

Junior C pre-season starts this week

Junior C hockey is gearing up for the 2015 / 16 season with some pre-season exhibition games getting started this week.

The Georgian Mid Ontario Junior C Hockey League will see the line-up reduced to nine teams this year as the Fergus Devils have announced they will be taking a 'leave of absence' for the year.

Rumours were swirling last season that the Fergus club would be folding. The Devils have struggled for the past few seasons ending last year with a 16-24 record.

The returning champion Alliston Hornets will be the team to beat. The Hornets won the League last season after finishing the regular season in first place then knocking out the Huntsville Otters in the first round before going dispatching the Orillia Terriers in the semi-final round.

They won the championship with a four game sweep over the Schomberg Cougars in the final round.

The Hornets have won the championship seven times over the last eight seasons.

Returning teams include the Stayner Siskins who had a good season last year finishing in second place with a 28-12 record. They were knocked out by Orillia in the first round of playoffs.

The Huntsville Otters recorded a 24-16 season and ended with a first round playoff loss to the Schomberg Cougars.

The Penetang Kings are back after playing to a .500 season last year and losing in the semi-finals to Schomberg. The Kings won the League championship in 2014.

The Caledon Golden Hawks finished with a fifth place standing in 2015 with an 18-22 record for the season. They were out after losing in a four game sweep to Penetang in the quarter-finals.

Orillia ended the 2015 season with a seventh place finish and a 17-23 record and managed to make it to the semi-final round of playoffs.

The Erin Shamrocks didn't make a playoff berth last season after finishing in ninth place with a 16-24 record.

In the basement, the Midland Flyers, who have had an up-and-down record over the past few years, didn't make it to the playoffs after winning 11 games for the season and coming up short in 29 games.

The GMOHL season gets underway on September 16, with all teams having opening games that week.

The Alliston Hornets will also host their ninth annual Junior C tournament the weekend of September 11-13, at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre in Alliston.

By Brian Lockhart