

Soccer gears up for BMO's Team of the Week

By Jeff Doner

With spring in the air, the soccer season is starting to ramp up and so is the Bank of Montreal's nationwide Team of the Week soccer program.

The program is in its third year and was started to help recognize and support youth soccer on a national level. For 15 weeks this summer, Canadian soccer coaches, parents and community members can nominate their favourite youth soccer team for a chance to win team of the week.

Pomilla Singh, Aurora BMO Bank of Montreal branch manager, encouraged every team in Aurora to sign up.



Bank of Montreal branches across the country, including this branch at Bayview and Wellington, are gearing up for the BMO Team of the Week program.

"Soccer is popular here in Aurora and I'm sure we have no shortage of incredible youth players who embody the pillars of the BMO Team of the Week program," she said. "If you know a team of deserving youth soccer players who represent community spirit, passion, pride and dedication, nominate them! Not only could a team from Aurora be highlighted on a national level, but the grand prize could go a long way within our soccer community."

All they have to do is tell their story of why their team needs to be recognized as the BMO team of the week. Teams selected have to show team pride, spirit and passion for the game and community involvement.

One team is selected every week and wins a variety of prizes and perks, including: \$500 for the team itself, a celebration at their local BMO branch, track suits and a \$500 donation to the team's charity of choice. Once 15 teams are chosen, Canada votes on who should be champion.

The chosen team wins \$125,000 to refurbish their local soccer pitch and a \$5,000 donation to their charity of choice. The winner also chooses to go to a Toronto FC, Montreal Impact, Vancouver Whitecaps FC or a Canadian National team home game. BMO flies the team to the chosen city for a weekend.

The past two winners were the Ladner Storm from British Columbia and the Glen Shields Sun Devils 2000 from Vaughan. BMO Team of the Week winners will be announced weekly starting on Apr. 17.

Andrew James, former Aurora BMO branch manager who was involved with the program for first two years in Aurora, said BMO is lucky to be a part of the program.

"There has definitely been excitement from the players, from the parents and coaches," he said. "What's really inspiring is how much community involvement goes into these clubs between the parents, volunteers and the coaches, even just the players

themselves, the efforts they take on in fundraising and awareness.?

James also said the program has received a lot of positive feedback.

?There's a lot of pride around community awareness. I think people are glad to see that local business and sponsorship gets turned around and gives back to the community and offers a lot of opportunities.

?We at BMO are not just working in the community; we live in York Region and Aurora so it's really important and exciting for us to give back as well.?

Louise Dyer from the Aurora Youth Soccer Club had nothing but good to things to say about the program and the positive affect it has on the kids and community as a whole.

?I think it's a great program. We've had teams participate in the past and haven't had anybody be successful yet, but I think it encourages the kids to go above and beyond the call of duty and I think many sports are doing that now, so I think it's valuable for many different reasons.?

To enter your team visit www.BMOsoccer.com.