

## Ontario junior lacrosse league extends age eligibility to u22

Written By BRIAN LOCKHART

Young lacrosse players in Shelburne who are looking forward to playing in the big leagues some day will be interested to hear that the Ontario Junior A Lacrosse League has voted to extend player eligibility beginning 2021.

The OJALL board of governors made the decision by vote on July 17.

League eligibility has been changed to u22 and the new policy grants players who have not reached their 22nd birthday by January 1, of each playing year the ability to play Junior A Lacrosse in Ontario.

Currently, the Canadian Lacrosse Association and the Ontario Lacrosse Association rules limit junior age players to five seasons of competition.

Junior players range in age from 17 to 21.

However the CLA recently voted to extend the Midget division to include 17 year old players. That change will come into effect in 2022.

If the OLA takes direction for the CLA, the decision made by the OJALL would restore league eligibility to five years within one year.

The League has stressed the change is not a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the pandemic caused the cancellation of the 2020 series, many graduating players could potentially lose their final junior year in the sport.

The idea of extending graduating players eligibility for an extra year of play to make up for that has been discussed at several levels.

‘This is something the league has been discussing for a long time,’ said Board chair, Jason Shuttleworth. ‘It shouldn’t be viewed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic ? we believe extending junior eligibility to 22U aligns with the current competitive lacrosse landscape.’

The extension to u22 eligibility will allow all players who were eligible to play in the cancelled 2020 season to restore a season of competition.

The decision is especially important to players who were approaching the end of their junior career in 2020.

OJALL teams will not be excluded from competing in any championships the League is involved with.

The League will be making a number of future announcements with regards to the return of lacrosse in Ontario.

Shelburne Vets Minor lacrosse have not taken to the arena floor this season.

The 2020 Minor Box Lacrosse was officially cancelled on June 11, over concerns regarding the COVID-19 pandemic.