

Juniors may be a thing of the past

QUEBEC (CP) — Quebec junior hockey will be a thing of the past if the professional teams continue to recruit under-20-year-old players from junior league teams, an official of the Quebec Remparts said Tuesday.

“Junior hockey franchises are on the whole in shaky positions,” Paul Dumont, director-general of the Remparts said.

“The premature withdrawal of talented players from these teams may force the closing of certain clubs,” he said.

Speaking to a meeting of the Rotary Club here, Mr. Dumont said the major league teams will have to change their player-recruitment policies.

Sports

DOUG BULWER, Sports Editor

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Major Jr. hockey

'Little different from a slave market' says report

EDMONTON (CP) — A study of the rights of individuals in amateur hockey in Alberta has severely criticized the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA), saying hockey at the Major Junior A level "is little different from a slave market."

The report, commissioned by the Alberta department of culture, youth and recreation, says "the constraints upon the individual rights of hockey players at the upper, pre-professional levels ... are so serious as to cry out for immediate and drastic action."

"At this level, the amateur hockey system is little different from a slave market in which the promoters and dealers have taken all power unto themselves and have reduced the status of the individual to the point where he has become a pawn of the system."

The report, prepared by L. W. Downey Research Associates Ltd. of Edmonton, calls for the Alberta government to:

- Establish an amateur sport or hockey ombudsman or commission;
- Prohibit contracts between non-adults and amateur sport teams;
- Declare invalid agreements between a player and a team or association restricting the freedom of the player to play with the team of his choice;
- Prohibit agreements among amateur sports teams and associations that restrict the freedom of a player to choose his team;
- Declare invalid any sale or trade of a player in any amateur sport without his written consent;
- Prohibit amateur teams or associations from receiving compensation for costs used to develop players' skills in any sport.

An ombudsman would evaluate conditions of amateur sports in Alberta, initiate and enforce legislation and adjudicate disputes between associations, teams and players.

The 63-page report reserves some of its strongest criticism

for the CAHA.

"In declaring itself the final and absolute authority in the establishment of hockey policy and in the control of hockey players, the association has attempted to remove itself from public accountability and to deny the possibility of external arbitration and review mechanisms."

Many of the CAHA's bylaws impose invalid restrictions upon the freedom of individuals and the CAHA "vests in individuals and committees far more discretionary power over other individuals than any free society should tolerate."

The CAHA denies hockey players their rights to natural justice by sanctions against individuals who appeal decisions in the courts, the report says.

The operators of the major pre-professional leagues "conspire, through contracts with players and agreements among themselves, to enslave individuals and deprive them of virtually all freedom of choice and action."

Regarding the "lower and purely amateur" levels of hockey in Alberta, the report found that, with a few exceptions, promoters attempt to maintain a balanced level of play and allow individuals reasonable freedom of choice and action.

The study found significant differences between the ways the CAHA and its provincial affiliates express regulations and the manner in which they are interpreted and applied. There were also differences between league and team regulations governing purely amateur players and those governing "amateurs en route to the professionals."

In its quest for power, the CAHA has adopted "regulations which impose unreasonable constraints upon individual freedoms."

"We believe that no matter how noble its intentions, any voluntary association of citizens, formed for the purpose of promoting a public good, should not be allowed to seize and maintain the kind of power that the amateur hockey association has seized and maintained to the exclusion of all external or review mechanisms."

Horst Schmid, minister of culture, youth and recreation, said public reaction seminars to discuss the report will be held in Calgary and Edmonton later this year.

Sunday Kyak races

Entry fees for these events