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The first two rounds of The Kootenay International Junior Hockey League west division playoffs have shown the need for changes in the 1987-88 season.

Of three matchups only the Rossland-Trail encounter can be called a real series. Both Castlegar series were no contests with the bigger and stronger Rebels running all over their smaller opponents.

The league cannot have a seven-game shootout in every playoff series begins, although they'd like to, but such domination as Castlegar's demoralizes fans.

The Trail Smoke Eaters going into the tank again and senior hockey is more clouded across the country. The KIJHL has a chance to excel being the only game in town.

Watching the Rossland-Trail series go seven games proves junior B hockey can be exciting. The league should institute changes in the off-season to rejuvenate interest.

Many of the better players leave to improve their careers just when they become local stars. Rossland's Dallas Drake will probably jump next season to Vernon Lakers of the B.C. Junior Hockey League. Castlegar's Dane Jackson, property of Seattle Thunderbirds of the Western Hockey League, will head to major junior. The KIJHL should improve its product.

The league could change its classification from Junior B to super-

midget. It could already be classed as a midget league, with most of the players still able to qualify for minor hockey. The players opt for junior to better their careers.

Using the midget programs in Saskatchewan and Alberta as guideline, the KIJHL could lower the age limit for the league. This would ensure local players the chance to play good hockey and complete their education. It would provide more competitive hockey.

This may also inspire B.C.'s tier one and two teams to become involved with Kootenay clubs. With a place for their younger prospects to play, they might affiliate locally, such as Vernon with Rossland Warriors, Penticton Knights with Trail Junior Smoke Eaters and Kelowna Packers with Beaver Valley Nite Hawks. This would assure teams of better players and the fans of quality hockey.

It might rejuvenate towns like Nelson, Grand Forks and Creston. Nelson has a quality midget team which just returned from a fine showing at the provincials. These returns would give the league an abundance of teams once again.

Arenas are now full with fans attending playoff games. But next September, when coaches are combing the streets for players and managers are crying for people to support the team at the box office, local junior executives might say they should change.