

Shelburne Shocks Basketball Club keeping games limited

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

With most sports at a standstill right now, many players are hoping for some kind of return to their favourite activity in the near future.

Some players are keeping active by training on their own but it's tough to practice when you're not allowed to meet in groups.

The Shelburne Shocks Basketball Club has been seeing some action on the court with tournament play recently, however they cannot practice as a club because local basketball gyms are still off limits.

Club president and coach Sherwin Stephens has arranged some tournament play with other GTA teams so his players can at least stay active.

Sherwin has arranged the games with full cooperation of parents while making sure all safety protocols are in place.

'We are kind of active, but not completely active,' Sherwin said of the club's current activities. 'Tournaments are popping up. Because our season was shortened, I think we are obligated to at least put some games together, here and there, for them. Our older team only got two games in (before COVID shut things down.) We're hoping to just keep them busy. When I see the players I always tell them to keep active because you never know when I'm going to call and say we have a tournament.'

The teams had just started their season when the pandemic brought everything to a sudden halt.

'In the GTA you can get into some private gyms, but it is regulated,' Sherwin explained of the couple of games they have had.

He is well connected in the basketball community and several other coaches have reached out trying to arrange mini tournaments so players can at least remain active and keep their skills up.

'My son was very active in basketball for the past ten years so we did a lot of travelling and made a lot of contacts. Also a lot of people who are running these programs, I went to school with them.'

The games the teams have played have been strictly regulated to maintain social distancing protocols.

'We have no spectators at all,' Sherwin explained. 'We have just coaches and players. We try to go with ten players so we can at least have substitutions, but we work with what we have. We are trying to follow the example of the NBA. We all have masks when not playing. We all just have to be responsible. I do tell the parents it's up to them. I ask if they want their kids to participate in a tournament. If the parents are okay with it, we go ahead and play. If the kids really want to play, we're there for them. We certainly wouldn't try to force any kids to play, and never put any kids in harm's way due to the COVID situation.'

The Shocks U16 team played two games in a tournament in Toronto recently and had a successful day, even if there was no one in the stands to cheer them on.

There are no high school sports taking place this fall, and possibly for the entire year, so any kids wanting to keep up their skill levels will be doing it on their own.

The Shelburne Shocks are trying to help kids stay active even if it is in a limited capacity.

The Shocks started as an organization in May of 2019, to bring competitive and house league basketball to residents of Shelburne

and the surrounding area.