Salmon Arm to rejoin BCJHL Interior Division

By DON KENDALL
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The B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior Division will expand from five to six teams during the 1987-88 season.

Salmon Arm will rejoin the BCJHL in September after a one-year leave of absence. Gord McIntosh, who was general manager of the Shuswap club in 1983-84, confirmed today that Salmon Arm has applied to rejoin the league.

McIntosh said, "The team cannot be formally accepted until the BCJHL annual meeting June 5, but we have been told by the league president (John Johnson) to proceed with our plans."

McIntosh has been a driving force behind the rebirth of the franchise, however, he will not be involved with the new club in a management capacity. "I helped the new owners get the ball rolling and I helped them find a new coach, but I won't be involved with the operation of the new team."

Dave Couch, Walt Crandlemire, and Ed Shadick, all of Enderby, and Jim Weed, of Salmon Arm, are the new owners.

Cam Ftoma was named Tuesday as the team's head coach. Ftoma was an assistant coach with Brandon Wheat Kings, of the Western Hockey League, last season. In 1985-86, he was head coach of the Manitoba South Blues, who lost to the Penticton Knights in the Western Canadian tier two championship.

McIntosh said, "I'm confident it will be a good franchise. The club has strong ownership . . . with solid financial backing."

The Salmon Arm team, which has not yet been named, joins Kelowna Packers, Summerland Buckaroos, Vernon Lakers, Merritt Warriors, and Penticton in the Interior Division.

Ernie Gare, who is head coach and assistant general manager of the Lakers, said he is pleased the division is back up to six teams.

"It is important for their team, and the league, that they have strong ownership and a competitive team," Gare said. "The ownership appears sound and I understand their coach has already recruited some players.

"If he (Ftoma) brings some players with him, it will give them a good start at building a competitive club."