TO HELP LOCAL PLAYERS

Vernon Lakers establish junior hockey scholarship

Vernon Lakers recently announced the establishment of the Vernon Junior Hockey Scholarship Fund which will help local players with their post-secondary education in the coming years.

The Scholarship fund will be chaired by a special committee comprised of five local business persons who will administrate the fund and also make the player selections for receiving of the educational stipend.



ERNIE GARE

There are three major objectives of the fund: to provide scholarships for qualifying players who wish to attend Kalamalka College on a full time basis while playing for the Vernon Junior A hockey club; to provide funds for bursary awarded to graduating (Vernon native) player who exemplifies good citizenship qualities, has a high academic average and who wishes to pursue his education at a Canadian university or college (tentatively called the Roly Samartino Bursary award).

This scholarship will have its own entity, separate from the present Vernon hockey franchise or future franchise sales or changes in management. The purpose of the fund will be solely to help young hockey players who play in Vernon to further their college education on a continuing basis as long as there is junior A hockey in the city.

"It's an added incentive for kids to play hockey in Vernon," explained Lakers' Coach Ernie Gare who was the perpetrator of the idea. "It will be a separate entity from the franchise so it will be an on-going thing."

The actual fund will be the result of a number of fund-raising drives which will be carried out under the guidance of fund administrators over the course of the next hockey season.

"We're going to organize a major fund-raising event to get the ball rolling," suggested Gare. "Eventually we'd like to raise enough to use the interest on the fund to provide three or four scholarships each year."

Meanwhile, the five committee members will include Lakers' owner and General Manager Mel Lis who is also a Vernon businessman. Others include Frank Estergaard of Thorne Riddell Inc., Bob Kaiser of Bloom £ Sigalet Ltd., Brian Willows of Davidson and Co., and Ernie Kowal, another local businessman.

The committee will oversee the fund and will also be responsible for managing the project as well as selecting certain fund-raising events. An interest-bearing account will be set up for the fund which will be controlled solely by the members of the committee.

The committee will also explore the possibilities of forming a non-profit society to assist in the fund-raising activities.

"Similar funds have worked in other centres such as Penticton," added Gare.

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