



## GTHL Announces Plans to Curb “Birthday Skates”

*The practice is “unethical and dangerous”*

TORONTO (Tuesday, December 12, 2006) - The Greater Toronto Hockey League today announced renewal of its efforts to curb and eliminate tampering and the practice of illegal tryouts.

“We are aware that at this time of year, some of our coaches and parents begin to focus their attentions on forming teams for next season rather than continuing to support the efforts of their current team” said GTHL President John Gardner. “We know that the practice of illegal tryouts is beginning now.”

“The discussions that take place both in and out of arenas regarding which players are on the move, which should be cut and, in some cases, what promises must be made to players show a complete lack of respect for the sportsmanship that minor hockey should teach participants” said GTHL Executive Director Scott Oakman. “We hope that parents want to teach their children the value of remaining committed to their existing team and teammates. We wonder what lessons are being taught when parents place their children on the ice at illegal skates and tryouts.”

GTHL rules prohibit team officials from, directly or indirectly, attempting to recruit players away from a team with which they are currently registered and from conducting skating sessions at which players not registered with their team participate. Players who participate in such skating sessions, often known as “birthday skates”, will be prohibited from signing the following year with the team conducting the session and may be subject to further discipline. Hockey and skating schools and sessions, if not advertised and open to the public, may be considered illegal skating sessions.

The GTHL is again implementing a series of measures to counteract this type of activity. These measures are being implemented earlier than ever in order to address the fact that this kind of activity begins at this time of year. The measures include a tip line where individuals can call and confidentially advise the GTHL of a pending illegal tryout.

“Last season we suspended 5 coaches and 3 players for this activity. I am confident with this renewed effort on behalf of the GTHL Board of Directors we will catch many more individuals and hold each accountable” said Gardner. “In addition to being unethical, these activities are dangerous, as there is no Hockey Canada insurance coverage provided to participants.”

Gardner’s advice – “If you are invited to participate in a birthday skate or illegal tryout, ask yourself if breaking the rules is the type of lesson you want your child to learn from the game of hockey”.

The confidential illegal skate tip line is 416-636-6845 ext. 320. A caller only needs to leave the date, time and location of the skate.

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