

Do you consider Aurora to be a sports town? Some want to make sure you know it

Every town in any place seems to go through its own metamorphosis.

Naturally, it starts off small, and then it continues to grow and it is molded by the strong personalities of its people.

Before you know it, there's a theme. The town might even have a nickname. But most of all, every town is always known for something. Whatever it is, people gravitate to it based off of this one characteristic that they find irresistible.

Over the years, Aurora has been all about sport and in 2018, Sport Aurora began a pilot project with the hopes of giving Aurora the absolute pleasure of being known as a sports town.

?It was put together by a sport committee and that sport committee basically said, that we can run tournaments, but we need to have other things: some help in order to do some of the other amenities around the tournament that make it a special thing for guests to come in,? said president of Sport Aurora, Ron Weese.

?We did that primarily because we knew we wanted to create Aurora as a tournament town and we wanted more sport tourists to come and we knew it was good for business and good for sport.?

But, of course, COVID-19 played its role in preventing their plans.

Despite the Sport Concierge helping out the Central York Girls Hockey Association (CYGHA) and Tigers Team Governor Jim Thomson with a few events, it could never properly get going and to full throttle.

But when Aurora-King Baseball president Shaun McGuire reached out asking if he can get some help with a tournament, the program kicked off again.

The upcoming Father's Day tournament next weekend would be the perfect fit to showcase Aurora as the wonderful sports town that it is.

?Personally, in terms of sports towns or Aurora in general, I think what differentiates Aurora from other locations, is the small-town feel but with tons of sports amenities,? said Joel Malley, Head Coach of the 9U AA.

?When teams come in, they don't feel overwhelmed.?

Next weekend, teams coming in from Ottawa and Sudbury in particular, will have quality places to stay.

Microtel Inn is a partner with AKBA and will provide discounts for incoming families. The Holiday Inn is also available for those coming down.

And with that taken care of, arriving families will be coming to Aurora to experience the Aurora culture. Town Park will have the Farmers' Market ready to go on the Saturday morning for families travelling with their teams.

There is a splashpad for families with other children to ensure they are taken care of and are having fun during their time away.

The Aurora Optimist Club will take care of food for everyone at the venue and 100 per cent of their proceeds are donated to helping out the youth. Ice cream trucks will be stationed all over.

At Lambert Willson Park, all diamonds are within walking distance to ensure nobody has to travel far.

And, of course, there is everything around Town that everyone should know about, that truly makes Aurora the sports town that it is. There is the Aurora Tigers, CYGHA, Aurora Minor Tigers, Aurora Diggers, AKBA, Aurora Barbarians, St. Andrew's College and their competitive teams and Aurora Youth Soccer Club. Then you have sporting entities like Sport Aurora managing and helping everyone out, and there's a Hall of Fame in Town to commemorate achievements of all athletes this town has ever produced.

If this doesn't make Aurora a full-blown sports town, it's not clear would take to do so. Everyone that Malley has emailed, is very excited to come to Aurora to spend a weekend for a tournament. No matter if they are staying the night or simply driving in, everyone is ecstatic to get this ball rolling and to see what this Father's Day tournament could do.

?The AKBA board believes that baseball should participate directly in the success of sport in Aurora and includes contributing to sport tourism,? said president of AKBA Shaun McGuire.

?Tournaments are great proving grounds for every team and it is with pride that we want our baseball visitors to feel welcomed in Aurora. I connected with Sport Aurora months ago to discuss ramping up our tournament offerings for both this year and next because we couldn't do everything we need to make this a tournament town. Sport Aurora offered their Sport Concierge program and we are looking forward to seeing some great baseball and great visitor services that will make us all proud of Aurora.?

The Sport Concierge program is already in the works to get volunteers out to these events to help out incoming tourists to the Town. They will also help out the Aurora Diggers with their upcoming tournaments and are in the works with the AKBA U10s.

Clearly it's a movement that is here to stay. With all of the sports amenities, rich history and passionate sports citizens in Town, there is no doubt sport makes Aurora tick. And the Town wants travelling young athletes and their families to know it too.

If you need any help with a tournament or you have some fruitful ideas to share, you may contact Ron Weese directly at president@sportaurora.ca.

By Robert Belardi