

# VIJHL Information Hub

## **1. Why did the VIJHL make this decision to become independent?**

We felt that it was in the best interest of our league to become independent because of the increased opportunities for development it will provide for our players. VIJHL players will now have the ability to affiliate at a higher level of hockey, which will aid tremendously in their development. By not being under Hockey Canada regulations, we also expect the quality of player and the level of play in general to increase as our player pool gets larger. This move also allows the VIJHL to possess more autonomy and puts all the decision-making in our hands to make sure we are doing what's best for VIJHL players and their families.

We also recognized that the Junior A path through BC Hockey could take a significant amount of time and we were not interested in a years-long project to reach the level needed to compete at that level.

We have seen the success of other independent leagues, which only supported our move. Leagues like the BCHL are thriving as an independent league, which gives us confidence that we will do the same.

## **2. Why did the VIJHL decide to make the switch now?**

This has been discussed among our board for the past year. The VIJHL participated with the PJHL and KIJHL, as well as BC Hockey, for a considerable amount of time, however progress was slower than anticipated. The three leagues intentions were to remain independent from each other, which would have had adverse effects on an 11-team league. The improvement to player quality and advancement would also be hampered as the new program would take time to gain traction.

## **3. Did the BCHL influence this decision?**

No. The VIJHL and its Governors/Owners decided, without influence, to leave Hockey Canada and become independent. Since that decision was made, the VIJHL's relationship with the BCHL has grown and synergies such as programs, development of players and officials, administration procedures and programs have become a deeper part of our discussions.

**4. Is the VIJHL now affiliated with the BCHL?**

The VIJHL and BCHL have formed an alliance and, starting in 2024-25, VIJHL players will be able to affiliate with BCHL teams. This is a mutually beneficial agreement as the BCHL now has access to additional affiliate players in a high-quality league, right in their own province, while the VIJHL can give its players opportunities to further develop their game and eventually reach the next level of hockey.

**5. Will the VIJHL have a shortage of officials?**

We do not anticipate having a shortage of officials. Many have already shown their desire to work for independent leagues and the VIJHL expects much of the same. The VIJHL anticipates no issues building an officiating staff large enough to work all league games next year.

**6. Is this change a way for the league and teams to make more money?**

No. Our model will continue to be the same, other than the fact that we're offering an elevated experience and pathway for our players

**7. If players choose to play in the VIJHL, will they be banned from participating in Hockey Canada sanctioned play in the future?**

Under the current Hockey Canada regulations, if a player participates in an independent league like the BCHL or the JPHL after **Sep. 30**, they are not permitted to join a Hockey Canada sanctioned league during that same season. That being said, there is a reinstatement process that has proven to be successful in the past. In addition, the player would be eligible to return to Hockey Canada sanctioned play the following season.

**8. Will players be cut from teams late in the season and be left with nowhere to play?**

The VIJHL will considered expanding its rosters to 25 players (plus an emergency goaltender), so it will reduce the likelihood that a player will be cut late in the year.

**9. Is the VIJHL's new insurance a downgrade from the Hockey Canada insurance?**

No. The VIJHL's new insurance provider provides coverage that is as good, if not better, than the previous one. The previous insurance coverage was used as a

template to provide the best available option.

**10. With new roster rules, has the VIJHL abandoned its commitment to BC born and raised players?**

No. The VIJHL has maintained its previous minimum of six British Columbians per team (similar minimums to other Canadian junior leagues), while also mandating that players who change residency before or during the season are not considered local players.

**11. Will VIJHL rosters have European players now that they are permitted to join the league?**

Each team will be allowed a maximum of two non-North American players, similar to the BCHL or other junior hockey leagues.

**12. Will players that participate in a VIJHL spring/summer camp face obstacles from Hockey Canada?**

No. Only players that play in league games after Sep. 30 will face obstacles should they wish to return to a Hockey Canada sanctioned league during the same season.

**13. Is the VIJHL worried about losing players because of this announcement?**

We are confident that our model and our dedication to improving the player experience will only increase the amount and the quality of players who choose to play in our league.. Additional affiliations agreements are currently being worked on to assist in the development of all players that play with the VIJHL.

**14. Where will the VIHL be getting its affiliate players from?**

Affiliates may come from any independent minor/youth/high school league across North America. Discussions about additional affiliation agreements have already begun.

**15. What does this mean for the PJHL and KIHL?**

These are both strong leagues that have been around for many years . Their programs and product are sound and the VIJHL would expect no change moving forward. We wish them all the best as they navigate the path to Junior A in BC, but we felt it was in our best interest to follow a different route.