At Special Friday Meeting

OJHL Vetoes North Kamloops Entry

The Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League last week turned thumbs down on a bid by North Kamloops to enter a team for the 1965-66 season.

The OJHL denied entry of the North Kamloops junior franchise by a vote of 10-2 at a special meeting held Friday night here in Vernon.

However, Don Brown, manager of the proposed new entry, let it be known that North Kamloops would ice a team next season whether they were admitted into the league or not.

"We have a nucleus of players already and we're confident we will have a competitive team," Brown said. "I think the Kamloops area is quite capable of supporting two junior teams."

"If you don't choose to admit us we'll simply join another league or play through an exhibition schedule," he said. "It doesn't matter to us. You'll have to face us in the playoffs, anyway."

The OJHL will continue to operate with the present four teams, Kamloops, Vernon, Kelowna and Penticton-Summerland, next season. In denying admittance of North Kamloops as a fifth member the OJHL felt that the extra travelling involved would hurt the league financially. The league was also unconvinced that the Kamloops area could ice two competitive teams.

Brown first announced plans to form a North Kamloops junior team at the OJHL's spring meeting back in April. He was given until the middle of June to submit a formal application for entry.

Brown was manager of the Kamloops Rockets Junior Club for four years. He left the team at the end of the 1964-65 season along with coach Ken Stewart. Stewart will coach the new North Kamloops club.

The Kamloops junior franchise was taken over by the Kamloops Minor Hockey Association, headed by president Doug Daws. The association will appoint its own coach and manager to run the team next season. The name of the team, the Rockets, will also be changed in deference to former sponsor Ernie Davies.

In stating his case for acceptance of North Kamloops into the OJHL Brown said the new team had no intention of hurting the Kamloops club or competing with it for players.

"We're in this to promote hockey and all we ask is a fair hearing on the basis of our ability to ice a team and scheduling feasibility."

"We have a lot going for us," Brown added. "We represent a young, ambitious community. We've got an arena, all we need is the players and this won't pose any problem."

When asked where he was getting his players, Brown refused to divulge the source. He admitted however, that many of them would have to come from outside the Kamloops area.

Discussion got hot and heavy at one point in the meeting when Brown charged there was lobbying afoot to prevent acceptance of the North Kamloops franchise. He said the Kamloops delegates already had their minds set on vetoing application, a charge that Daws quickly and firmly denied.

Some league members suggested that Kamloops and North Kamloops amalgamate to form one junior team, at least for one season.

OJHL president Dave MacKay said he could foresee furture expansion of the league and he hinted that the proposed extension of the National Hockey League to the West Coast would probably have an effect on the league.

"The day will come when we'll have to take a stand on whether to accept pro sponsorship," MacKay said.

"I don't think this league will be any different than the old senior league if it's not run properly. I hope you're running this league for the promotion of hockey and not for the money."

"It's up to each individual member to assure that the league survives," he said.

There was some discussion at the meeting on lengthening the schedule next season. MacKay told each team to submit available ice times by July 20 so a tentative schedule could be drawn up.

The next general meeting of the OJHL will be held the first week in August. At this time league members will draft resolutions to be presented to the annual B.C. Amateur Hockey Association meeting in Kamloops Sept. 17-19.

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