



NORTHERN ONTARIO HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

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NOHA BOOSTS REFEREE RECRUITMENT NEW FUNDING TO COVER REGISTRATION FEES, PROVIDE EQUIPMENT FOR NEW OFFICIALS

North Bay, ON – August 18, 2022: Building on recent community feedback that called for more support for officiant recruitment and retention, the Northern Ontario Hockey Association (NOHA) announced today that it will aggressively recruit more qualified Officials to the game of hockey by covering the registration fees, as well as provide equipment – whistle, jersey, and pants – to all first time On-Ice Officials for the 2022/2023 season, thanks to a successful bid for government funding.

The initiative, which is supported by a grant from the Ontario Sports Network (OSN), will help remove barriers to entry for more than 150 Officials across Northern Ontario, saving them more than \$250.00 each. The need to support and recruit Officials was also identified as a priority through the research and engagement process that the NOHA began in March, 2022.

Over the last few years, the NOHA has learned the need to purchase new equipment such as a black helmet with visor, whistle were a significant factor in individuals not getting involved in officiating. Over the last number of seasons, the number of registered officials across the NOHA territory has decreased by more than 200 – from 550 prior to COVID-19 to approximately 350 in the 2021/2022 season.

“The NOHA is grateful to the Ontario Sports Network for their support of this initiative, and thankful for the feedback that we received from our membership.” said NOHA Board President, Sue Shepherdson. “Officials are a core component of our game and we have had several struggles over the last few seasons in ensuring that there were enough Officials for games across the NOHA. This is a tremendous opportunity for new Officials to step on the ice with little to no cost and experience the many benefits of officiating.”

New Officials can visit the NOHA website, www.noha-hockey.ca for further information on officiating and to register for an information session being held on September 12, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. New Officials will pay the registration fee (\$100.00) up front, but the fee will be reimbursed by the NOHA in early December based on their regular commitment to officiating. Individuals who are interested in Officiating this season must be at least 14 years of age as of December 31, 2022.

Questions can be directed to NOHA Officiating Program Coordinator, Adam Morell, at (705) 474-8851 or amorell@noha-hockey.ca.