Junior season chopped by possible CUPE strike

A civic workers' dispute creating uncertain arena availability has caused the British Columbia Junior Hockey League's Coastal Division teams to scrap the remainder of their schedule and move into playoffs.

"We decided to go right into our playoffs rather than try to reschedule games," said Rod McMaster, general manager of Nor-Wes Caps who operate out of North Vancouver recreation centre, which is run by the municipality.

Also affected by a possible strike by civic workers are Nanaimo Clippers, Richmond Sockeyes and Vancouver Blue Hawks. All use community rinks for their home games.

McMaster said the Coastal Division decision followed meetings in Penticton prior to the league's all-star game Wednesday night.

The six teams in the playoffs will play a best-of-nine first round. The Blue Hawks and Caps, in fifth and sixth place, respectively, begin their series Friday in Vancouver and continue Sunday at North Vancouver if ice time is available.

The other series will have second-place Richmond meeting fourth-place Abbotsford Flyers and first-place Nanaimo Clippers playing Cowichan Valley Capitals.

In a move appeared aimed at cutting travel costs, the first-round pairings had more to do with geographic proximity than where a team stood in the standings.

McMaster said the league would likely announce a full playoff schedule today.

GOAL LINES — The Coastal Division overcame a 2-0 deficit to gain a 4-4 overtime tie with the Interior Division in the BCJHL all-star game before 1,000 fans in Penticton. Scoring for the Interior were **Mike Correale, Leroy Rempel, John Maskiewich** and **Rick Norberg** while **Tom Irving, Jack Wright, Daryl Goodwin** and **Len Myers** counted for the Coastals.