



More on the Central Hockey League

By **ROBIN INSCOE**

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When the puck drops on the 2013-2014 hockey season, the Central Hockey League will head into uncharted waters— a Canadian franchise in Brampton.

Team owner Gregg Rosen, team president Cary Kaplan and Central Hockey League commissioner Duane Lewis made a presentation to city councillors on Wednesday, receiving unanimous approval for the project that will see the first non-American franchise begin play next season at the Powerade Centre.

All that's left is finalizing the lease agreement between the City of Brampton and the Realstar Group. The yet unnamed hockey club has already agreed to terms on a 15-year lease with owners of the Powerade Centre.

As for the team name, that will be determined through a Name the Team Contest, that is already underway. Visit www.hockeybrampton.com for details on how to win.

Kaplan, who heads up Cosmo Sports, said that group had been looking at several locations and working on a deal with the Central Hockey League for three years before the Brampton option came up. The demise of the Ontario Hockey League's Battalion, who will move to North Bay for next season, opened the door for them here.

"I'm really glad the other deals didn't work out," admitted Kaplan, who's sports marketing offices are just 10 minutes from the Powerade Centre. "There is a lot of heavy lifting to be done, but this is an optimal situation."

Gregg Rosen, the owner of the new franchise is not new to the hockey ownership scene. He guided the Kingston KIMCO Voyageurs to the Ontario Junior Hockey League title a few years ago. He operates KIMCO Steel Sales in Kingston.

"You've got to see it to believe it," said Rosen of the Central Hockey League in his presentation to city councillors. "I'm very excited."

Just what is the Central Hockey League?

Most southern Ontario residents know very little about the league, primarily because it encompassed teams through the mid-western United States.

Brampton will be competing against the Allen (Texas) Americans, Arizona Sundogs, Bloomington (Illinois) Blaze, Denver (Colorado) Cutthroats, Fort Worth (Texas) Brahmas, Missouri Mavericks, Quad City (Illinois) Mallards, Rapid City (South Dakota) Rush, St. Charles (Missouri) Chill, Tulsa (Oklahoma) Oilers and Wichita (Kansas) Thunder in their inaugural season, with the possible addition of a 13th entry in the next few weeks according to commissioner Lewis.

And while many in southern Ontario might not know of the league, a few of the names might be familiar, Lewis noted that 61 percent of the the third-tier pro league's players are Canadian and 17 percent played in the Ontario Hockey League on the way up.

The Central Hockey League has affiliations and working agreements with National Hockey League and American Hockey League teams, and according to Kaplan the Brampton franchise will have an NHL affiliation. While the league hasn't had any Canadian teams, it does have ties north of the border.

In addition to Lewis, who was born and raised in Georgetown, the founders of the league and majority



CENTRAL HOCKEY LEAGUE.

stakeholders are Jim Treiving and George Melville, owners of Boston Pizza.

One noticeable difference will be on the benches, where each team can dress 18 players (including goaltenders) instead of the traditional 20. And there is a salary cap of \$11,000 per week.

The 72-game schedule will commence in early October and finish mid-March. Last year's average regular season attendance was 4,042.

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