

ADVAS charity game to boast political, NHL talent

Scott Mitchell, Senior Reporter

Twin Arena might look more like Parliament Hill than a hockey arena on July 5.

Political agendas will be put aside that afternoon when a team of Conservative Members of Parliament will face off against a squad of Alberta provincial Members of the Legislative Assembly in an MP vs. MLA charity hockey game.

Also suiting up will be NHL draftees Zach Boychuk and Dana Tyrell and Olds native Jay Rosehill. Ty Rattie, the No. 2 overall pick in the 2008 WHL Draft will also suit up, along with Calgary Flames alumni Tony Stiles.

The idea was Wild Rose MP Blake Richards' brainchild after playing in a number of similar games in Ontario run by eastern MP's. All of the proceeds will go to benefit victims of crime assistance funds, such as the Airdrie and District Victim Assistance Society, the Bow Valley Victim Services Association, Cochrane and Area Victim Services and the Chinook Arch Victim Services.

"The idea had kind of crossed my mind before I was even elected," Richards said. "We had talked about this initially as a fundraiser for our party. After I was elected I thought it would be a nice thing to do for the community."

Tickets will cost \$10 and Richards is hoping to raise in the neighbourhood of \$20,000. While some politicians will take the opportunity to talk shop, Richards will be all business on the ice.

"This is for bragging rights. It's a big game," Richards said. "The most important thing is raising money but it's going to be a competitive game."

On the other side will be Airdrie-Chestermere MLA Rob Anderson between the pipes.

"It gives us a chance to build relationships," Anderson said before taking some time to trash talk. "They might feel the need to rig their team with all this NHL and WHL and AHL help, but if they don't do that there is no doubt it is men against boys."

Richards sees flaws in the netminder.

"I'm looking to light the lamp behind him for sure," Richards laughed. "If my team wins, I'm not going to let Rob forget about it all year."

Richards is hoping to make the game an annual event.

Doors will open at 12:30 p.m. and ticketholders will have a chance to mingle with players and politicians beforehand.

The game will also mark Tyrell's return to the ice after knee surgery in January. He will head off to the Tampa Bay Lightning's rookie camp two days later.

Tyrell even got in on the trash talk.

"It's hard to say," he said when asked what he expects the calibre of play to be. "I'm sure some of them played hockey when they were younger or maybe even still play a little bit. "

A detailed list of players is available at wildrosehockey.com. There could be additional special guests confirmed in the next couple of weeks, Richards added.

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