

Player Famine Wrecks Blades' Winning Combo

Buccos Have 9-Point Bulge With Double Weekend Sweep

KELOWNA 10, 3; VERNON 2, 2

Player shortage—a bugbear that drove Penticton out of the junior hockey league—helped kill any chance of the Vernon Blades closing the gap with Kelowna on the weekend.

For one or both of the games they played Coach Bill Brown had only two regular defencemen and lacked three forwards.

The results: disastrous. The Kelowna Buckaroos drubbed the locals 10 to 2 Friday in the Orchard City and roughly edged them 3 to 2 before hometown crowds Saturday.

The double losses plunged them deeper into the Okanagan Junior Hockey League cellar which they occupied when Penticton withdrew. They are now nine points behind Kelowna and 11 behind the league-leading Kamloops Rockets.

Missing during all or some of the weekend action were Gordie Nuyens, Gordie Kineshanko and Gary Roland on defence, and Dave Groenhausen up front.

Brown had to rely heavily on John Macko and Dave Mackey to handle patrol duties propped up by spares from the forward line.

Although his offensive formations were almost complete except for Groenhausen, they just couldn't come up with the right scoring combinations nor could they cope with the savage forechecking administered by the Buckaroos.

In both games the Blades scored first only to see their red-sweatered adversaries bite back with a vengeance.

High scorer for the Blues' losing cause was rookie forward Corky Agar who notched their final goal of Friday's contest and the opener Saturday. Before bowing out with an injury Kineshanko collected one Friday.

Two Buccos came away with hat tricks from the weekend activity. Friday night winger Don Evans staged a personal blitzkrieg in the Vernon zone to score three. Fred Thomas got a goal the same night and picked up all three here on Civic Arena ice.

Whenever the Vernon and Kelowna teams meet they let their hair down and bring sticks and fists up. Last weekend was no exception, both games seeing plenty of penalties levied out.

Until almost the middle of the second period Saturday the Blades were waging hot and successful battle with the powerful Buckaroos. They had outshot them 16 to 12 in the opening frame and were leading on two goals by Agar and Ike Coulter.

Agar utilized a deft pass from Dale Sorochuk to lead off things late in the first.

Team captain Coulter then drilled a fast one past Kelowna netminder Sid Shussel to crack open second period action.

But then eyhaustion reared its unwelcome but inevitable head on the Blades' decimated bench and Kelowna poured on the coals and the goals.

At 6:20 of the second session Thomas stroked a sizzling shot past Larry Pirnak after taking a pass from Han Stob and Bob Gruber. With two minutes to the horn he added another, again from Gruber.

Besides fatigue, penalties ate into Vernon's ranks in the third but they didn't seem to hurt the high-flying buccos. Despite having Ron Lakes off for slashing they broke into the lead to stay when Thomas blasted in the puck unassisted through a maze of players in front of Pirnak.

This goal may have broken a tie but it hadn't bent the Blades' spirit. Two minutes afterwards all hell broke loose in the Kelowna end zone when Bobby Stein and Phil Larden had a go with bare knuckles. Buck Sherk and Gary Roland immediately chipped in for the Blues versus Ken Hamanishi and Terry Kasubuchi.

For this outburst the sparring sextet received four roughing and two fighting penalties, Stein and Larden getting the majors.

The ice was uncluttered for an opportune Vernon offensive but it didn't materialize. Although they exerted good pressure the Kelowna defence put on a better display.

As the final minute ticked by Brown pulled Pirnak for a supreme attack which nearly paid off except for the alertness of Shussel.

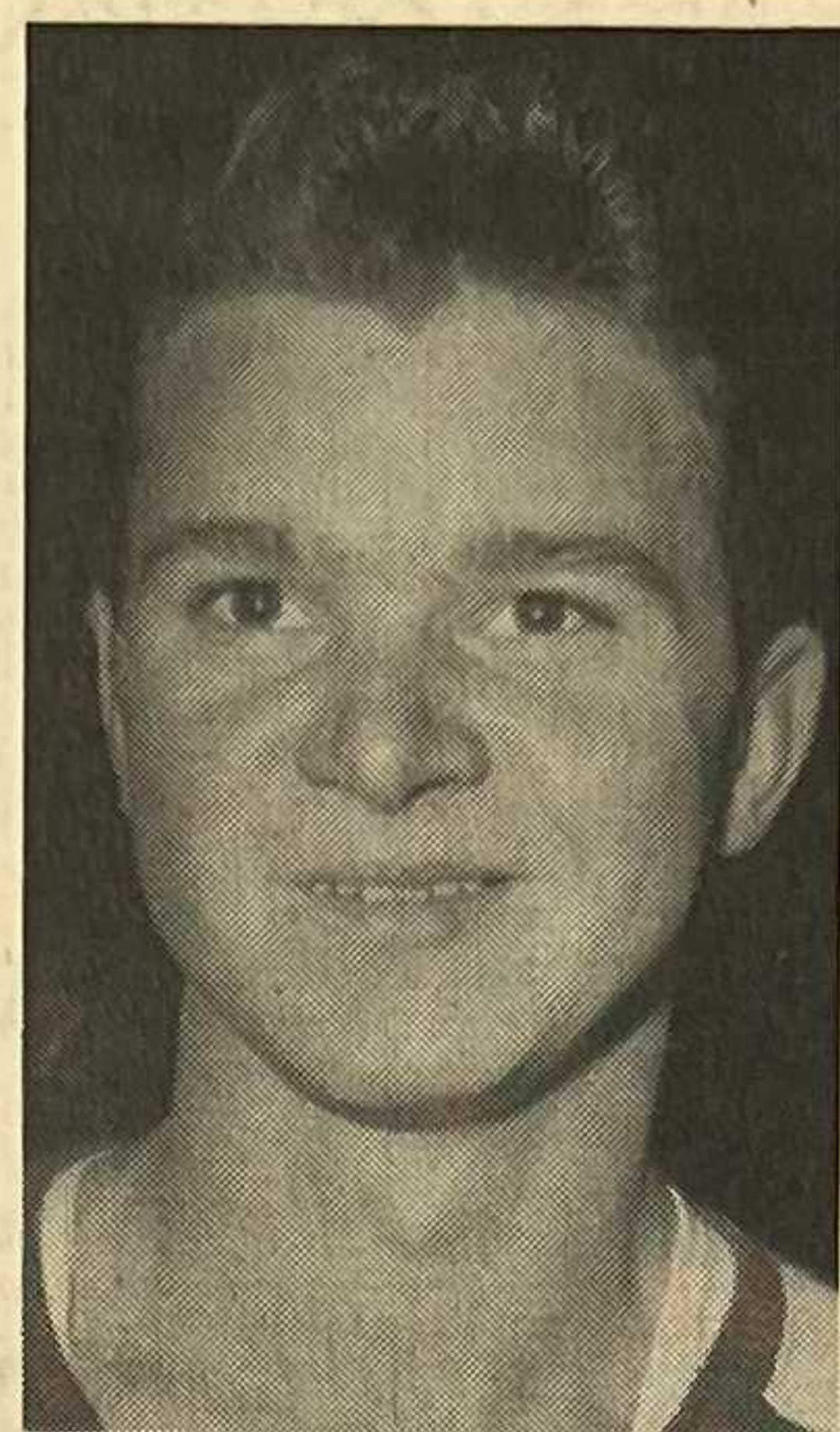
The high man in their lowly cause was defenceman John Macko who gets better with every game.

Despite being overworked he coolly and carefully did his job and did it well—stopping rushes and starting rushes, passing and poke-checking, stick handling and skating.

Also showing fire was Corky Agar who got plenty of shots on goal to go along with his lone marker.

Kelowna outshot Vernon 36 to 32 in the scrappy contest.

The Blades must now recover some badly needed strength, both in personnel and scoring punch, if they



JOHN MACKO
... stars for losers

are to meet the league-leading Kamloops Rockets on equal terms tonight.

Game time for the Blade-Rocket clash is 8:30 p.m. at the Vernon Civic Arena.

Game Summary

First Period: 1, Vernon, Agar (Sorochuk), 13:58. Penalties: Lakes (4:56). Kelowna bench penalty (10:06).

Second Period: 2, Vernon, Coulter (Sherk), 2:12; 3, Kelowna, Thomas (Stob, Gruber), 6:20; 4, Kelowna, Thomas (Gruber), 18:40. Penalties: Mackay (9:21), Pyle (10:40), Hamanishi (11:06).

Third Period: 5, Kelowna, Thomas (9:27). Penalties: Larden (4:33), Turanski (4:57), Roland (5:00), Lakes (7:31), Stein, Larden, Sherk, Kasubuchi, Hamanishi, Roland (13:01), Vernon bench penalty (15:07), Kelowna bench penalty (17:15).

Intermediates Meet Kamloops In Hockey Play

The Vernon Canadians will be out to grab sole possession of first place in the Okanagan Intermediate Hockey League with a win in Kamloops tonight.

Odie Lowe and Co. need the win so they can host the Kelowna Packers here Saturday night with some measure of advantage. A loss would have them pushing to gain a tie with the Orchard City crew which beat them 5 to 3 in a game at Kelowna last week.

The first time Hallowe'en put the hex on the Kamloops-Vernon meeting in the Hub City. This time it could be the Chiefs' turn to launch a whammy—and in the direction of some familiar blue uniforms.

Last Tuesday they put up a good, game fight here despite losing 5 to 1 and must be considered dangerous, especially with old playmasters like Buddy Evans in harness.