

Rocket Ice Still A Jinx To Blues

Newcomer To Vernon Line Makes Impressive Debut

KAMLOOPS 11, VERNON 5

No one really expected Vernon Blades to win Saturday night when they travelled up to Kamloops to play the hot-shot Rockets on their home ice.

And they didn't. They lost 11-5, their fourth straight and their 14th in 17 starts since the Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League season began.

No surprise. This happens to just about every B.C. junior hockey team that invades the pad of the Rockets. What's surprising is the fact that the Blades should have lost by a more ignominious score, say 15-5 or 20-5, but didn't.

Because the Blades were a pretty motley, disorganized crew on that Kamloops road trip. Five regulars were missing from the lineup—wingman Buck Sherk and defenceman Gordie Nuyens out with one-game suspensions, centre Ike Coulter saddled with work commitments, and wingers Howie McNeil and Gordie Kineshanko otherwise occupied, nobody knows where.

Posed A Problem

All of which posed a pickle of a problem for coach Hap Schaefer, especially up on the forward line. However, he managed to obtain the required number of replacements, one of which turned out to be a pleasant surprise and a possible answer to some of Schaefer's current player woes.

The surprise came in the person of George Mandzuik, a stocky 19-year-old newcomer who dropped into Vernon out of the blue (actually Red Deer, Alberta) two weeks ago.

Mandzuik, off skates for a year and with only a few practices under his belt, nevertheless made an impressive debut at the Kamloops Memorial Arena Saturday, scoring a goal, assisting on two more and generally showing proof of being a good, heady hockey player.

Hometown fans will likely see a lot of him in action Tuesday night when the Blades again play the Rockets at the Civic Arena.

The return of Bobby Stein, thought to be a doubtful starter for more than a week with back injuries, also was a surprise to Schaefer. Stein saw regular duty Saturday and picked up an assist on a picture perfect goal by Corky Agar.

Bob Ouchi and juvenile Len Lanaway saw limited action as attack replacements and Wilf Tantrum and juvenile Maurice Wernicke subbed on defence for short periods, Dave MacKay and Jim Stephen going most of the way.

Fared Well

So, with these last minute switches in the lineup, the Blades did battle with the Rockets and, considering their makeshift character, they fared very well, better in fact than the previous week when they were bombed 12-2 with a full slate of regulars on hand.

One big reason why the Blades never suffered a worse fate than 11-5 was goalie Brian Woodward. The point-hungry Rockets rattled 61 shots at the rookie net-minder and he successfully rose to the occasion with stick, glove or body 50 times, a valiant effort indeed by the steadily improving youngster. Lee Simpson, his opposite number, was only called upon to stop 23 shots and 5 of these found the back of the net.

Jim Stephen played probably his best game of the season to date, snaffling as many Rocket rushes as he

could despite his being used almost the full 60 minutes.

Corky Agar awoke from a slump to lead the Blade brigade in scoring, bagging a brace and assisting twice. Dale Sorochnik looked better than usual, adding another goal and also setting up a pair. Allan Rogan notched the remaining tally.

Centre Murray Owen, back after a leg injury, and winger Brian Fourn propelled the Rockets to victory, each scoring three goals and assisting twice. Winger Dale Sandyke and defenceman Ken Rodgers potted a pair apiece and Eric Shishido sniped a singleton.

Only Four Penalties

Only four penalties were called in the game, three to Vernon including, surprise of all surprises, a fighting penalty to Ralph Litzenger. Usually mild-mannered, Litz sought to dispute a sticky point with Kamloops' Glen Richards in the third period and they each drew two minutes in the pen.

Of the three periods the first one was the best, at least if you're looking at it from the Blades' point of view. Down 1-0 shortly after the faceoff thanks to a quickie by Fourn, the Blues rebounded to take a 2-1 lead, Rogan tallying from Wayne Wutzke and Mandzuik and Agar connecting from Sorochnik and Frank Harrison. Then Eric Shishido tied it up to end the period on a play from brother Terry and Eddie Begg.

In the middle frame Fourn slammed in his second goal and Rodgers followed with his first to make it 4-2, but back came Vernon to narrow the gap with Mandzuik tipping in a slick pass from Sorochnik and Agar.

However, the Rockets were not to be denied and they ended the period leading 6-3 after Sandyke and Owen had done some more damage. They added five more goals in the third period to make it rout, Sorochnik and Agar replying twice for Vernon.

Summary

First Period: 1. Kamloops, Fourn (Richards, Owen) 1:50. 2. Vernon, Rogan (Wutzke, Mandzuik) 10:55. 3. Vernon, Agar (Sorochnik, Harrison) 11:25. 4. Kamloops, E. Shishido (T. Shishido, Begg). 12:30. Penalty — Sorochnik (spearing) 19:45.



CORKY AGAR
... four points

Second Period: 5. Kamloops, Fourn (Richards, Rinaldi) 2:50. 6. Kamloops, Rodgers (Rinaldi, Begg) 11:05. 7. Vernon, Mandzuik (Sorochnik, Agar) 14:25. 8. Kamloops, Sandyke (Begg, E. Shishido) 15:10. 9. Kamloops, Owen (Richards, Rinaldi) 16:30. Penalty — MacKay (hooking) 15:20.

Third Period: 10. Kamloops, Owen (Richards, Fourn) 2:20. 11. Vernon, Sorochnik (Agar, Mandzuik) 8:05. 12. Kamloops, Sandyke (T. Shishido, Begg) 8:50. 13. Kamloops, Owen (Fourn, Rodgers) 10:55. 14. Vernon, Agar (Stein) 12:25. 15. Kamloops, Rodgers (Owen) 18:10. 16. Kamloops, Fourn (Rinaldi) 19:45. Penalties — Litzenger, Richards (fighting) 10:55. Shots: Simpson 6, 5, 7—18; Woodward 15, 16, 19—50.

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Vernon Midgets

Rocketmen Here Tuesday

Civic Arena fans see their hometown Blades for the first time in more than a week when the cellar-dwelling juniors host high flying Kamloops Rockets Tuesday night.

The Blades will be out to avenge the 11-5 trimming they got up at Kamloops Saturday night while the Rockets will be striving to retake sole hold of first place in the Okanagan Junior 'A' Hockey League.

Vernon was missing five regulars on that Saturday trip but all or most are expected to be in uniform for the Tuesday night clash which, if the last game here between these clubs is any indication, promises to be a doozer.

There'll be a new face in the lineup with the appearance of forward George Mandzuik who gave a good account of himself Saturday in Kamloops. Mandzuik is 19 years old and hails from Red Deer, Alberta.

Game time is 8 p.m.