Overage limit!

BCJHL BOSS GETS TOUGH

By AL PATERSON
Daily News Sports

The B.C. Junior Hockey League has made it tougher for teams to go out and buy a contender.

At a recent league meeting in Merritt, league governors voted in favor of a motion limiting the number of 20-year olds from the Western Hockey League a team in the BCJHL can use this season.



BRUCE ALLISON

In previous years there was no limit, a team could use as many 20-year olds as it could afford but not anymore. This year only three WHL 20-year olds will be permitted after the Jan. 10 deadline.

BCJHL president Bruce Allison said Monday that fans this season can look forward to cleaner games with harsh penalties in store for those players who fight or otherwise step out of line.

"It was unanimous all across the country," said Allison. "Everybody voted to keep the game misconduct for fighting rule. People don't want to see fights. They turn and walk out of buildings when those things happen. It's a thing of the past. We're in the 21st century now. We can't market horsebleep. We want to market good, clean, fast exciting hockey. That's the direction we want to go in."

The buzz word this season is "risk management," according to Allison. The onus will be on coaches to maintain strict control of their players.

"If they don't," said Allison, "they run the risk of being sued."

He cited the Western Hockey League case of Brad Hornung, an 18-year old centreman who toiled briefly for the Regina Pats. Three years ago Hornung was checked into the boards from behind and is a quadriplegic today.

Hornung currently has a multi-million dollar lawsuit pending, one that Allison says may cost the WHL "between $5 and $6 million before it's over."

"It's up to the coaches to make sure that kind of thing doesn't occur in our league," said Allison. "Risk management is what sports is all about today. You can't have guys running around hitting people from behind. People don't want to see that kind of hockey. They are non-violent today and will walk out in droves if they see that sort of thing."

As the president of the BCJHL, Allison has let it be known that he is prepared to act swiftly and decisively in order to maintain strict discipline in the league this season.

A former president of the B.C. Junior Hockey Association, Allison says handling the BCJHL is "a piece of cake compared to that."

He insists that everything is rolling along smoothly and that "there are no problems at all in the BCJHL today."

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