

THE MISSISSAUGA NEWS

Hoping for more special moments

By Sam Laskaris

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Members of The Mississauga Lightning are hoping other clubs will follow their example. Somewhat disappointed that they don't have more tournaments to attend, officials with the local Special Olympics floor hockey team have decided to stage their own.

The Lightning will play host to a 10 team event, for players who are mentally challenged on Feb. 9 at Homelands Senior Public School (2420 Homelands Drive). Tim Logan, who has coached the Lightning for the past five years, said he's hoping other cities with Special Olympics clubs also decide to start running their own tournaments. "We're trying to create a buzz," he said "And if it doesn't happen then we'll at least know we have our tournament to go to every year."

Those who have confirmed their participation in the Lightning tourney include two teams from London, two from Toronto, as well as entrants from Brampton, Scarborough, Flamborough and Milton. A club from Sudbury might also be taking part. If Sudbury doesn't attend, Logan said another team will fill its spot.

Though in previous years the Lightning simply participated in exhibition contests whenever it could line up a rival, this year Mississauga is in a four team league with Brampton, Flamborough and Milton. "It's only four teams, but it's a start" said Logan, adding clubs have a six game regular season followed by two playoff rounds. The season began in November and continues until April.

Though his side won its first three league matches, Logan is uncertain how it will fare at its tournament. "It's hard to say," he said. "We'll be playing four games and sometimes it's hard to keep up the intensity level for four games." The Mississauga club, which was founded about 10 years ago, has 22 players on its current roster. And there's a wide age range – the youngest players are 14 while the oldest are in their late 40's. Offensively the club is led by Aaron Lindsay and Mark Ellis. Mike White is a defensive specialist and Tiffany Cooper is the lone female on the squad.

The Tournament will commence at 8:30am. The Championship final is scheduled for 3:15pm. Games consist of three nine-minute periods of running time. Mississauga's opening match is against the Scarborough Cyclones at 8:30am. It won't just be the winners who will be taking home some hardware. "We'll have awards for everybody," Logan added. "We want them to leave the tournament on a positive note."

For more information on Mississauga's Special Olympics programs, call the organization hotline at (416) 322-1623.