

Hockey dollar is stretched



Hockey fans in B.C., and in particular, on the Lower Mainland, are getting all the hockey they can handle, and probably a little too much.

Between junior, intermediate A, senior, and professional hockey leagues in this province, there are about 75 teams.

That figure does not include commercial, industrial, or intermediate B leagues such as the North Okanagan, White Valley, or Monashee Leagues in this area.

B.C. recently was awarded its second junior A league, something we needed as much as another increase in the price of gas.

The Pacific Coast Hockey League, which was recently granted A status, could find life pretty tough.

NO RURAL AREAS

The Pacific Coast League will not have the travelling expenses of the province's other A league, the BCJHL, but it also will not have the rural areas to draw fans from.

The PCHL will have to battle for the already overstretched Lower Mainland hockey dollar.

Besides the Vancouver Canucks and Blazers, which draw the bulk of the hockey money on the coast, there is the New Westminster Bruins, tier one junior A team.

On top of that there are two established intermediate A hockey leagues and numerous commercial loops.

Of the six teams in the PCHL, only Norwes Caps have the arena, talent, and organization to call itself a junior A club.

The hockey battle on the coast is becoming so intense that several intermediate clubs are considering folding. However, a rumour circulating in the Vancouver area states that a senior A club may soon locate there, and play in the Western International League with the four Kootenay teams currently in the loop.

The BCJHL has made a definite move to breakaway from the B.C. Amateur Hockey Association and go under the wing of the Western Canada Hockey League.

What this will probably mean in two years is that the BCAHA will not have a junior A league. If the PCHL lasts, as a junior A league, more than two years, I will be extremely surprised.

But, when Enderby gets granted its NHL franchise in a few years, Vernon Vikings may be in trouble too!

GOOD RESPONSE

For the first time, Vernon Minor Hockey Association decided to have people interested in coaching a club this year, apply in writing for a position.

The response has been better than expected and anyone wishing to coach a club, should apply soon.

Applications can be picked up at the RCMP office or Tradeland Realty.