



## LNHL 2022 Tournament Cancelled

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NIPISSING FIRST NATION (January 14, 2022)** – Nipissing First Nation (NFN) has decided to cancel the Little Native Hockey League (LNHL) tournament that we planned to host in Mississauga from March 13-17, 2022.

This decision was made in response to the surge in COVID-19 activity across the province resulting from the highly transmissible Omicron variant and is fully supported by the LNHL Executive Committee. The return to modified Step 2 measures, including restrictions on recreational facilities and gatherings, as well as limited testing capacity and data reporting due to recent changes in provincial guidelines, signals that we are not moving in the right direction.

The continued uncertainty around aspects of daily life that we used to take for granted – from schools being open, to participating in hockey tournaments, and simply the ability to come together without worrying about the safety of our families and communities – makes it clear that cancelling the tournament is the right decision to make at this time.

“While this isn’t the kind of three-peat anyone aspires to, the decision to cancel the tournament for the third year in a row was made entirely out of concern for the health and safety of First Nation communities across Ontario, especially those unequipped to deal with increased demands on already very limited resources,” said NFN Chief Scott McLeod.

“Although we remain hopeful that the situation will improve in the coming months, this pandemic continues to teach us that we can’t predict what will come next. We all hope that this will come to an end sooner than later, but as many have noted, ‘hope is not a strategy’ and holding a huge hockey tournament amidst an ongoing global pandemic is not a risk that Nipissing First Nation is willing or prepared to take,” Chief McLeod added.

“In these rapidly changing and unpredictable times, your health and safety has always been our top priority,” said LNHL President Marian Jacko. “I would like to thank the NFN LNHL Host Committee and the NFN Chief and Council for their leadership, their support, and their resilience. On behalf of the LNHL Executive, we express our heartfelt gratitude for their unwavering dedication and support for the Little NHL.”

Our LNHL Host Committee and the LNHL Executive discussed the possibility of postponing the tournament until later in the year or hosting a regional format. Having considered the many factors involved with these options, we have agreed that a postponement or alternate format is not feasible.

We have also taken into consideration the vast amount of time and resources that NFN staff have devoted to planning this event since 2019. We are mindful and respectful of their other duties as NFN continues to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic to protect the community.

NFN's Chief and Council will discuss the possibility of Nipissing hosting the LNHL tournament at a later date, however no decision has been made at this time. We will contact our sponsors, partners, volunteers, and special guests in the coming weeks to discuss next steps. We appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as we work through this.

We know many will be saddened by the cancellation of LNHL 2022, but we trust that the rationale behind our decision is clear and sound. Our leadership, LNHL Host Committee and Executive are equally disappointed given how much time and energy we've invested into hosting what would have been an amazing LNHL experience.

Our theme *All Nations, One Family* was intended to be celebrated together. Until we can do so safely again, please keep it in mind as we work together through these difficult times, even if it means staying apart for a little while longer.

Miigwech and stay safe everyone!

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*In the Spirit of Hockey,*

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