

Junior "A" Hockey League Probable Replacement For Struggling Seniors

Whether the Okanagan Junior Amateur Hockey League will replace its senior counterpart depends on its acceptance by Vernon's long-suffering Joe Phan, and a continuance of the uncertainty which surrounds the struggling OSAHL.

While the seniors have yet to call a meeting to discuss their future, junior backers have stepped in with a rapid promotion plan which has almost reached its completion.

The OJAHL has released a tentative schedule which is slated to open at the Civic Arena October 31 between Vernon and Kelowna. Featuring teams from Kamloops, Vernon, Kelowna and Penticton, the junior season will last until February 10, with 15 home and 15 away games.

This will be followed by the league playoffs, and then provincial playoffs against the Kootenay and coast champions to determine the province's representative in Memorial Cup competition.

LOOKING FOR SPONSORS

Right now the clubs are negotiating for sponsors. Already Kamloops has acquired the backing of a major hotel, and others are likely to follow between now and the opening of training camps October 1.

Apart from these individual sponsorships the league will receive no outside financial help. "We are hoping that fan response will make it self-supporting organization," says league president Bill Brown.

The Okanagan junior setup will have no hookup with professional leagues. "Right now that's the way we want it to be," states president Brown, who expects Western Hockey League clubs to apply for junior league seasoning for their top prospects despite this rule.

Former Vernon Canadians' coach George Agar, now handling the new WHL franchise at Los Angeles, has shown a great interest in the Okanagan Loop and has asked for an option on any major prospects.

LEAVE PLAYERS ALONE

Commenting on the calibre of hockey Okanagan fans can expect, Mr. Brown said it would be the best they could put up. "We can be just as strong as the Alberta and Saskatchewan leagues provided the prairie

junior clubs leave our players alone," he contended.

Going on, he said if the Okanagan had the players now with prairie clubs they would have no trouble in holding their own in Western Canada competition.

Steps have been taken to combat this invasion. "Now they're allowed only one import from one club," says Bill. "We'll probably lose some of our best boys but most of them already had strings with prairie clubs before we thought of forming a junior league here," he states.

Vernon's junior prospects look healthy. Most of last season's better players will be back in the lineup, and with a little junior experience behind them should provide the nucleus for a contending club.

So far Dave Kowal, Donny McCall, Brian Sammartino, George Beck, Harry Wynnchuk and Warren Henry have announced their desire to attend the junior training camp. Boys born after July 31, 1941 are eligible to play.

SEASON TICKET DRIVE

Already plans to conduct a season ticket drive are well underway. They will be priced at \$5.25 for 15 games. "The more we sell the more we'll have to put into our club," says Bill Brown, who anticipates good response from local hockey lovers.

Right now the coaching job



BILL BROWN

... Heads Junior Loop

is up in the air. Last season's senior coach Odie Lowe, teammates Tom Stecyk and Sherm Blair, and former national leaguer Dave McKay have had their names linked with the post, but this could be grossly reduced with the continuance of senior hockey in the Okanagan.

Local Divoters Hit Road For Tournaments

Senior and junior members of Vernon Golf Club hit the road for separate tournaments Sunday.

The senior group attended the annual Kamloops Days event, while Vie Morphet's juniors were contesting a special junior competition at Salmon Arm.

Registrations For 17-Week Boat-Handling Course Tonight

Registrations will be taken tonight at the Vernon Yacht Club for a 17-week course in small boat handling.

The course is being organized by the Vernon Power Squadron with the purpose of establishing a higher standard in the handling and navigation of boats.

Officials of the squadron are hoping for a good response to the course which will cost \$15. "We are looking for additional membership and believe the interest in the course will provide this," says squadron commander Amos Baker.

Date for commencement of the course, and the weekly night, will be decided by those registering.