

New junior hockey season start date pushed back to December

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

It seems that the hockey season around the province is looking to a December start this year.

The Western Ontario Athletic Association, which hosts the senior league in which the Shelburne Muskies compete have already announced they are moving the start date from October to December.

Now it seems Junior level hockey will be following suit.

For Junior C fans in the region, that means the Stayner Siskins and Alliston Hornets of the Provincial Junior C Hockey League won't be hitting the ice for a least two more months.

Hockey Canada, the governing body for the sport, is currently saying very little about the start of hockey this year. They are waiting for direction from health authorities.

However, Travis Chapman, head coach for the Alliston Hornets confirmed that the current goal is to start the current Junior C season in December.

"We're planning for a December 1, start," Chapman said. "Hopefully that means they will allow some fans to be in the arena."

Current restrictions allow for gatherings of 50 people due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Once you get two teams, coaches, and trainers in the building, that number will be met very quickly.

"The hope is that pushing it back to December will allow for school openings," Chapman said. "We will see what happens then and hopefully they will lift restrictions."

The current plan is for the season to wrap up on March 2, then start the playoffs.

Hockey Canada has not allowed teams to have tryouts yet this season. Even if the go-ahead for tryouts was given, there's no ice in the arenas.

Despite the fact that the Hornets have not been on the ice, and not allowed to have tryouts, Chapman said they will be ready to play.

"We already have a team signed. We pretty much have the whole team from last year back again except for the over age players. We have a couple of players who were AP's last season that have signed with us. We did our scouting last year. If the puck dropped tomorrow, we would have a team ready to play."

Several other leagues around the province have announced that they will also be starting play in December.