

# Anti-fighting strategy adequate, OHA boss says

BY PATRICK MALONEY  
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An expanded local push to see fighting eliminated at all levels of Ontario junior hockey, not just in the Ontario Hockey League, is unnecessary, one official says.

Brent Ladds, president of the association that oversees Junior B, C and D hockey in southern Ontario, yesterday said on-ice fights are no longer the chronic problem they may have once been.

"It's not a major problem for us," said Ladds, who has been with the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) for three decades.

"I'm not naive enough (to think)

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*Brent Ladds, OHA president*

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that you can eliminate them altogether."

Peter Jaffe, a London anti-violence activist, has launched a campaign to end fighting in the OHL, the league in which the London Knights play. The move has since garnered support from the board of the Middlesex-London Health Unit.

At a meeting last week, the board applauded Jaffe's plan and also

turned its attention to other levels of provincial junior hockey, such as the OHA.

In the OHL, a fight results in a five-minute penalty. In the OHA, which governs 150 southern Ontario teams with players between ages 16 and 20, a fighter gets a five-minute penalty and is removed from that game.

That penalty, however, isn't stern enough, said Dr. Graham Pollett, the Middlesex-London medical officer of health. "A (five)-minute misconduct and a game misconduct is not sufficient to end fighting," said Pollett, a longtime hockey fan.

He would like to see tougher punishments, suggesting a penalty,

game misconduct and an additional one-game suspension could deter fighting.

Bill Billington, a Londoner and longtime OHA leader, said he's against fighting and the organization "has always striven to try and discourage that type of activity."

For Ladds, the OHA's current rules are sufficient and the board of health's suggestion misses the net entirely.

"If it was an issue, we would be the first one to address it," he said. "How far do you go to put it out? If you fight, you're out of the game — what's next?"

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