to complete this form, every time they attend practice.

When entering the rink, everyone must wear a mask. Players must wear the mask until they are ready to head out on to the ice, and the moment they are off the ice a mask must be worn.

Players must be suited up while entering the rink. In some cases, dressing rooms will be available for players to change into their skates and put on their gloves and their helmets.

Teams will be situated out on the ice in a shared-ice situation for the first two weeks, depending on their bubble. The primary focus is enhancing the players' skills and developing a better understanding of the game.

With the NHL just finishing up the playoffs, this couldn't be a better time for the kids to look up to players such as Steven Stamkos, Brayden Point, Jamie Benn and Tyler Seguin.

Once the third week rolls around, it's a different story.

?In the third week we begin playing. With a three-on-three or four-on-four format, the kids will receive a lot of ice time and touching the puck, which will result in natural development as the season progresses. Couple that with weekly practices, these kids are going to excel this season!?

What will also help children excel is competition. The AMHA plans to record wins and losses, keeping scores and standings for a competitive edge this season.

The Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) rosters will consist of nine skaters and one goaltender for the season.

Saltzman says it all in the fun, but the safety of all staff, players and parents is of the utmost priority.

**By Robert Belardi**