KENDALL'S KORNER

BCJHL owners optimistic



by Don Kendall

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Things were different at the B.C. Junior Hockey League's annual meeting, held recently in Kelowna.

The usual doom and gloom associated with tier two junior hockey was replaced by congratulations and optimism. The BCJHL is justifiably proud of producing two consecutive Centennial Cup champions. Penticton Knights won the national title in 1986 and Richmond Sockeyes repeated the feat this year.

With the return of Salmon Arm after a one-year leave of absence, the league has two, six-team divisions. There are no teams threatening to fold, no ownership changes, and most directors are looking ahead to the 1987-88 season with optimism.

"Everyone seems to have a positive attitude," said Lakers' General Manager Mel Lis.

The league's future looks much brighter than a few seasons ago when the Interior Division was struggling to find more than four franchises and Coast teams were dropping like flies. The BCJHL now has two groups, in Cowichan and Courtenay, waiting for franchises.

The best news out of the meetings, as far as local fans are concerned, came from Lis who announced Vernon has applied to the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association to host the 1990 Centennial Cup.

"There is no guarantee we are going to get it (the Centennial Cup tournament), but we are going to give it our best shot," Lis said.

Red Deer Rustlers and Kelowna Packers have also stated they will be applying for the four-team tourney, which guarantees the host club a berth in the national finals.

Other bits and pieces from the meetings:

. . . The new Salmon Arm team will be nicknamed the Tigers.

. . . The league rejected a suggestion, from Ontario, that each team allow two, 21-year-olds.

. . . The 1988 BCJHL all-star game will be played Jan. 19, in Abbotsford.

. . . Langley Eagles are moving to Chilliwack for the 1987-88 season. The Eagles had hoped to relocate at Seafair Arena, in Richmond, but that move was rejected because of the proximity to the Richmond Arena, where the Sockeyes play their home games.

. . . Merritt Warriors will revert back to their old nickname, the Centennials.

. . . Half-shield masks will be mandatory next season. Despite claims that the shields have brought sticks up higher than they used to be, the motion was approved by all team governors.

. . . The BCJHL regular season schedule will run from Sept. 18 to Feb. 21.