

Super-circuit envisioned for B.C. Junior Hockey

The junior hockey situation in B.C. may be resolved or tossed completely into the air next weekend when club representatives gather at Penticton to explore the feasibility of a seven team super circuit in this province.

The meeting has been called by George Stoll, B.C.'s junior hockey representative to the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association.

Okanagan teams included

So far, the league is expected to be made up of the four existing Okanagan-Mainline Hockey League clubs, Penticton Broncos, Kelowna Buckaroos, Vernon Blades and Kamloops Kraft Kings, as well as three teams from the coast.

The new league, if formed and sanctioned by both the BCAHA and the CAHA, would probably start operation next year. It would be known as the British Columbia Junior Hockey League.

The seven-team provincial loop proposal was adopted at a BCAHA meeting in March 11 in Vancouver.

At the March meeting,

it was also decided that due to the responsibility assumed by the BCAHA under the conditions of the pro-amateur agreement (NHL-CAHA) the executive committee of the B.C. body shall have the authority to approve locations of where the teams shall operate and also the management of such Junior "A" teams.

As well as decide which cities will be granted franchises in the new league, the Penticton meeting will also discuss how the league is to operate, and formulate recommendations regarding Junior "B" hockey in B.C.

Emphasis on Junior "B"

Okanagan-Mainline District Representative to the BCAHA Larry Buchan of Vernon, connects the move towards a seven team super circuit in this province with an amateur hockey bulletin circulated at last Sunday's meeting of the Okanagan Mainline Hockey Association, sounding out directors on the idea of raising the age limit in each minor hockey division by 17 months.

Buchan claims that if the idea of giving players an extra year in each age group is passed, it would virtually do away with juvenile hockey in the province and place a greater emphasis on Junior "B".

The BCJHL would be regarded as Junior "A" with the winner engaging in the Memorial Cup playoffs each spring, while all other junior teams in the province would come under the Junior "B" category and play for the Cyclone Taylor trophy, emblematic of present Junior "B" supremacy in B.C.

"The present age deadline is May 31, and what they are trying to do now

is raise it by 19 months to the following December 31," Buchan said. He maintains that by raising the age limit in each division by almost two years, the effect would be felt more on juvenile hockey than on junior hockey. Players are allowed to move up through the ranks (Pee Wee-Bantam - Midget - Juvenile - Junior) according to their ability, and in a small community, where competition is too great at the present juvenile level, the situation would be remedied at the Junior "B" level where a coach would have more time with players to mold a winning team.

The age difference, however, is the only drawback in the agreement between the NHL and the CAHA. Once the agreement is signed, the NHL would turn over a healthy sum of money to the CAHA each year and would sign graduating juniors on a common draft. The raising of the age limit would mean an almost two years extra wait for players before they could be signed to a pro card.

Want a tighter hold

Dave MacKay, president of the Junior Blades, who will be attending the meeting with club manager Hugh Clarke, said that it is the NHL funds that has prompted the so-called seven-team super circuit in B.C.

In the past, the NHL clubs have directly sponsored junior teams (e.g. Detroit Red Wings-Edmonton Oil Kings; Boston Bruins-Oshawa Generals), but under the new pro-am agreement, monies would

go directly to the CAHA and from there to provincial branches where they would be distributed to junior leagues, and finally, to individual teams.

"It is only natural under the new agreement that the CAHA would want more control over the leagues and the teams," MacKay said. "They are giving the assistance and they want to insure the obligation is honored."

Involves more money

MacKay stated he is going into the meeting "to find out" what will happen and where Vernon fits into the picture.

Doug Daws of Kamloops, president of the OJHL said "To operate such a league, which will be of a higher calibre than the present Okanagan Junior Hockey League, and will involve more league games in the season, must also involve greater expenditures and an anticipated greater revenue source."

Present speculation is that one year's operation for a team would run in the neighbourhood of \$25,000, or approximately four times as much as it cost the average club in B.C.

to operate at a junior level last year.

A major part of the money difference would come from the CAHA, thus necessitating a tighter control by the governing body.

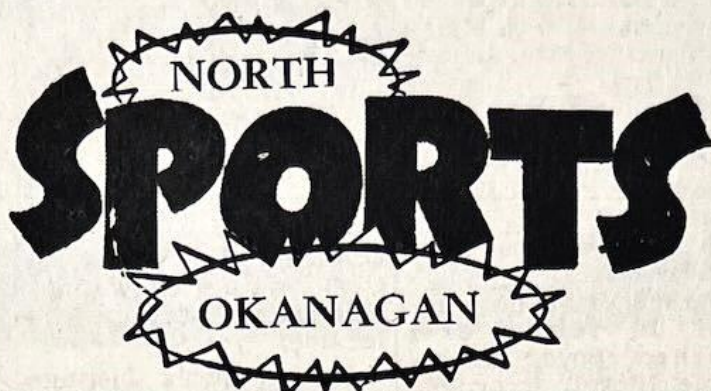
During the 1966-67 season there were nine Junior "A" calibre teams in B.C. representing three leagues, the Okanagan, the Kootenay and the Coast.

An interlocking schedule was played between the Coast and Valley clubs, and the Coast champion New Westminster Royals met and easily defeated the Kootenay winner, Trail, in the B.C. semi-finals. The Okanagan winner, Penticton Broncos, put on a

and the Valley than the eastern part of B.C.

So far, only Trail has come out openly against the move towards the seven team Junior "A" league, and could be the stumbling block at next weekend's meeting.

much more fight, promoting speculation that the entry of teams into the super-circuit would lean more towards the Coast



Wins two trophies

M. (Mike) Kozack of RR 2, Vernon holds the F. B. Jacques Jewellers Trophy and the Fishers' Hardware Trophy awarded last week at the fish dinner for a winning entry, the second and third largest Kamloops trout, caught in Okanagan Lake during the Winter Fish Derby. The annual Derby was sponsored by Lakeside Hotel & Resort, Vernon Sport & Marine Centre Limited, the Highway Market, Fishers Hardware, Viel Sports Centre and F. B. Jacques & Son Limited.

Minor soccer scores

Division 2
April 1 — Penticton 6, Vernon Aces, 0.

April 8 — Vernon Aces, bye.

Division 4
April 1 — Kelowna 2, Vernon Warriors 3; Jim Arthur, 3 goals.

April 8 — Coldstream 0, Vernon Warriors 4; Jim Arthur 1, Bill Smith 1, Walter Jaster 1, Ray Smilski 1.

April 1 — Coldstream 0, Penticton 2. April 1 — Oyama bye. April 9 — Penticton 3, Oyama 1; David Nuyens.

Division 5
April 2 — Vernon Rovers 3, Elite 11, 0; Robin Lacroix 3. April 9 — Vernon

Rovers 3, Kelowna Panthers 1; Robin Lacroix 3.

Division 6
April 2 — Vernon Spartans 3, Vernon Spurs 2; Allan Schuck 1, Danny Chong 1, Dennis Sochan 1, Randy Pirnak 2. April 9 — Penticton 3, Vernon Spurs 0. April 9 — Vernon Spartans 1, Kelowna Gems 2; Dennis Sochan 1.

Sat. deadline

COLDSTREAM — Final registration for Coldstream minor ball will be held on Saturday, April 15th at 10 a.m. in the Coldstream School.

Teams will be drawn up immediately.

Pin Day set for next week

The first Pin Day of the season will be held at the Vernon Golf and Country Club Tuesday with a turnout of 49 expected.

The draw has a 9 a.m. start and any women not included in the following tee-off times are welcome to take part.

9:00 a.m. — 1. B. Pierce, Aileen McRoberts, T. Bell; 2. I. Frederiksen, D. Wallington, E. Desnoyer; 3. J. Balestra, E. Stubbs, J. Kuchel.

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According to latest developments, the province of British Columbia stands to gain most once the pro-am agreement between the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association and the National Hockey League is signed.

Next weekend at Penticton, a meeting of junior hockey heads in this province will attempt to form a seven-team B.C. Junior Hockey League in a move towards a tighter control by the CAHA on junior hockey, and a general upgrading of the same in B.C.

When contacted earlier this week, BCAHA District Representative (for Okanagan-Mainline) Larry Buchan stated, "There is nothing further to report" between the CAHA and the NHL. But one cannot help but think that the CAHA, or at least, the B.C. branch, is confident that the agreement is not far from the signing stage if they called a meeting of this nature.

Because the league that is envisioned in the province is expected to be one that will cost each club close to \$25,000 a year to operate, making the idea absolutely impossible without the monies from the NHL through the CAHA which, will not come until a pro-am pact is made.

The so termed seven team super circuit for this province in itself is not enough. However, coupled with the money grants which will be channeled from the pros to every junior team (and here the "every" is important) in the country, the loop could be the best thing to happen to hockey in B.C. since the Penticton V's won the world hockey title, and that's almost long enough ago to talk about.

What the money will do is put B.C. on a par with other Canadian provinces and move it a little closer to being able to compete for the Memorial Cup, apex of all junior hockey in the nation, and a trophy that has eluded any western team up until just a few years ago.

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Before the pro-am agreement, drawn up to be signed some time later this year, pro teams sponsored junior hockey clubs outright. The objection the CAHA had against this was that only a few teams were being sponsored. Eastern Canada was, and still is, but to a lesser degree, the hockey hotbed of Canada. As a result, the east received most of the cash; a few teams on the prairies, for their uncanny ability to come up with good players were also doled funds; but by the time anybody got around to casting glances at as far western places as B.C., the "beads and trinkets" supply was exhausted.

Realizing that their's was a sad case if they hoped to carve a niche in pro hockey after a couple of seasons of B.C. junior hockey, prompted many players from this province to migrate to the prairies, or even further east. As a result, it weakened the calibre of hockey in B.C. and left the province in no position whatsoever to compete nationally.

Next year, the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association has warned there will be no inter-provincial transfers allowed between teams. Such a decree would have to be considered harsh, without the added promise of such a league as the super-seven.

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With such a league though, the CAHA must be assured of complete, if not

almost rigid, control of all teams. For that reason their prime concern is with where the teams will be located and who will operate them.

If they hope to upgrade the calibre of hockey "their way" they must have that necessary control. Whatever their demands on teams entering the newly proposed league, teams should be prepared to bend, at whatever the cost, if only for the betterment of hockey in B.C.

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THE SPORT SEEN... It is that baseball time of the year again, and after numerous rumors from all corners of the Okanagan Mainline Baseball League (some founded, some not so founded, and still others which were cleared up) according to local head man George Nuyens... Penticton Molsons, rumored on the brink of disaster, were but are nor any more; Kamloops Lelands and North Kamloops Stars are in about the same boat as last year (neither are expected to be boarding sinking ships); and Luckies will be better than ever this time around... the Connie Mack situation could be better, according to Nuyens... apparently everybody in the high school age league are sitting on the fence and waiting for something to happen... locally, a coach is being sought for the under 18's, and a couple of hats have been tossed into the ring... from this corner, it might not hurt local management to look into the possibility of Reg Main handling the youngsters this spring... they say a change is as good as a rest, and the word from Main this past winter is that he would like a year's rest...

Bowling

The Annual Meeting of the Vernon Lawn Bowling Club was held at the club house in Polson Park on Tuesday with a record number of members in attendance. The business meeting was preceded by a smorgasbord type dinner.

Retiring President, Ervina E. Fralick, gave a report of the past year's activities. In spite of an unusual amount of cool, wet weather the Club enjoyed a full and successful season in 1966. Thanks to a lot of volunteer labor and material contributions the club was able to maintain its facilities without any great financial drain. Vernon was host for the Interior Lawn Bowling Tournament July 1-4 and according to Drawmaster Kenneth Kinnard, this proved a com-

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