



Newmarket Hurricanes Go Tobacco-Free

In July 2009, the Newmarket Hurricanes first learned about the provincial movement Play, Live, Be...Tobacco-free. At that time they had a player contract that prohibited the use of tobacco while being a part of the team and acknowledged the negative health effects of tobacco-use on sports performance. They had a desire to learn more about how they could share their tobacco-free policy with other Junior A hockey teams.

During the 2009-2010 hockey season, York Region Community and Health Services tobacco staff consulted with the Newmarket Hurricanes Community Relations Coordinator to develop a comprehensive action plan that included: attending three hockey games to raise community awareness about the importance of tobacco-free sport and recreation; promotional advertising including a rink board ad and a health message in the program; enhancing the existing policy and developing a communication strategy. When the hockey season ended, York Region tobacco staff continued working with the Community Relations Coordinator to develop a comprehensive tobacco-free policy that included a players' pledge. In addition, the policy ensures that any new volunteers will also be tobacco-free.

"The importance of being tobacco-free has always been recognized by the Newmarket Hurricanes. Being tobacco-free is an important message for our players and with our new tobacco-free policy we have taken the next step towards ensuring our players are healthy, performing at their best, and are excellent role models for children and youth in the community," said Brian Perrin GM and Head Coach, Newmarket Hurricanes.

The tobacco-free policy will be officially launched at the beginning of the 2010-11 hockey season. The Newmarket Hurricanes are the first Junior A hockey team in York Region to adopt a comprehensive tobacco-free policy. The Newmarket Hurricanes are considered leaders and role models in promoting tobacco-free living and sports to children, youth and the community at large.

Submitted by Kelan Jylha, Summer Student, York Region Community and Public Health Services