

## **BCHL confirms Canadian Junior Hockey League departure**

<https://twitter.com/BC Hockey League/status/1380687282479321088/photo/1>

After reviewing our options, the BCHL has chosen to no longer belong to the Canadian Junior Hockey League. The BCHL is not withdrawing from Hockey Canada or BC Hockey.

We wish the CJHL partners well and look forward to completing our current season and returning for our 60th anniversary in the fall.



## **CJHL STATEMENT REGARDING BCHL**

APRIL 9, 2021

**CALGARY, Alta.** — The Canadian Junior Hockey League (CJHL) announced today that the British Columbia Hockey League (BCHL) has submitted a notice to withdraw their membership from the CJHL, effective March 24th.

The remaining nine Leagues within the CJHL, will continue with their commitment to player development, through their Partnership with Hockey Canada, and its members, as well as the National Hockey League, which includes the presentation of the Centennial Cup national championship, the World Junior A Challenge, and the CJHL Prospects game.

## **BCHL Facts About Leaving The CJHL – The Details**

9 hours ago Admin

<https://thejuniorhockeynews.com/bchl-facts-about-leaving-the-cjhl-the-details/>

Many people are talking about “why” the BCHL left the CJHL. And that’s all it is, talk and nothing based on any facts.

Lets be clear, the FACT is the BCHL is not becoming part of the USHL. It has never been discussed and it not going to happen. This was a completely false rumor started by someone to get visits and followers. Sources in the BCHL and the USHL have confirmed that the USHL has not had talks and the USHL is completely not interested.

FACT – The BCHL leaving the CJHL was timed because the CJHL/Hockey Canada agreement is set to expire May 20, 2021 and the BCHL thought they could negotiate their own agreement with Hockey Canada that would allow them to be a Canadian Tier I labeled league.

FACT – Sources within Hockey Canada have reported they will not give the BCHL anything more than what any other CJHL member receives in the Hockey Canada/CJHL agreement which will be renewed.

FACT – Hockey Canada is not giving the BCHL Tier I status. Hockey Canada is not moving to a “Tier” system like one used in the United States. The CCHL has removed the “Tier I” portion of their old logo because of this. Hockey Canada is not about to alienate all the CJHL member leagues in order to make the BCHL happy.

The idea that Hockey Canada would make the BCHL “Tier I” and the rest of the CJHL teams “Tier II” is like saying Hockey Canada will make the OHL “Tier I” of Major Junior, the WHL “Tier II” because they have fewer NHL players, and then the QMJHL would be “Tier III”? Who thinks that will happen?

FACT – The BCHL made proposals to the CJHL to allow for out of Province recruiting of U-16 and U-18 players. That proposal was denied by the CJHL and by Hockey Canada. Hockey Canada makes the recruiting rules, and they are not going to be changed for the BCHL.

FACT – The BCHL is no longer listed on the CJHL website, the divorce is final.

FACT – The BCHL uses more import “American” players than any other league, averaging more than 130 American players per year for the last six years. (not including 2020-2021 due to COVID) More than twice as many as the CCHL who are in second place, and more than four to six times as many players as the rest of the Canadian members of the CJHL.

FACT – The BCHL can not survive without American players.

FACT – BCHL member teams have been charging players fee’s for various items including tuition for about seven years and those fee’s vary from team to team. Few BCHL teams are completely free to play, and would not meet Tier I criteria based on their financial models alone.

FACT – Import player numbers, American players are going to be reduced by Hockey Canada in the coming years from 6 per team to 4 per team. Hockey Canada is in the business of developing Canadian players, not American players.

FACT – The BCHL has regularly signed American players to use them as trade capitol to make deals with other CJHL teams to get their top Canadian players. A clear pattern of these trades is evident after players have played a few games and then are shipped off to other leagues.

FACT – The vast majority of NCAA commitments in the BCHL come from American players.

FACT – The vast majority of those American players with NCAA commitments in the BCHL have their commitment before going to play in the BCHL.

FACT – The BCHL wants a later start to the junior hockey season because they can not sell tickets to games in September which cuts into profit margins.

These are the facts. After investigating and actually speaking to people involved and not hearing some rumor from some scout at a game, or some guy at the bar that his aunt’s, cousin’s, neighbor knows a guy.

This has nothing to do with how “good” the BCHL is. How “good” the BCHL is or is not is completely subjective opinions from people watching hockey and everyone has their opinion.

This is strictly about the facts of the BCHL leaving the CJHL and why it happened. If you think these facts are interesting, wait until the “fallout”. Look for that article in the next day or two, because the BCHL team owners are about to find out on Wednesday at their BOG meeting that they played their hand completely wrong.

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## **BCHL goes rogue: League set to part ways with CJHL**

[Cleve Dheensaw](#) / Times Colonist

<https://www.timescolonist.com/sports/bchl-goes-rogue-league-set-to-part-ways-with-cjhl-1.24305562>

APRIL 9, 2021 10:12 P

The Clippers and Grizzlies could find themselves in a new league next season as the BCHL has served notice it wants to leave the CJHL. DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

The B.C. Hockey League has become the Rebel Hockey League.

The Canadian Junior Hockey League announced Friday that the BCHL has submitted a notice to withdraw its membership from the CJHL, effective retroactive to March 24th.

That leaves nine leagues within the CJHL.

“It gives us the independence we need,” said Nanaimo Clippers GM and head coach Darren Naylor, when asked about the issue, during a general interview about the early games so far in the pandemic-abbreviated 2021 BCHL Island Division season.

The move means the BCHL will not be eligible to compete for the national Junior A championship Centennial Cup, the former RBC Cup, which has been contested since 1971.

“We can have our own championship,” said Naylor.

BCHL teams have won the Centennial Cup five times since 2009 and 14 times overall. The Brooks Bandits of the Alberta Junior Hockey League edged the Prince George Spruce Kings of the BCHL 4-3 in the last championship game in 2019.

“The remaining nine leagues within the CJHL will continue with their commitment to player development, through their partnership with Hockey Canada, and its members, as well as the National Hockey League, which includes the presentation of the Centennial Cup national championship, the World Junior A Challenge, and the CJHL Prospects game,” the CJHL said in a statement.

Naylor said he objected to some of the features in the CJHL, including its early

annual start date in September. League play in junior hockey should start in October, said Naylor.

“It’s a broken structure,” he added.

Naylor also has issues with the weekly CJHL national top-20 rankings, saying many of the teams ranked could not beat teams from the BCHL that were not ranked.

BCHL commissioner Chris Hebb could not be reached for comment.

“After reviewing our options, the BCHL has chosen to no longer belong to the CJHL. The BCHL is not withdrawing from Hockey Canada or B.C. Hockey,” the BCHL said in a terse statement late Friday.

“We wish the CJHL partners well and look forward to completing our current season and returning for our 60th anniversary in the fall.”

The BCHL is considered the gold standard and leads all Canadian Junior A leagues in supplying players to the U.S. university level, and in 2019-20 surpassed its previous best number of players committed to NCAA Div. 1 schools with 166, up from 151 in 2018-19. That includes players such as former Victoria Grizzlies captain Alex Newhook, selected in the first round of the 2019 NHL draft by the Colorado Avalanche, and named 2019-20 NCAA rookie of the year with Boston College, before winning the silver medal with Canada in the 2021 world junior championship. Newhook was among the 94 BCHL alumni in the 2021 NCAA tournament with 15 of the 16 qualified teams having had at least one former BCHL player on the roster. Fourteen former BCHL players made it to the Frozen Four in Pittsburgh this weekend, with Alberni Valley Bulldogs-product Aaron Bohlinger skating in the championship game today for UMass against St. Cloud State and its four BCHL graduates.

Naylor, meanwhile has his Clippers off to a 3-0 start heading into Friday night’s late-finishing game against the Cowichan Valley Capitals (1-2-1). Alberni Valley (1-1-1) meets the Capitals in a matinee this afternoon, while the Clippers play the Grizzlies (2-2) tonight. Each team is playing 20 games in the BCHL Island Division season. All games are at Weyerhaeuser Arena in Port Alberni.

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## BCHL Commitments Decline With Scouting Decline Across Canada – Follow Up To BCHL Leaving CJHL

by [Admin https://thejuniorhockeynews.com/bchl-commitments-decline-with-scouting-decline-across-canada-follow-up-to-bchl-leaving-cjhl/](https://thejuniorhockeynews.com/bchl-commitments-decline-with-scouting-decline-across-canada-follow-up-to-bchl-leaving-cjhl/)

The BCHL has left the CJHL. We have covered this last week and it has been confirmed with multiple sources. They left the CJHL because the BCHL believes they are better than the CJHL member leagues. They felt they should be seen as being at a higher level than the CJHL members.

The BCHL felt, and believe, like many Canadians in British Columbia believe, that the BCHL is the best league for developing players for the NCAA.

The BCHL feels, or believes they are better than the North American Hockey League for developing players, and further believe they offer a higher level of competition.

News flash, no one in the NCAA has these beliefs or feelings. Another news flash, commitment numbers and scouting numbers do not support the BCHL's lofty opinion of themselves.

While the BCHL is a very good league, the majority of their commitments come from players who are from the United States, who already have their commitment before going to the BCHL. This is a fact.

The BCHL gets the majority of its American players by way of those players being cut or released from USHL teams. This is also a fact.

The BCHL uses more American born players than any other Junior A league in Canada.

Ten years ago, the BCHL could be seen as an equal to the USHL. They are not even close to the USHL in talent any longer.

When the Import Player rules changed and American born players were still considered import players even after playing a year in Canada, the BCHL level of play came down drastically. Some National Championship teams at that time were nearly devoid of Canadian born players completely. And this is what prompted the rule change.

The BCHL uses more out of province import players than any other league in Canada as well. So its not like British Columbia is developing a lot of its home grown talent. They are taking it from other programs across the country.

Now by leaving the CJHL the BCHL hopes to be able to raid the rosters of all the other Provinces best U-18 and U-16 players. Because under CJHL rules member leagues can not recruit those out of province players. Being outside of CJHL rules would in theory allow the BCHL to suck talent from across the country.

So why are the commitment numbers for the BCHL down?

Lets first realize that NCAA Hockey was developed for American players at American Schools. It was never intended or designed to give any international students a free ride education on American tax payer dollars. This is something that schools have been discussing for several years now.

With the financial crisis of 2008, scouting budgets were slashed. Trips to Canada were completely eliminated for some schools, and most schools limited those trips.

Canada is more expensive to get to than staying within the United States to scout. The cost of travel, hotels, gasoline and food are all much higher in Canada than the USA.

The USHL is the leader in developing NCAA athletes. The NAHL is second, and arguably the best direct junior to NCAA development league. The NCDC is gaining a lot of ground and producing more commits every year. All three of these leagues offer scouts unlimited and inexpensive opportunities to scout the best NCAA prospects in the world. These are real economic facts.

With the COVID pandemic, there has been almost no scouting in Canada while in the United States scouting has exploded to all new highs. Players that normally would have gone to Canada stayed in the United States, and benefited from it with increased scouting.

Canada while taking a more conservative approach to hockey didn't let anyone have even close to a regular season. Scouts like players couldn't cross the border.

Every year, more and more American born Coaches are also getting the NCAA Coaching positions that used to go to Canadian Coaches. Why? Because the United States has been just as successful if not more successful at developing players than Canada for the NCAA.

American Coaches favor scouting the USHL, NAHL, NCHC, USPHL and NCHC. That is just simply a fact.

Culturally, American born players have prepared for NCAA hockey all their lives. Their grades in school, test scores and development plan is all geared toward the NCAA.

While for most Canadian players the NCAA is an option only if Major Junior doesn't work out for them. This in many cases leaves Canadian players not as well prepared academically for NCAA programs.

All of these things influence scouting.

Across all of Canada scouting is down, NCAA commitments are down, and its been a trend for years. Six years ago I wrote this piece [An Advisers Life – The Truth About Which Leagues NCAA D-1 Players Come From \(thejuniorhockeynews.com\)](#). The trends in this piece have continued and have accelerated.

The USHL is number one, NAHL number two and the BCHL is holding on to number three while the NCHC is gaining ground on third place for NCAA D-1 commitments. The EHL and USPHL are the undisputed leaders in NCAA D-3 commitments and no one else even comes close.

The truth is, no one wants a 5 hour flight to BC unless its to get the best player in the league.

The truth is, the BCHL's biggest problem is their own location. Leaving the CJHL isn't going to improve your location, and its not going to improve your scouting or commitment numbers. That ship has sailed.

Maybe the BCHL should shift it's focus to developing players for Major Junior and Canadian University. What's wrong with that idea?

The truth is there is nothing wrong with that idea, but BCHL leadership ego's will not accept the position they are now in. That is why they have made this ill planned and terribly timed exit from the CJHL.

While the BCHL has definitely been very successful winning roughly half of Canada's Junior A National Championships since their inception, they have only won four out of the last ten. That is still very successful but not dominating by any means.

Fans of the BCHL are fans. They all remember the good old days. That's why they are fans. Today though the BCHL is still a good league, from a business standpoint though, everyone needs to look at facts and realize that the BCHL of the good old days is not the BCHL of today or tomorrow.

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## **BCHL Has Withdrawn From CJHL – Confirmed**

<https://thejuniorhockeynews.com/bchl-has-withdrawn-from-cjhl-confirmed/>

The BCHL has indeed sent a letter to the CJHL and they are no longer members of the CJHL. This has been confirmed by multiple sources. They are not leaving the CJHL, they have left and the long standing relationship is over.

The BCHL has not left Hockey Canada, though that may still happen. It could happen by choice of the BCHL or it could happen by choice of Hockey Canada.

The BCHL has clearly over played their hand with this move. By leaving the CJHL, they are no longer eligible to participate in the World Junior A Challenge. This event is only open to CJHL Members in Canada.

By leaving the CJHL the BCHL can not participate in the CJHL Top Prospects game.

The BCHL can not participate in the Sirius World Cup.

These are not the only consequences of the BCHL's choice to leave. There are problems facing the BCHL with this action if they intend to stay in Hockey Canada and BC Hockey.

The BCHL uses more American born players more than any other Canadian league. With talks of reducing Import Players throughout all Canadian leagues, from six per team to four per team, the BCHL would see a large part of their talent pool and most of their NCAA commitments go away.

BC Hockey has also required that their Junior B leagues wear full facial protection. The BCHL, if staying under BC Hockey will likely face the same rule implementation or BC Hockey will face legal action from Junior B hockey.

People have suggested that the BCHL would be signing import players from Europe with this decision. That idea is a fantasy.

The CJHL approved the use of import players from Europe almost five years ago, and Hockey Canada denied the CJHL rule change to take effect. Hockey Canada will not allow it, and the WHL will definitely fight against it happening.

If the BCHL left Hockey Canada they could use European players, and have no import player restrictions. This would be the beginning of the end of the BCHL. Without Hockey Canada, there would be a mass exodus of talent for the CJHL leagues and for the North American Hockey League.

Some people are also living on "Fantasy Island" when they suggest direct competition with the USHL for recruiting the top players. The BCHL will never be able to directly compete with the USHL for talent. A future article will do a deep dive into this subject.

The BCHL now is on an island of their own making. They no longer have the political lobby support of all the other CJHL leagues. They certainly wont have the support of the WHL, and they likely just lost the trust of Hockey Canada.

The arrogance of the BCHL really has no limit. When TJHN broke the story that they would use a pay to play model, the President of the Board of Governors called me to say I was lying



about how much they would charge. Making threats that never came to fruition. Making claims that were completely untrue, and demanding retractions and corrections.

Yet, his team charged players some of the highest tuition. And none of the other threats were acted upon. The BCHL kept rolling.

This move to leave the CJHL was predictable. It is typical of the mindset of the leadership of the BCHL. They hate the fact that they are now light years behind the NAHL, and they are not even in the same galaxy as the USHL. The NCDC is not only gaining ground in NCAA D-1 commitments but surpassed the BCHL in players named to the NHL players to watch list.

Reports that the BCHL is trying to become a Northern Division of the USHL are simply wishful thinking and coming from pure delusional speculation. USHL Owners would never devalue their franchises by allowing the BCHL to partner with them in any way. BCHL teams would not meet the financial requirements for membership in most cases. Neither USA Hockey or Hockey Canada would ever approve such a move and it would need the approval of both. The NAHL would also vote against such a proposal.

If anything the BCHL could possibly align with the NAHL, but that is pure speculation. I don't believe for one second BCHL teams could compete on a nightly basis with the NAHL simply based on physicality alone. And the Wenatchee Wild who left the NAHL for many reasons including travel expenses sure wouldn't be looking to add to their travel budget at this point after a year of pandemic.

That the BCHL would alienate all the other leagues in Canada is simply mind boggling. They were disliked before and now, no one will be there to help them. But they will get their wish to be on their own, and they are about to find out how alone they will be.

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## **BCHL Leaving The CJHL And Hockey Canada?**

<https://thejuniorhockeynews.com/bchl-leaving-the-cjhl-and-hockey-canada/>

Multiple sources are reporting that the British Columbia Hockey League has notified the Canadian Junior Hockey League that they will be withdrawing from CJHL membership as of the 2021-2022 season.

TJHN has confirmed from BCHL team sources that a letter was in fact sent to the CJHL informing the CJHL of the BCHL's intent to leave last week.

Other sources that have not been confirmed are reporting that the BCHL will also leave the umbrella of Hockey Canada.

According to statements made "off the record" the BCHL has made it clear that they feel they are better than, or above the rest of the other CJHL members when it comes to level of play. Multiple sources have said the BCHL has made it clear they feel other "Junior A" leagues in Canada should be on a "level below" the BCHL.

One source said;

“They think they should be the USHL of Canada and the rest of us should be like NAHL teams. They think they are better than everyone and they aren’t or they would win every RBC Cup and they don’t.”

Another source said;

“They think they are losing players to the USHL and NAHL and they aren’t. They think they are just as good as the USHL and they aren’t. They think that by leaving they can compete directly with the USHL and NAHL for player recruiting and it just won’t work.”

While the BCHL has long been a great league for NCAA player development, it is not on par with the USHL or NAHL when it comes to college commitments or level of play.

As the USHL and NAHL and now NCHC have grown and proven to NCAA coaches that they are developing players for their NCAA programs at a higher rate the BCHL has fallen behind.

As NCAA budgets have been cut, and scouting budgets have been slashed, those NCAA programs have changed where and how they scout. They no longer need to go to Western Canada to recruit NCAA players. Scouting predominantly in the United States, they save time and money. This is just the economics of hockey, and the BCHL can not change those economics.

Scouting across Canada as a whole is down, even before the pandemic. NCAA programs are simply saving money and staying home.

NCAA scouting bias has also changed. While most NCAA coaches in the past were Canadian, younger coaches and assistant coaches doing the recruiting are now American born. Coaches and scouts tend to be biased toward the leagues they know the best. This is why the leagues in the United States are so far ahead of Canada in NCAA player development.

If indeed the BCHL leaves the CJHL, and if it leaves Hockey Canada they will not rival the USHL. They will simply be seen as another league not sanctioned by a national governing body. They will not rival the NAHL and will likely see a dramatic drop off in talent within two years.

Regardless of result, the BCHL has certainly shown they have a high opinion of themselves and they are willing to alienate themselves further from the rest of Tier II Junior A hockey in Canada.

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