

Fired-Up Blades Defuse Rockets

Play Best Game Of Season; Please Coaches, Wow Fans

VERNON 6, KAMLOOPS 3

A "get-tough" policy introduced by coaches Jim Moro and Hap Schaefer to try and halt Vernon Blades' cellar slide produced the desired effect Tuesday night.

With three regulars sitting out the game and the threat of more roster changes hanging in the air the Blades, fired up and ferocious, sank their teeth into the visiting Kamloops Rockets and emerged with a 6-3 victory in their slaver jaws.

The win put the skids to a five-game losing streak and kept the Blades in sight of the Rockets and Kelowna Buckaroos, presently tied for the Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League lead with 16 points on eight wins.

The Blades now have six points on three victories, still a parcel of distance back. But if they continue to play the brand of hockey they did Tuesday night things could get a little crowded around the top storey of the OJHL in the very near future.

There was no doubt about it, Tuesday night's game was the best game seen at the Civic Arena this season. And it was more than a coincidence that the Blades happened to play their best hockey the same night—the coaching staff and a majority of the fans were willing to attest to that.

"It was a real team effort all the way tonight," said coach Moro after the game. "The boys never played better."

Kenny Stewart, coach of the Rockets, had to agree and he was the first to admit it. "Vernon was really hustling out there and they were passing the puck around good too."

The Blades' success formula Tuesday boiled down to one thing, pure and simple, they played a full 60 minutes of the hockey they had until then only served up in 40-minute or 20-minute helpings.

And the sparse 150-odd crowd loved it and will likely be howling for more when the Blades take on the Buckaroos at the Civic Arena Saturday night.

It was hard to pick out any individual stars, just about everybody seemed to come up with a good game. There was big centreman Bobby Stein who came up with two goals, the second one going as the insurance marker. Ike Coulter probably played his best game of the season, scoring another big pair including a crucial go-ahead tally late in the second period.

Fired Winner

Ralph Litzenberger, the tireless little go-go guy, fired in the winning goal in the third period to bust up a 3-3 tie and later set up Coulter on the sixth and last one. Buck Sherk dazzled, assisting "Litz" on the winner and then feeding Stein on his brilliant scoring play.

The third line, the only one that didn't get any goals, failed not for lack of trying. This, the trio of Allan Rogan, Corky Agar and Wayne Wutzke tested the Rocket defence and goalie Harvey Budarick with bullets all night but were robbed time and again.

Vernon's defence, working with only three most of night, was on the whole solid. Jim Stephen had a particularly good night on the blueline and scored his first goal of the season besides. Goalie Brian Woodward gobbled up a lot of rubber to keep the Blades in the game.

Making his debut Tuesday night was Howie McNeil who has been out with a mangled hand. It obviously still gives him trouble, especially on

stick-handling, but he came up with a fair game, considering. Juvenile defenceman Maurice Wernicke and forward Bob Ouchi also saw limited action.

The Rocket sharpshooters included defenceman Eddie Begg, winger Brian Fournier and centre Robbie Jamieson.

Only four penalties were called throughout the clash, three to Kamloops and a pair of these to Richards. Vernon outshot Kamloops 29-24.

Took Advantage

The Rockets took advantage of a slow Blade beginning to hammer in a quick goal at 3:59 of the first period, Begg poking in a loose puck. Stein replied for Vernon five minutes later, rifling in a long, low sizzler through a tiny hole.

Kamloops again took over temporarily in the second period when Fournier cut in front of Woodward with a pass from rearguard Terry Shishido. Stephen then locked the count at the 11-minute mark with a sudden slapshot from the blueline that caught Budarick unawares. Coulter cut loose at 17:32 to put the Blades one up when he swung around and backhanded a 40-footer from his pivot spot, Dave MacKay assisting.

Jamieson withheld the last period fury for a while with a goal at 4:04 but Litzenberger put it away for keeps two minutes later, shovelling a Sherk pass under Budarick's pads.

After this came the night's sparkler on a controversial play. Working up along the sideboards Sherk was heavily up-ended but just managed to slip the puck ahead to Stein who streaked in on Budarick and drilled a shot between his legs. Kamloops claimed an off-side on this particular play but their dispute went for nought.

It was then left to Coulter to cinch it for sure with a deceptive drive that caught the Rocket netminder looking again.

Summary

First Period: 1. Kamloops, Begg (unassisted) 3:59. 2. Vernon, Stein (unassisted) 8:33. Penalties — Jamieson (cross-checking) 5:36; Nuyens (charging) 17:44.

Second Period: 3. Kamloops, Fournier (T. Shishido) 7:12. 4. Vernon, Stephen (unassisted) 11:00. 5. Vernon, Coulter (MacKay) 17:22.

Third Period: 6. Kamloops, Jamieson (Rinaldi) 4:05. 7. Vernon, Coulter (Litzenberger) 16:33. Penalties—Richards (high sticking) 7:45; Richards (charging) 14:21.

Shots: Woodward 7, 8, 9—24; Budarick 9, 13, 7—29.

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Special

Blades Strapped 12-2 In Wild Brawl At Kamloops

Kamloops 12—Vernon 2

In a wild, brawling affair that had little resemblance to a hockey game, Vernon Blades were strapped 12-2 by Kamloops Rockets Wednesday night.

Goal-scoring was only of secondary importance in the clash with the accent on penalties. A total of 29 infractions were levied out including two game misconducts to Vernon's Buck Sherk and Gordie Nuyens, three 10-minute misconducts to Sherk, Nuyens, and Kamloops' Brian Fourt.

Two fights broke out, one between Vernon's Gordie Kineshanko and Kamloops defenceman Ken Rinaldi, another with Nuyens, Steinke, and Fourt the combatants.

Coach Hap Schaefer of the Blades complained that the refereeing in the game was

very poor.

Larry Roberge personally massacred the Blades, scoring five goals and assisting once to lead the Rocket rally. Brian Fourt and Eric Shishido each scored twice while singles went to Dale Sandyke, Robbie Jamieson and Glen Richards.

Buck Sherk scored from Jim Stephen and Corky Agar clicked from Ike Coulter to prevent it from being a total washout.

The Rockets took a commanding 5-1 lead in the first period and extended their dominance to 8-2 going into the third period when they ripped in four more unanswered goals, Roberge collecting the last three.

As has happened so many times this season the Blades actually outshot their victors, this time 40-32.

Shishido Still Sharpest Shot In Jr. Hockey Loop

Eric Shishido of the Kamloops Rockets continues to set the pace in the Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League individual scoring race with a leading 25 points on eight goals and 17 assists.

But Kelowna's John Strong is closing in fast with 21 points on nine goals and 12 assists. Third is Buckaroo captain Harvey Stolz with a league-leading 12 goals and seven assists for 19.

The only Vernon Blade in the Top Ten is prolific-scoring centreman Bobby Stein, tied with four others with 16 points. He has an even-stein eight goals and eight

assists.

Harvey Budarick still is the top goaltender with an average of 3.4 but he's being pushed by stand-in Lee Simpson with a 3.6 average.

Kelowna usurped Vernon's position as the most penalized club in the league last week. They have a total of 220 minutes while the Blades have 218.

League Scoring (top 20)

	G	A	P	M	P
E. Shishido,					
Kam.	8	17	0	25	
J. Strong, Kel. ...	9	12	33	21	
Stolz, Kel.	12	7	23	19	
Sandyke, Kam.	8	10	11	18	
Fourt, Kam.	11	6	9	17	
Stein, Ver.	8	8	2	16	
Richards, Kam.	7	9	12	16	
Roberge, Kam.	6	10	9	16	
R. Bulach, Kel.	5	11	14	16	
Kasubuchi, Kel.	7	6	14	13	
T. Strong, Kel.	7	6	10	13	
Agar, Ver.	4	9	8	13	
Verna, Kel.	9	3	10	12	
Sherk, Ver.	6	6	28	12	
Nuyens, Ver.	5	6	44	11	
Begg, Kam.	4	6	2	10	
Coulter, Ver.	6	3	2	9	
Schnepf, Kel.	5	4	16	9	
Steinke, Kam.	3	6	16	9	
Rinaldi, Kam.	1	8	30	9	

Goalkeeper Averages

	GP	GA	Ave
Budarick, Kam.	7	24	3.4
Simpson, Kam.	5	18	3.6
Robinson, Kel.	11	58	5.2
Woodward, Ver.	13	71	5.4

Midgets See First Home Hockey Action

Vernon Midget All-Stars take to Civic Arena ice for the first time this season Saturday morning when they host Kelowna in the second meeting between the two clubs in Okanagan Midget Hockey League play.

Tom Stecyk's Vernon crew pasted Kelowna 8-2 in Kelowna a week ago and are considered strong favorites to repeat the trick on home ice.

Junior Blades Ask For Help

Vernon Junior Blades Hockey Club has asked the Recreation Commission for assistance in promoting junior hockey in this city.

A special meeting took place Wednesday morning between the Commission and Blades' director Carl Sorensen, during which the "fairly poor" financial position of the club was discussed.

All agreed that the calibre of junior hockey in the Okanagan was worthy of better support from fans who "don't know what they are missing."

Closer Co-operation

It was felt both the

financial state of the club and the promotion of junior hockey locally, could be improved by closer co-operation between the Commission's Arena Committee and the hockey club executive.

The Arena Committee comprises chairman R. C. Cull, D. S. MacKay and J. D. Dobie. The hockey club executive is headed by president William Brown, and comprises directors Carl Sorensen, Hal Gordon and Brian Willows, and secretary-treasurer W. M. Tait.

Several promotional ideas were discussed and will be investigated by a

special committee.

It was agreed that with a large number of promising minor hockey players being developed a good supply of junior hockey material would be available in future years.

Meanwhile the Blades set about promoting their own cause Tuesday night when they hammered league-leading Kamloops Rockets 6-3 at the Civic Arena. Only 150 fans watched a thriller, but by the performance, this could be trebled when Blades do battle with Kelowna Buckaroos here Saturday night at nine o'clock.