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May 30, 2014

QMJHL drops overage salary to match OHL and WHL; predictably, potential overagers aren't happy

By Mike Sanderson

Drummondville Voltigeurs forward Jérôme Verrier joked he could become the team's trainer for the extra cash lost for overagers in the upcoming QMJHL season. (CP / Francis Vachon)

The QMJHL made a business decision on Friday, trying to pull a fast one behind the backs of their players, especially potential overagers.

In a true political move, the QMJHL announced Friday afternoon they were reducing the salary for overagers from \$550 a week to \$150. This puts them in line with the salaries of the other two junior leagues, the OHL and the WHL, by way of per diem pay.

Typically, in politics, the government or a party will release information they know will be ripped to shreds on a Friday afternoon, so by the time the public can talk it up, it's Monday morning, and it's blown over.

It won't blow over for the potential overagers or their employers for this season.

Philippe Boucher told Mikaël Lalancette of TVA that "we risk losing certain players" and said that he's worried about the rule keeping good 20 year olds out of the league for better pay elsewhere.

In the old system, teams paid out \$46,200 to their three overagers over the course of a seven month season. In 2014-15, teams will pay their three 20 year olds \$12,600. The idea saves \$33,600 and is designed as cost-effective for the smaller market teams who can't keep up with the bigger markets of the league.

Understandably, players aren't too happy.

Louick Marcotte of the Val-d'Or Foreurs said on twitter that he's grateful his parents can fill in the gaps.

La lhmq nous dit qu'on sera plus autonome en finissant notre stage junior ... Avec les salaires, une chance que mes parents sont la! #20ans

— louick marcotte (@louickmarcotte) May 30, 2014

Dillon Fournier of the Rouyn-Noranda Huskies added that the overagers helped the younger ones, and that becomes much harder on \$150 a week.

My 20 year olds took care of me for 4 years whenever I needed help. My time in

This is Exhibit Z referred to in the affidavit of Andrew J. Eckart sworn before me, this 20th day of February, 2015

[Signature]
 Commissioner for taking affidavits

junior would not have been the same without them. — Dillon Fournier (@doochiee)
May 30, 2014

Jérôme Verrier offered to become his team's new equipment manager for the extra cash.

Les équipes pourraient donner le job de gérant d'équipement à leur 20ans. Ils économiseraient encore plus. #20anspascontent

— Jérôme Verrier (@JeromeVerrier77) May 30, 2014

Moi pour 50\$ de plus/semaine je le ferais. #trainer #20anspascontent — Jérôme Verrier (@JeromeVerrier77) May 30, 2014

Lastly, Frédéric Gamelin explained it simply with a hashtag, translated to "20 years old, not happy".

#20anspascontent

— Frédéric Gamelin (@fredgamelin10) May 30, 2014

The salaries of other players remains unchanged: 16 and 17 year olds get \$35, 18 year olds get \$50 and 19 year olds get \$60.

It's acknowledged that overagers can make more playing professionally or even in junior A, where the per diem pay is not nearly as regulated. However, if they do, they forfeit all their accrued university tuition scholarships from the CHL to do it.

The league considers this a cost-cutting measure but it could put an end to a long tradition that overagers took care of the younger players for meals and extra goodies, like Fournier alluded to above. It could also allow more players to sign pro contracts, even in the ECHL or lower pro leagues, over playing their overage season.