

BCJHL won't budge on rule change issue

The British Columbia Junior Hockey League's eight teams voted unanimously Tuesday not to change the league rules and continue playoffs despite a suspension imposed Monday by the B.C. Amateur Hockey Association.

BCJHL President Bryan Couling said the league took the action because, "It would be ridiculous to alter our rules in the middle of the playoffs."

BCAHA suspended the league for failing to comply with several rules laid down in the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association's handbook.

The infractions include icing rules, failure to give a minor penalty for touching the puck with a high stick, and failure to rule that a second major penalty be accompanied by a misconduct with an automatic two-minute minor added.

Couling said, "Those are petty incidents. They certainly do not

warrant a suspension. The ruling is grossly unfair because there was no consultation with the league before the move was made."

Earlier this week, the BCJHL was considering complying with the rules because the league was not sure if it could secure officials.

Couling said, "We felt we might have a problem getting referees because they will be suspended if they officiate our games while we are under suspension. But, we got the full support of officials, both on the coast and in the interior."

Meanwhile, the league got some unexpected praise Tuesday.

GETS SUPPORT

Former B.C. Amateur Hockey Association vice-president and acting president Don Ewart came out in support of the BCJHL's stand against the BCAHA.

Ewart, of Penticton, told the Daily News he feels it is time the BCJHL

stands up and gets counted.

Ewart said, "I was rather astounded BCAHA President Frank Spring would make such a ruling at this stage of the game.

"The BCAHA has been aware for some time that the BCJHL is playing under different rules. Why he would suspend them now is beyond me. Perhaps it had a bit to do with the league pulling out of Centennial Cup competition.

"I understand the BCAHA's junior A director, Bill Colborne of Burnaby, didn't even know what Spring was pulling off.

"I feel the league should continue playing, and at the end of the season, sit down and talk with the BCAHA. But, they better be sure the people they talk with understand junior A hockey."

Couling said he plans to meet with BCAHA officials this summer to try to iron out the problems.