

Older players to be allowed

British Columbia Junior Hockey League teams will be allowed to dress a total of nine, 19 and 20 year olds, during any one game next season.

League President Bryan Couling cast the deciding vote in favor of allowing nine 'older' players to dress for each team.

The eight BCJHL teams split four-four on the vote, so Couling was called on to break the tie.

Last season, there was no restriction on 19-year-olds, however, only four 20-year-olds were permitted to play in any one game.

Another major change approved at the league's annual meeting, over the weekend in Kelowna, was that the fourth-place team in both

divisions will be dropped from the playoffs.

The remaining three clubs in each division will then engage in a round-robin tournament.

Couling said, "If time permits, the top two teams in each round-robin tourney will then playoff for the division title, before the league's final series, between the Interior and Coast champions, is played.

"However, if time does not permit, the two round-robin winners would then clash for the league title."

Each team will again play a 66-game schedule this year, and overtime and the shootout competition will be retained.

An application from Portland, Ore., to join the league was rejected, mainly for geographic reasons.