



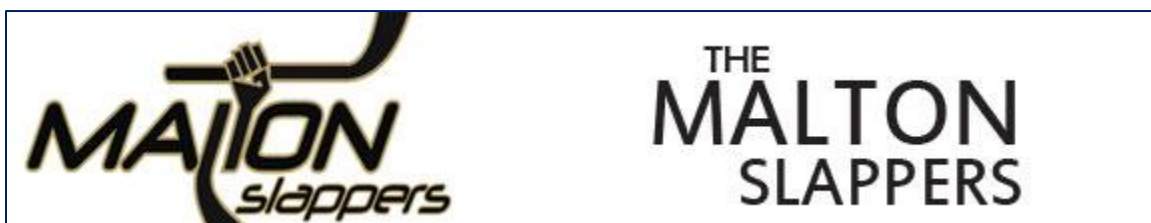
## THE 2011 SALAAM CUP TEAM PREVIEWS

THANKS TO:  
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### POOL 'A' PREVIEWS



The Slappers look to be hungry this year coming off a strong 2010 tournament. Feeding off their win over ML last year - declared as the best game in Salaam Cup history - they look to take it to the next step this year and finally reach the finals after losing in the semi's for 2 straight years. Last year coming off a 3-1 loss to the eventual champions they are putting back the same roster as last year. Malton has always had amazing secondary scoring, it is just their primary scoring that needs to step up. Their top forwards such as Safi Ahmed, Mohammed Bilal and Emmad Khawaja need to elevate their game if Malton looks to go past the semi-finals. The usual defense core led by Azhar Hussain and Nomi Choudhry will be there once again. Malton has always been criticized of having bad defense yet they have yet to lose more than a 2 goal margin. Adding players such as Shahraiz Khan and up-and-comer Yusuf Ingar, they look to use their depth and out work every team. Alongside slappers will be team India coach Ranbir Singh who will once again be behind the bench. Look for this team to be playing in the finals with home advantage at the Malton Arena. → *Safi Ahmed*



The Dragons have revamped their roster adding superstar forward Omar Sabri and the return of the great Farhan Raja. Raja was formerly with the Greenbirds, but after a great absence from ball hockey he returns to play with his original team: the Rexdale Dragons. Sabri and Raja will give the Dragons exactly what they have been missing all these years - those one or two goals they needed to win those key games. Last year they lost a close game to their rival Greenbirds. A tough 1-0 loss that could have turned the tournament upside down if Rexdale had won. This year they hope to turn things around and surprise every team they face including their first game which will be a revenge game for them as they look to take down the Greenbirds. With their offense taken care of they still have their defensive problem. With no big names on defense they will rely heavily on goaltender Ibad Khan who has proven over and over again he is one of the top Muslim goalies. Look for this team to surprise everyone and maybe even find themselves in the Salaam Cup finals. → *Safi Ahmed*



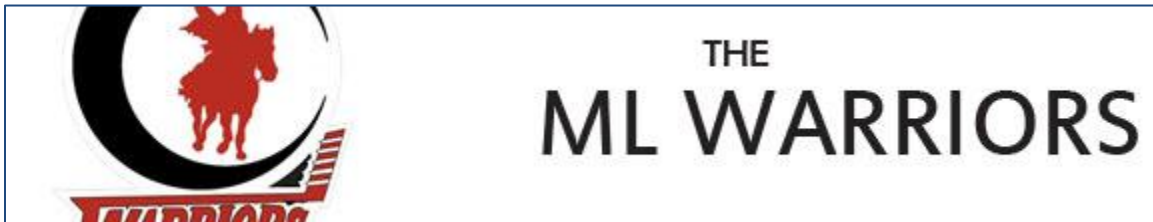
One of the original Salaam cup teams, the Montreal Islamique always battle their way into the top of the standings. They have not been performing as well as they were in the first couple tournaments, but they have picked it up recently. Last year coming off a tough 1-0 loss to their rivals Rexdale in the semi-finals, they look to be one of the top teams in pool A once again. With mostly the same roster as the previous years they seem to be gelling more and more winning the Montreal tournaments. But gym hockey is much different than arena hockey, something that their notable players such as new convert Jonathan Roy, Sophian Mian and Riaz Lasania need to learn. They need Sophian and Riaz to come up big in the tough games rather than padding their stats vs the lesser teams if they look to succeed and get past the semi-finals. Montreal will have a tough schedule, but if their top line performs they will have a chance to make it all the way. Look for this team to be competing with every team in pool A and battling their way back to the semi-finals. → *Safi Ahmed*



The first of two Donlands team to enter into this years' Salaam Cup will be looking to make a splash in Pool A. Much of the same team as last year, Donlands will be led into battle by Yusuf Teli, Mohammed Manjra and Nawaz Sheikh and will definitely be hard-pressed to put the ball in the net. The back-end looks strong but aging as Imtiaz Manjra, Feisal Tilly, Shahid Zafar and Zunaid Amla will try to stop any offence that comes their way and be able to thwart the ludicrous speed and strength from opposing teams. The starting goalie for Donlands will be none other than Sohail Okadia, and their backup will be Asif Thakor which allows this team to have a formidable backstopping duo between the pipes. → The Apprentice



After winning 4 straight Salaam Cup titles, the Greenbirds saw that streak come to an end at the hands of the Shaolin Monks in 2010. They heard it all: They were too old. Washed up. Yesterday's news. Old uncles. GMs Osman Buttar & Ali Wadee believes there is a lot of hockey left in the legendary team, as the core of the team went over to Europe and took gold in Pool B at this year's International Street & Ball Hockey Federation's tournament in Bratislava, Slovakia. The forward corps that has gotten the job done time and time again has remained intact for 2011, with some minor tweaks. Osman Buttar leads a group which includes the likes of brother Bilal, Sajjid Ayubi, Usama Mahmood, Greenbird rookie Shaukat Khan, Ammer Askary, Camran Baig, Farooq Khan, The Kalair Bros, and MHL star, Ali Wadee. On defense, team Pakistan hero Ijaz Chaudhry will be counted on to hold the fort alongside brother Ahmed, Sami Chaudhry, Junaid Mohammed, Dilawar Alvi, and Zafir Rashid. Raza Zaidi will be between the pipes for the Greenbirds and will be looking to recreate the magic he conjured during the team's run for gold last month. If one thing's for certain, it's this: The Greenbirds are coming to this tournament with a renewed sense of determination. The team possesses what many teams lack: a winning pedigree. 13 of the team's 20 players were on Team Pakistan's Gold Medal winning team last month in Bratislava, and you can bet the taste of victory is still fresh in their minds. → Ghostwriter



The ML Warriors enter this year's Salaam Cup with the hope of returning to the finals and lifting the Cup for the first time since 2005. It is going to be no easy task, as GM Imran Patel has decided to go with essentially the same roster that got knocked out in the semi-finals a year ago against the Malton Slappers. The forward corps is comprised of a good mixture of youth and veteran leadership. Along with Samir and Shoaib Patel, Yusuf Bangee who will lead a young group of forwards which includes Aamir Talati, Safraz Motala, Hasanji Patel, Mohammad Makrod, and Sufyan Memon. Add in the belligerence, truculence, pugnacity and testosterone of Nabil Patel, Mohammad Kadva, and Uzair Motala and you have a pretty well rounded offensive group. On defense, veteran Suleman Chichwadia will look to take charge of a group which includes the likes of Zuhair Khanji, Suleman Nakhuda, Imtiaz Hatia, Faheem Vawda, and Ahmed Bulbulia. Again, a solid mixture of veteran savvy and youth will look to get the job done on the blue line. The man behind the mask will be none other than Umar Chichwadia, who will be looking to backstop his club back to the big dance and the success of this team hinges on his performance. The team in front of him has been practising for quite some time, so make no mistake: although the faces are similar, this team is a completely different one that bowed out at the hands of Yasar Razvi and the Malton Slappers just one year ago. Will the ML Warriors beat the odds and have their names back on the Cup? Or will another Salaam Cup pass ending in bitter disappointment? → *Ghostwriter*



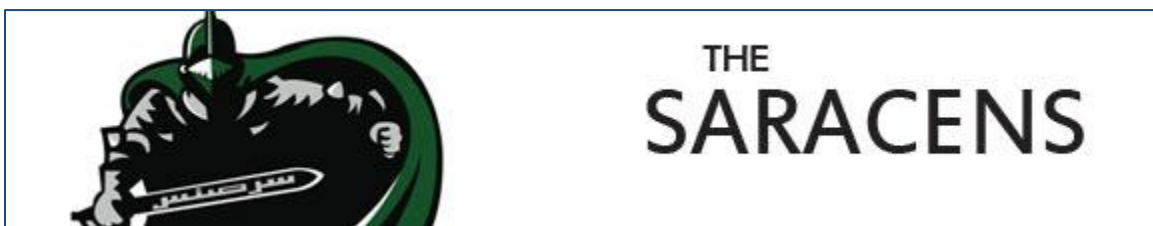
After ending the Greendbirds' historic run of 4 straight championships in last year's tournament, the defending champions are back for 2011 and are looking to repeat. The core of the team has remained intact, with Naveed Sheraly, the Ali Bros, Aadil Khan, and Erfan Bhanapatel leading the charge on offense. Newcomers Ahmed Saleh, Furqan Salam, and Ayaz Sheraly will look to round out the offense with Saqib Durrani, Ahsan Zaidi, Naeem Akhtar, and Mohammad Khote all looking to get this team its second straight championships by potting those important goals. The patrollers of the blue line have also remained intact from last year, with Talha Siddiqi leading the charge. He will be commanding a strong corps which includes the Azmi Bros, Arif Dhirani, Mustafa Alam, and Ahsan Zaidi. The most important position, as everyone will agree, is goaltending. After making his Salaam Cup debut in 2010 and having his name engraved on the Cup, Muhammad Sibtain is back between the pipes looking to backstop the Monks to their second straight championship. It's not going to be easy, however, as opposing teams have had a year to revamp their rosters and practise every play in the book. Will the Monks repeat? Only time will tell. → *Ghostwriter*



Kaz Akbar had high hopes of bringing in some veterans and a good mix of youth to participate in Salaam Cup. So high that he opted for pool A. The problem, however was that a lot of the participants were not able to commit and pulled out very close to the tournament. Now Kaz had to scrounge and recruit players that probably don't have the utmost skill set to compete highly in this dangerous division. His many years playing between the pipes and his international experience will be the be all and end all of this team and he has managed to woo some notable veterans such as Khalid Mughal, Nadeem Qureshi and Waseem Kalair. His defence will be thoroughly tested and he does have a capable individual in Rizvan Kassam manning the blueline. Raza Bahadur was also a late add-on and will definitely provide hustle and heart for a team that hasn't had much to to gloat about. The Red Army will definitely play spoiler and tire out the teams they will face and could surprise fans along the way.

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## POOL 'B' PREVIEWS



After some management change the Saracens finally seem to be getting on the right track. With Hashim Qureshi taking over as GM they seem to be in good hands as he is a proven leader with his ice hockey background. Some notables are still on the team such as Bilal Pervaiz, Akbar Jilany, Zafer Sami and Ahmed Hathout. They lost some key players in Belal Hafeez, Shahraiz Khan, Yusuf Buttar, Salman Syed and Furqan Salam but still boast a solid roster adding players such as Junior Salaam cup all-star Hassan Badreddine. B pool seems to be very open this year for any team to take and if all Saracens are on the right page they could go further than their semi-final loss last Salaam cup. → *Safi Ahmed*



For the first time in Salaam Cup history, a team will participate from a totally different time zone. The BC (British Columbia) Islam make their debut and is a huge reason why this tournament is receiving the hype it deserves. Originally they were supposed to enter last year's tournament but there were too many complications. This year they plan on attending the tournament and they have everything in their favour. Nobody knows the players on this team and how good/bad they will be. They have the upper hand against any opponent with nobody knowing who their top players are. What we do know is that the West Coast know their ball hockey as some of the greatest players to play internationally - whether with Team Canada or with Team India - originate from the mountainous region. With leader Rizwaan Abbas initially asking to be placed in pool A, this team seems to be highly competitive. Look for this team to be playing in that relegation match to get into Pool A. → *Safi Ahmed*



Always playing their hardest and giving the opposition a tough time, the Blade Runners once again enter the tournament with their same hard working roster. With a season under tier 4 they seem to be getting better and better and making a name for themselves. With captain Salman Alvi moving back to defense, he will be controlling the play and ripping shots from the point with their forwards looking for those garbage goals. This team does not have a lot of skill, but they have the heart for hard work and determination, something every skilled team needs to win. Players like Khalid Bhatti are stepping up in leagues like the GHL and I-Slam, and they will need him to use that accurate hard wrist shot of his if they plan on playing Sunday night for the pool B championship. Coming off a Salaam Cup championship team, Saqib Ali was a huge splash for GM Alvi and will be the go-to guy for this Golden group. He needs to be a key contributor if they want to play Sunday at Malton Arena. → *Safi Ahmed*



This team looking very familiar to the team that won tier 2 in I-Slam, look for the Green Knights to make a statement as they look to be one of the top teams in pool B. With their leading scorer, Hasnain “trimmers” Tirmizey, the leadership and experience of Naveed Mohammed and their line-up of dump and chase style of hockey, they will be tiring out opponents on defense and making them work for every loose ball. They have a big defense with the Siddiqui brothers leading the pack and they will look to use their big frame to knock off other forwards off their feet and use their size to their advantage. The only hole in this team is their goalie, Uzair Baig. Sometimes looking like he does not care and sometimes he plays like a Yasar Rizvi. They need him to be on top of his game if they plan on going far. Their defense will be solid, forwards will be grinding it out and scoring goals.....their only question will be how far their goaltending is willing to take them. → *Safi Ahmed*



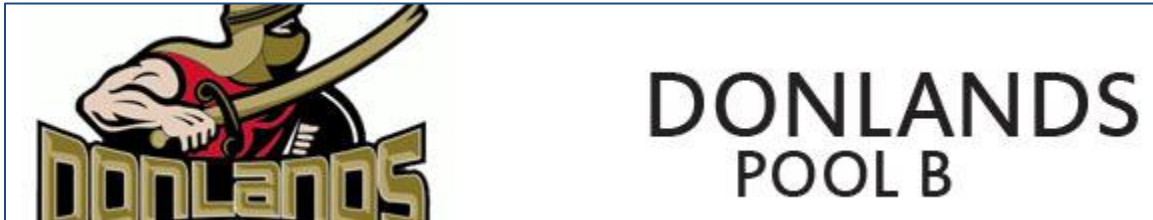
The Camels look to be fighting again this year adding key players that they needed to have that offensive punch like play maker Taqi Ahmed and Ali Tahir. Taqi is a newcomer into the Muslim ball hockey world but is to known as many as a gifted playmaker who knows how to find people. With these 2 players adding to the core of the Camels they look to be stronger than before. Trying to push past the first round for the first time in their history they should be playing in the semi-finals for Pool B. With the same defensive core they will give opposing forwards a hard time as they are able to keep up despite their age. Camels have finally solved their goalie problem, replacing Tamer El-Masri with proven backstop Sameer Subedar who they believe will keep them in every game. Look for this team to be battling it their way into the Pool B semi-finals. → *Safi Ahmed*



A disappointing exit for the Knights as they fell 2-1 to the Saracens in the quarter finals last Salaam Cup. The Knights have always had a solid offensive unit it is just their defense and goalie that has been causing problems for them last couple of years. With offensive stars such as the Rasoul brothers, power forward Haseeb Syed, dangler Zaid Toorawa they look to be offensively strong. They have well known defensemen such as Nauman Abbasi and Ali Murtaza, but it is just their defensive lapses that always seem to be the most glaring. Nauman always seems to be doing too much rather than keeping it simple which would make him a much better d-man. Goalie Khalid Mufti is always up for the task, diving and making miraculous saves. But its just the shots that should be easy to stop that are always going in. If the Crescent Knights want to go past the first round they need their D to keep it simple and their goalie to make key saves for them as their offense has always proven to be successful. → *Safi Ahmed*



The GTA Young Stars will play their first ever Salaam Cup. This team has a combination of players from the Malton / Thorncliffe area. Situated in Pool B, Young Stars such as Adil Patel, Abdul Manjra, Syed Ahmed, and Shoaib Rangrez will look to upset their opposition in Pool B. The goaltender for the GTA Youngstars will be Talha Ahmed, who will be playing his 2nd Salaam Cup. Time will tell whether or not he will be able to handle the vigour of the weekend as his rise in the MHL has become a slow, but sparkling one. But if he is able to rise above it, the GTA Young Stars could go far. → *The Apprentice*



The second Donlands team will be placed in Pool B. Many of these players have only experienced playing in the Madina Hockey League, and this inexperience will show playing in a tournament 10 times more competitive. The Kasuji clan of Zakariya, Zakeer, and Hanif will be Donlands' go-to players. Other notables include Zubair Jasat, Nadeem Kapadia and Junaid Vadia. This team will have its struggles, but could play the role of spoiler and tire out the opposing teams who are destined to make headway this weekend. → *The Apprentice*



Ahmed Mobin, The GM of Dynamo, has tried to assemble a team that can handle the intensity and competitiveness of the Salaam Cup. Many of these players are new to the Salaam Cup, or have played last year with Blitzkrieg. The two players that Dynamo will rely on heavily will be Mahmood and Alim Premji. These brothers will look to bring Dynamo to the top of the ranks in Pool B. Others include Zain Syed, Ubaid Khan, Imdad Ali and Naveed Masood. The lack of depth on this roster is a big question mark, and in the Salaam Cup, if you don't have depth, the tournament could be over before it even begins. → *The Apprentice*



The second team from Montreal will try to take home the title of Pool B champions. Led by Sharaz Yunis, who is also the goaltender for the Rebels, posted a 2.40 GAA in last year's tournament with a .842 Save Percentage. The Rebels will once again look towards Amar and Zubair Wahid for an offensive outburst throughout the tournament. Last year, the Wahid brothers were strong on offence, tallying a total of 4G and 1A. The Wahid brothers will need to take their game to the next level if the Rebels want to go further this year. The Rebels look to be a resilient group of players who are coming down to the GTA with one purpose: to make a mark on the Salaam Cup. → *The Apprentice*



On paper, this Markham team looks very dominant. With players such as Aadil Kadva, Abdul-Lateef Sayyad, Ahmad Khawaja, Ayaz Umarwadia, Bilal Syed, Shehryar Khan and Shahbaz Jamal, the offence for Markham looks to be taken care of. On defence, the load will be carried by Omar Syed, Abbas Amarshi, Muaz Uddin, and Yunus Mohammed. The only question mark surrounding this team is of goaltender Rahil Ahmed. Rahil has been known to be either very good or horribly bad (are his injuries healed up?). His consistency as a goalie is one of the worse that I have seen. If Rahil can turn up the heat and provide stellar goaltending, Markham has a very good chance of capturing Pool B in this year's Salaam Cup. → *The Apprentice*



The Pool B champions of 2010 are returning to the Salaam Cup and will try to repeat what they accomplished last year. They have the team to do so, as majority of the team has stayed in tact. New additions to this team are Sohel Ingar, Uwais Sachinwala, Vasim Kagzi and Atif Sufi. Returning players are Akib Patel, Fayaz Sindha, Rizwan Baig, Abu-Bakr Hafejee, Shahid Bulbulia, Sajid Bala, and Bilal Patel. Afzal Vepari will be the netminder for Scarborough once again, and will be relied upon to provide timely goaltending. Two big losses for this team however is Sufyan Memon and the grizzly veteran, Imtiaz Dawood. Both these players were probably the main reason Shahid Bulbulia and company were able to hoist the trophy and they will definitely be in tough to repeat that. → *The Apprentice*

*The End*