

## GOJHL penalized five teams due to violation of vaccination policy

The Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League released a statement on December 17, penalizing five clubs in the Golden Horseshoe Conference in violation of the league's vaccination policy.

The GOJHL, had permitted each individual team to be responsible for ensuring the vaccination status of players and club personnel. In the league's latest findings, 30 GOJHL regular season games have been impacted.

Due to ineligible participants in these games, the statement said all games will be dubbed a 5-0 loss and if both teams were in violation no points were given.

On the list, the Hamilton Kilty B's were forced to forfeit two victories due to ineligible players against the Thorold Blackhawks on October 2 and against the Niagara Falls Canucks on October 4.

The St. Catherines Falcons forfeited one victory against the Fort Erie Meteors on September 25 and the Welland Jr. Canadiens forfeited one game against the Pelham Panthers on September 26.

The second most games forfeited on the list saw the Thorold Blackhawks lose out on six games this year all against Niagara Falls, Hamilton, the Caledonia Pro-Fit Corvairs, Pelham and St. Catherines.

The most penalized team was the Niagara Falls Canucks as the club lost out on 24 games this year due to ineligible players. The GOJHL has also announced a member of the organization has been suspended indefinitely.

With these forfeits coming into play, the Canucks now sit at the bottom of the division with only five points on the year. The Blackhawks sit in second last with 14 points.

The league has surely sent out a clear-cut message to the rest of the GOJHL that everyone is being investigated to ensure that the vaccination policy has been met.

If an ineligible player or member of staff is discovered, teams could be paying a hefty price that could ruin their season and their playoff hopes.

**By Robert Belardi**