

PJHL North Carruthers Division team line-up to change this season

Written By **Brian Lockhart**

The North Carruthers Division of the Provincial Junior Hockey League will see some big changes when teams return for the start of the 2024-25 season.

The current line-up has nine teams, including the Alliston Hornets and the Stayner Siskins.

PJHL executive confirmed that the long-time Schomberg Cougars and the Caledon Golden Hawks will be moving to the East Orr Division.

The Orr Division is farther east and includes teams from Clarington, Georgina, Uxbridge, Port Perry, Lakefield, Little Britain, and North Kawartha.

"We have been reviewing our alignment for two years," said Terry Whiteside, Commissioner of the PJHL. "We have 63 franchises and the goal is to have seven divisions with eight teams, and one division with seven teams. This way, all teams make the playoffs and all divisions would have to play the same number of rounds to get to the Schmalz Cup finals. Currently we have a division with six teams and two with nine. The ninth place team in this division doesn't make the playoffs."

The League also took travel time and current attendance into consideration when deciding to make these moves.

"We also looked at travel time when considering alignment," Whiteside said. "In Schomberg and Caledon's case, their travel should be less in the Orr Division than it would be in the Carruthers Division. We hope to be able to work with the teams to develop rivals and increase their gate attendance. Neither team draws very well currently, in comparison to many other teams."

Both Caledon and Schomberg have low attendance at home games compared to other towns like Alliston and Stayner, which have a solid local fan base.

With the departure of these two teams, the North Carruthers Division will welcome the arrival of the newly formed Muskoka Bears. The Bears are based out of Bracebridge.

This will give the North Carruthers Division a line-up of eight teams for the new season.

In addition to Muskoka, the division will have teams from Alliston, Stayner, Orillia, Penetang, Midland, Huntsville, and Innisfil.