

NORTH SPORTS OKANAGAN

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Sports Editor

League President Rules

Vees Must Ice 12 Or Quit OJHL Playoffs

Unless the Penticton Junior Vees can ice a minimum of 12 players for each game of the Okanagan Junior Hockey League playoffs this season, their scheduled semifinal series with Kamloops Rockets will be cancelled.

This was the strong action decided upon at a meeting of the OJHL executive called Sunday here in Vernon to arrange playoff dates. It followed an official protest made to league president Don White by Rocket manager Don Brown about repeated poor player turnouts by the Penticton team on road trips to Kamloops this year.

Brown said that for Saturday's game in Kamloops Penticton showed up with only six players and had to use borrowed Rocket players to fill out their team.

He claimed Penticton was ruining their arena gate for the playoffs and making a complete farce of the league as a whole.

He then recommended the Junior Vees be kicked out of the playoffs this year unless the situation was changed. President White followed up on his recommendation by agreeing to warn Penticton such action would be taken unless it could assure a minimum 12-player team for the playoffs.

Representatives from the Junior Vees organization were conspicuously absent at the league executive meeting held Sunday to decide a playoff date for the semifinals.

However a tentative schedule was worked out by the three other clubs attending.

In the best-of-seven series between Vernon Blades and Kelowna Buckaroos action will begin Saturday, February 9 in Kelowna in-

stead of Tuesday, February 5.

Vernon will host the second game Tuesday, February 12, return to Kelowna Friday, February 15 and play back here again Saturday, February 16.

If the series goes beyond four games, play will continue in Kelowna on Tuesday, February 19, in Vernon on Friday, February 22 and back in Kelowna on Saturday, February 23.

In the first four games of the scheduled Kamloops-Penticton series, the Vees play in Kamloops Wednesday February 6 and return to Penticton Friday, February 8 then play again in Kamloops Wednesday, February 13 and back in Penticton Friday, February 15.

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They've found their trouble stems from another numeral, equally odd and in their case equally awesome.

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Gruber Fills Blades With Heavy 'Buck-shot'

Takes League Scoring Title, Cracks Hundred-Point Barrier

KELOWNA 7, 5; VERNON 2, 4

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Besides helping to lead the Buckaroos to first place in the Okanagan Junior League via Vernon, Gruber also took the opportunity to crown himself scoring king, collecting seven points for a record-breaking total of 103.

Amassed Points

Friday night in Kelowna he potted one goal and assisted on two others as the Bucks won 7-2 to clinch the OJHL title, then in Saturday's closing game of the regular season here in Vernon he amassed a two goal, two-assist count of four to break the century mark in points and help scuttle the Blades 5-4 in overtime.

Vernon ended the season, cut short by eight games to make way for a lengthened playoff schedule, deep in third place with nine wins and 22 losses. Such a position in the OJHL means they must now meet first-place Kelowna in a best-out-of-seven semi-final series beginning Saturday, February 9. Meanwhile, Kamloops Rockets, who came second in standings, will play the lowly Penticton Junior Vees.

There was no doubt the Blades badly wanted a pair of wins from the Bucks to close out regular play. They had a golden opportunity to bog them down and allow Kamloops to close a four-point gap and regain a tie,

meaning possibly another playoff opponent.

But Gruber and Co. stood stolidly in the way despite all their determined and spirited efforts.

Saturday these efforts came closest to fruition as they played one of their best games against the Bucks all season.

Fought Back

Down 2-1 after the first period the Blues fought back to take leads of 3-2 and 4-3, only to have Kelowna catch them late in the third and kill them in overtime.

Speedy winger Terry Kasubuchi scored the eventual winner midway through the extra frame, slapping in Gruber's loose rebounder inches from the goal line.

It was also Number Eleven who helped knot the score at 4-4 with less than two minutes left in the third, feeding the puck to defenceman Ken Kitsch on a slick play.

Gruber got both his goals on sheer speed and pluck, beating Vernon blueliners out of the corners and scoring unassisted at point-blank range. Ron Lakes got the other Kelowna goal on a deflection from Kitsch.

Corky Agar broke a long scoring slump with a brace to lead the Blades' attack. He opened first period scoring with a sharp backhand that slipped through Sid Shussel's

pads and then gave Vernon a 3-2 lead in the second on a scintillating, unassisted play.

The hometowners' second goal came from the stick of Gordie Kineshanko with help from Gordie Nuyens. Buck Sherk, in peak form, scored on a breakaway from number four, pulling Shussel way out from the nets and blasting the puck high into the corner.

Vernon Outshot

Kelowna outshot Vernon 29-26 in the game which started off very slowly but reached a screaming pace at the finish. Twelve penalties were levied including a game misconduct to Dale Sorochnik for interrupting an affray between Nuyens and Ralph Kirschner.

Invaluable centerman Bob Stein left the game late in the third with undetermined injuries suffered in a collision along the boards.

Friday's clash in Kelowna was also a close-knit affair most of the distance, Vernon trailing the Bucks 3-2 early in the third period.

Then the league-leaders exploded in predictable fashion, scoring four fast goals to take a 7-2 decision. They had notched two earlier, one in each period.

Fred Thomas and Harvey Stolz flashed the red light twice between them to lead the way, followed by Gruber, Phil Larden and Terry Kasubuchi each with single tallies.

Bob Stein took care of Blade goals, both scored in the final period.

Blades have a week to recoup and prepare for the up-and-coming playoffs. Practices will be held tonight at 6 p.m. and Tuesday night from 8 to 9 p.m.



The **Allison**

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Sportsman's Calendar

For Events
to Feb. 10th