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While plans for PJHL Jr. C season remain, fans/management not optimistic

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After the postponement of the start of the Provincial Junior Hockey League season, Junior C teams in the region are hoping to get into some kind of league schedule in January

Originally the PJHL planned to get the season underway in early December, however it was realized that due to COVID-19 restrictions, that time frame just wasn't feasible.

Junior C teams are allowed 25 players this year to make up for the fact that once games start, they won't be allowed to call up AP players if they come up short benched.

The current plan calls for a series of exhibition style games to be played in the pre-season, but teams will be limited to going up against other teams in that are in the regional health care system.

The games will be 20 minute periods with a running clock and won't last more than one hour. They will play two games in a night with ten players per team and a second set of different players for the second game.

Teams will have to take a two-week break before playing any other team in their region.

?We've been skating since early September,? explained Alliston Hornets head coach Travis Chapman. ?We did a training camp through September and cut the roster down from 30 down to 25. This year we are allowed a 25 man roster, up from 23, because you won't be allowed to have AP players this year. In our case we'll have an extra goalie so we'll have three goalies and 23 skaters. We've been given permission to bubble off with another team so can play ?exhibition games.' You bubble off with one team and if you want to switch and play another team you have to take a 14 day break. We're starting next week with Orillia. We're going to play two games in Alliston then two games in Orillia. We'll take a two week break then bubble off with Stayner after that.?

The public won't be able to attend exhibition games. Current restrictions limit 50 people to an indoor facility. With two teams, coaches and referees, that 50 person limit will be met once the teams arrive.

Instead, the Hornets are planning to tape games and broadcast them through social media. Fans will be able to subscribe for a small fee and see the games.

The plan currently calls for a schedule to get underway on January 4, however, that is not a sure thing.

?Whether or not things can get going is dependent on a few things. I think the biggest thing is if we can actually get fans in the building,? Chapman said. ?If we can't get fans in the building I don't think there are many teams that are going to play the season ? they just won't be able to afford to do it.?

The mood in Junior C circles is not too upbeat at the moment.

Many fans have already written off the season and don't expect to see their team on the ice this year.