

Blades Finally Corral Buckaroos

Extend Playoff Life With 5-Goal Comeback In Third

VERNON 2, 6; KELOWNA 4, 3

Vernon Blades boosted their sagging playoff hopes here at the Civic Arena Saturday by giving the Kelowna Buckaroos a strong over-dose of their own third period medicine.

Hovering on the brink of elimination in the best-of-seven Okanagan Junior Hockey League semi-finals and trailing 2-1 after two periods the Blades scored five times in the final 20 minutes to wrest a 6-3 decision from their powerful southern rivals.

Earlier on Friday night they were beaten 4-2 in Kelowna by the Buckaroos, sinking them under a weighty 3-0 for the series.

By winning again Saturday the Bucks would have had the semi-finals four straight but Vernon's sudden and spectacular eruption in the third period ensured a fifth game scheduled for Kelowna on Tuesday.

First Win

Besides stopping Kelowna's win string in the playoffs the Blues delighted about 1,000 fans at the arena by breaking a season-long jinx. It was the first time they had beaten the Cowboys since last year's semi-final when they forced a best-of-seven series to the bitter end.

And they accomplished it in Kelowna's favorite period

final period, one the eventual winner. And Bobby Stein who matched McNeil's brace with two quick beauties in the dying minutes to scuttle Kelowna for good.

Corky Agar played his best in some time, thundering shots at Shussel all night and starting off the Blades' scorefest in the third with the goal that tied the game at 2-2. Buck Sherk was a puck hog in the corners, rooting out passes to men on the point, one of which ended as a goal.

Defence Sparkled

Vernon's defensive foursome sparked and showed ability to go both ways. Gordie Nuysens was a key man on many power plays and scored and assisted once; John Macko also did well on attacks, setting up two goals; Dave Mackay and Jim Stephen backchecked closely and fiercely.

In the first period the Blades were very slow in getting mobile and it looked as if a complete rout was in the offing. Kelowna hemmed them in their zone all period, outshooting them 16 to 4 and scoring the only goal. Fred Thomas picked it up at 15:29, slapping a screaming liner off a Harvey Stolz pass.

Early in the second period Nuysens tied it up, breaking away with a loose puck deposited by McNeil at centre ice and finding Shussel's short side at close range.

At the 18-minute mark rookie winger John Strong put the Bucks up 2-1 on a quick deflection just outside the crease.

From then on it was all Vernon. Two minutes into the third Agar swept down the left side and hung a high sizzler from just inside the blue line that Shussel couldn't meet.

Two For McNeil

McNeil made it 3-2 at eight minutes even, faking the harried Kelowna goaltender perfectly on a breakaway. His second goal came on a hard, ice-level shot from the point with help from Sherk and Mackay.

Buckaroo coach Don Culley put out his power, Thomas and Gruber, at this juncture to try and get back in the game. Skating the length of the ice Gruber caught Holland cold after getting around the last defenceman.

Each club was four aside with Wayne Horning and

Gordie Kineshanko in the box for sparring when Stein opened up with his two at the finish. Both were on break-aways and both beauties to behold, Stein fooling Shussel with some slick stick-handling.

Thirteen penalties were assessed in the game, seven to Kelowna. Tony Winchuk was head referee.

In Friday's 4-2 loss to Kel-

owna the Blades fell behind 3-0 in the first period and never recovered. Gord Nuysens and Bobby Stein took care of Vernon scoring in the second and third periods with Bob Gruber tallying twice for Kelowna and single going to Wayne Horning and John Strong.

Holland again played brilliantly in the nets, stopping 46

shots and blanking Kelowna completely in the third period. More than once he foiled scoring terrors like Thomas, Gruber and Stolz with split-second saves.

Fifth game of the semi-final series is set for Tuesday in Kelowna and Hap Schaefer will be going all out in practice tonight to whet his Blues for this, the possible deciding match.



GARY HOLLAND
... kept Blades in game



HOWIE McNEIL
... scored the winner

for routing weaker foes—the third.

Coach Hap Schaefer's bag of "hero buttons" must have been close to empty after that game. Almost everybody came up with a praiseworthy performance.

There was goaltender Gary Holland who continued to amaze spectators with his uncanny ability in front of the Vernon nets. He swallowed 48 Buckaroo pucks during the game compared to 27 spewed at Sid Shussel and more than anyone else kept the Blades in the game when the pressure was heaviest.

There was big Howie McNeil who broke loose for two of the five goals scored in the

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