

TWO MAIN REASONS

BCJHL will not compete for Cup

B.C. Junior Junior Hockey League announced today it will not compete for the Centennial Cup at the conclusion of the 1975-76 season.

BCJHL President Bryan Couling told the Daily News the decision to withdraw from the national playoffs boils down to scheduling, and dollars and cents.

Couling said, "It is imperative that we conduct our league playoffs in an orderly fashion. Our league schedule ends March 7 and we have to be ready to open the Centennial Cup playoffs, against the Pacific Junior Hockey League champions, on April 2. There is no way we can have a league champion declared by April 2 unless we shorten our league playoffs substantially.

"The only time of year that

a junior hockey team has any hope of making a dollar is during league playoffs."

Couling claimed that by shortening the playoff schedule, the league could be imposing financial suicide on several franchises.

He said, "The economics of the Centennial Cup just don't make it worthwhile to compete."

SMALL PROFIT

Last year the BCJHL champion Bellingham Blazers cleared \$647 from their six-game Centennial Cup series against Spruce Grove Mets.

Couling said, "For a paltry \$647, there is no way we are prepared to reduce our league playoffs to best-of-five."

He pointed out that the bulk of money from Centennial Cup games is used for expenses,

with a large portion going to the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, before anything is turned over to competing teams.

Couling told a news conference in Kelowna today he doesn't feel the league is losing any prestige by not competing for the Cup. He also expressed optimism that the league could still be included with some sort of inter-provincial competition at the end of the season.

OTHER LEAGUES

The league president claimed there are at least two other leagues in Canada thinking of taking the same action.

"Now that we've opened the door, I wouldn't be surprised if we are joined by others," he said. "I can see no reason why



BRYAN COULING
... tough decision

the BCJHL couldn't have a playoff at the end of the season against another league, or leagues, as an alternative to the Centennial Cup."

Couling said the league is currently working on several proposals for a post-season playoff in the spring of 1976. As well, he predicted that within a year or two, the whole concept of the Centennial Cup will be reorganized.

He said, "All junior A leagues should be looking at some sort of round-robin playoff, along the lines of the Memorial Cup."

The current civic strike in Kelowna also played a minor part in the league's decision.

MINOR PART

Couling said, "If the Kelowna Buckaroos are forced to go without home ice

much longer, there would be a possibility that a few days would be needed at the end of the season to make up postponed games.

"Naturally we're hoping that won't happen, but it certainly looms as a possibility."

He added, "It was not an easy decision to make. We've talked about this in the past and almost made the decision at our annual meeting in July.

"But, we decided to wait until the BCAHA annual meeting in September in the hope we could convince them to set back the April 2 date for the B.C. playoffs, but the attempt was futile.

"We finally made the decision to withdraw at a league meeting in Kelowna last week, but decided to hold

off announcing it until we had a chance to explain our reasoning to the BCAHA.

"Acting BCAHA President Don Ewart will be advising the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, of the league decision, at a meeting today in Toronto."

In making the announcement, Couling said, "In no way does this mean we are breaking away from the BCAHA or CAHA. We are still very much a part of both organizations.

"Next year we will take another look at things and decide whether to get involved with the Centennial Cup again."

Vernon Vikings last participated in the Centennial Cup in 1972 when they lost to Red Deer Rustlers.

Vernon trounces Penticton Vees

PENTICTON (Staff) — Vernon Vikings trounced Penticton Vees 10-3 in B.C. Junior Hockey League action here Friday.

The Vernon goals were shared among 10 players.

In other BCJHL action, Kelowna Buckaroos recorded their second shutout of the season by defeating Maple Ridge Blazers 5-0, and Langley Lords downed Merritt Centennials 6-2.

Vernon led 2-1 after the first period and 5-2 after the second in the game in Penticton.

Scoring for the Vikings were Gary Gassoff, Steve Danshin, Grant Sidnick, Drew Tumback, Rick Simpson, Ken Stroud, Brian Maser, Peter Poeschek, Gary Huth and Clyde Goodswimmer.

As a result of the games Friday, Kelowna and Vernon are still tied for first place in the league's Interior division.

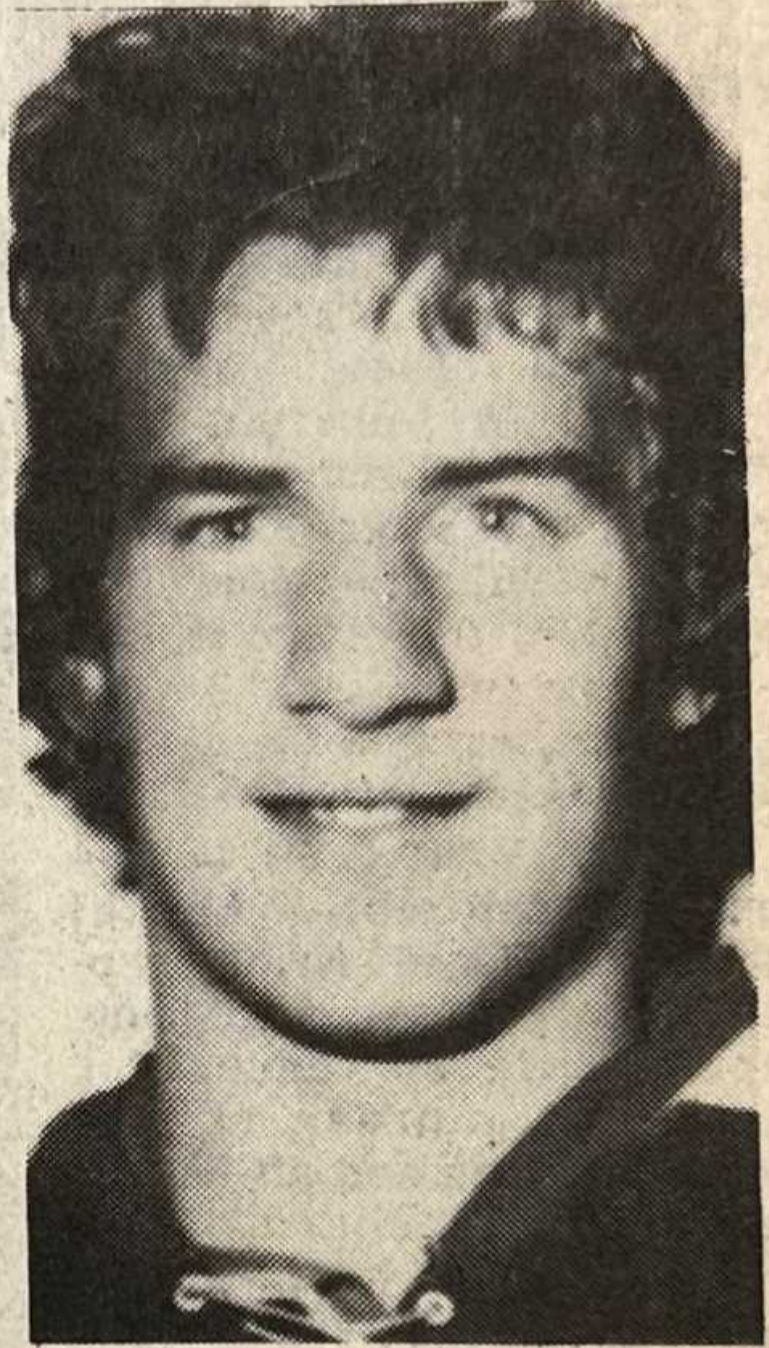
But Vernon gets a chance to move ahead tonight, when they meet Maple Ridge in a game in the Civic Arena.

Wayne Krebs led the Bucks to their shutout win with two goals, while singles were provided by Pat Severyn, John Olver, and Perry Schnarr.

Netminder John McKerrow handled 18 Blazer shots during the game.

In Langley, the Lords led 3-0 after the first period on goals by Brian Henderson, Dwayne Lowdermilk, and Errol Rausse.

Stefan Waslyszyn and Larry Playfair added goals in the



GARY GASSOFF

... one of 10

second period and Randy Larsen scored for Langley in the third.

Pat Dupuis and Neil Robinson scored for Merritt.

Lords' Dale Neilson stopped 27 shots while Randy Struch stopped 30 shots for Merritt.

In other league action tonight, Merritt visits Chilliwack and Penticton meets Kelowna in a game to be played in Enderby's new arena.

Maple Ridge continues its Interior swing with a game against Penticton Sunday, while Merritt will play in Nanaimo and Chilliwack will meet the Lords in Langley.