



Potential Rocket Wreckers

All set to defuse the Kamloops Rockets when they open the Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League season tonight at the Civic Arena are (left to right) Gordie Kineshanko, Bobby Stein and Buck Sherk, one of three goal-hungry Vernon Blade forward lines. Game time is 8 p.m.

Blades Draw Bead On Hot Rockets Tonight

First Puck Week Heavy With 4 Games In 5 Days

Vernon Blades will be plum up to their ears in hockey this week when they make their debut into the 1963-64 Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League season.

Starting tonight and running through to Saturday the Blades are faced with a punishing four games in five days—two back-to-back sessions with Kamloops Rockets and Kelowna Buckaroos.

Meaning if they aren't in shape for the season now they'll surely be so come Sunday. Also pretty well pooped.

But let's get back to tonight. Here at the Civic Arena starting at 8 p.m. the Blades lay their assembled 1963-64 fortunes on the line for the benefit of hometown fans.

And what better way to do it but against the Kamloops Rockets, two-time champions of the two-year-old Okanagan Junior hockey circuit.

Rockets Wrote Script

For those past two seasons the script has been written almost totally the way the Rockets wanted it. Last year the Blades only beat the red-shirts once and they had no more luck against the Buckaroos who shut them out through the regular season and only yielded a victory during the semi-final playoffs.

But this year, according to the Blades' confident and competent co-pilots Messrs. Hap Schaefer and Jim Moro, "things are a'gonna be different."

As yet their optimism is not unfounded. Both on paper and in practices to date the Blades look anything but a team with a tailor-made doormat look.

For one thing they're almost the carbon copy of the 1962-63 team which proved in the late stages of last season at least, to be no pushovers.

They'll be confronting the Rockets tonight minus only a defenceman, John Macko, now overage, and goaltender Gary Holland, who is presently seeking his fortune with Flin Flon Bombers of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League.

Last season's forward line is intact and the Blades still have a tough three-player nucleus to police the blue-line.

Spirit High

And another thing, spirit on the club is at a fever pitch. Right from the first practice a week ago the Blades have displayed a "can't wait to get on the ice" temperament, much to the satisfaction of Schaefer and Moro.

Fans will see the following three offensive lines in

operation tonight, give or take a little shuffling as the game progresses.

Fast-skating, sharp-shooting Bobby Stein will center one line flanked by rough, tough Buck Sherk on left wing and gutty Gordie Kineshanko on right. Sophomore Corky Agar, who looks ready to fly this season, will pivot on a line with ex-juvenile hustler Alan Rogan on his left and Dale Sorochnik on his right. Ike Coulter, another old stalwart, will be



BRIAN WOODWARD
... big test tonight

the spearhead of a third line with left winger Ralph Litzenberger, always a digger, and right winger Ed Spelay, another juvenile graduate.

Frank Harrison, a newcomer from the Coast, looks to be a good heady winger and should see plenty of action. Also dressing will be Wayne Wutzke, up from juveniles, and Ted Palm, who played a number of games with the Blades last season.

Howie McNeil is right out of the picture. The big forward got into a scrap with a packinghouse conveyor belt last week and came out second best. He'll be out for at least two months with injured tendons in his hand.

Back on defence there'll be league all-star Gordie Nuyens along with veteran stalwarts Jim Stephen and Dave MacKay. Wilf Tantrum, another prospect up from juveniles, will fill the fourth spot.

Unknown Quantity

The only unknown quantity at the moment is goal tending. Holland's departure to Flin Flon may or may not have created a sticky problem. All rests on the performance of young Salmon Arm juvenile Brian Woodward tonight and in the succeeding games this week.

Woodward has been working out with the club in most of their practices and has shown fair ability between the pipes. But only a live game will reveal whether the Blades have a dud or on up-and-coming Jacques Plante (Woodward's distinguishing article of goaltending gear is a fiery red face mask). The Salmon Arm goalie has never played junior hockey before but is certainly eager to make the club as he has commuted by bus from the Shuswap town for just about every practice.

He'll face a big test with Kenny Stewart's Rockets in town. The defending OJHL champs will be stepping on Civic Arena ice fresh from an 8-2 opening league win over the Buckaroos and an 8-3 exhibition lacing of New Westminster Royals on the holiday weekend. Don Brown, manager of the Rockets, claims it is the best team Kamloops has iced since the league first started.

Fans are reminded tonight is Kiddies' Night, meaning all children 12 and under accompanied by a parent are admitted free. Season tickets will be available at the arena as well or else at Ernie's Esso Service or from players.

Wednesday night the Blades play a return match with the Rockets in Kamloops, have a brief respite Thursday, then tackle the Buckaroos in a two-game weekend series—in Kelowna Friday and back here Saturday.

Watsons Win Husband-Wife Tournament

Mr. and Mrs. Clem Watson swept all the honors Monday, winning both the Husband and Wife and the Nancy Lynn (Grandparents) Golf tournaments.

They won the Pemberton Trophy for the Husband and Wife title and runners-up were Mr. and Mrs. Harry Francis of Kamloops.

The low gross was won by Mr. and Mrs. Len Wallington and the runners-up were Mr. and Mrs. Davidson from Revelstoke.

Another tournament for unattached couples was held and this was won by Al Myers and Margaret Monaghan. Harry Johnson and Gayle Drage were runners-up.

The putting competition was won by Tritia Higginbotham and Claude Small.

There was a record attendance for the tourney with 35 couples entered. There were 10 couples from out of town, notably Revelstoke, Kamloops and Penticton.