

# Wonders Never Cease! They Did It Again!!

## Short-Staffed Blades Shoot Rockets Out Of Orbit, 8-5

VERNON 8, KAMLOOPS 5

It's incredible, Charlie, and downright preposterous but the Vernon Blades did it again. They beat Kamloops Rockets and Kenny Stewart is maybe wondering whether he should consult a head shrinker.

Because the Kamloops coach could scarcely be blamed for going out of his skull after what he saw take place on Vernon Civic Arena ice Saturday night—the utter defeat of his fast, healthy league-leading Rockets by 10 (count them, 10) lowly rascals in Vernon Blade uniforms.

How could this happen, he must have pondered, to a team that just the night before had completely and convincingly crushed Kelowna Buckaroos, supposedly its strongest opposition, 8-3 in Kelowna and Wednesday had bombed these self-same

Blades 11-1 in Kamloops.

But it happened; 8-5 for Vernon. The third time in a row the Rockets had been rocked on Vernon ice and the fourth in six visits.

### Puzzling Story

And another chapter in the Blades' steadily enlarging book of riddles. Goats one night, glory boys the next, that's the puzzling story of the Vernon juniors so far this season.

Saturday night the Blades decided to be the glory boys, even if they only had 10 players to consummate the glory.

It was a pleasant surprise to the paid audience of 168 and other assorted souls present who had come to expect just the opposite from the Blades.

Also a surprise to coach Jim Moro who was probably bemoaning his depleted bench before the game.

Missing Saturday were starry centre Corky Agar, off to Saskatoon for the Christmas holidays, wingers Dale Sorochuk, George Mandzuik and Frank Harrison who has returned to the Coast.

However this lineup loss was partially counterbalanced by the return of Gordie Nuyens to the Blade fold. And it is probably true to say that the firebrand defence-man's presence helped spirit the shorthanded club to its stunning and stirring victory. Kamloops was beaten in

just about every department.

They have a good skating club but they were left behind in a spray of ice chips Saturday. They pass with perfection but the play-making of the Blades couldn't be matched. Their shooting is notoriously deadly but it was nothing to the firepower the Blades triggered.

It didn't take much head-scratching to figure out which line worked best for Vernon Saturday. The trio that did all the damage was a makeshift line centering Bobby Stein and flanked by Buck Sherk and Allan Rogan.

Together they accounted for seven of the Blades' eight goals. Stein led the way with three goals and three assists. Sherk, who played probably his best game of the season to date, added two more and set up another three, and Rogan tallied twice and assisted once.

Howie McNeil notched the remaining single on a picture play from Ralph Litzenberger. Coulter, the pivot on this line, didn't figure in scoring but came up with a solid performance nevertheless.

Nuyens was in on two goals and Dave MacKay also helped out on one of Sherk's markers. And let's not forget "iron man" Jim Stephen and goaltender Brian Woodward who were both pillars of fortitude and spirit.

Leaders in a second-best Kamloops campaign were centre Murray Owen and winger Glen Richards who each scored twice. Eddie Begg collected the fifth tally.

### Stuck To Hockey

Both clubs stuck strictly to hockey throughout and only seven penalties were issued by referee Don Jakes, four to Kamloops. The Blades outshot the Rockets 31-24.

The Blades weren't slow in advertising their winning intentions. Starting at 3:30 Sherk scored on a neat play from MacKay and three minutes later Stein ripped in a Sherk pass to put the Blades up 2-0.

The Rockets awoke seconds later with Owen scoring unassisted to narrow the gap but Rogan from Stein and Sherk and Stein from Rogan blasted the Blades to a 4-1 lead. Within a minute of the buzzer Owen notched his second of the game and it was 4-2 going into the

middle stanza.

At 5:17 Rogan steered in a Stein pass to make in 5-2. Late in the period Richards unassisted and it was 5-3 but Stein completed his hat-trick a minute late to give the Blades their three-goal margin once again.

Early in the third period the Rockets staged their biggest come-back threat and edged to within one goal of the upstart Blades, Begg and Richards the marksmen in that order.

But the Blades, forced into overtime once before after blowing a comfortable lead, would have none of this nonsense again and promptly rapped in a quick pair for insurance, McNeil from Litzenberger and Sherk from Stein and Nuyens.

The Blades resume hostilities Boxing Day when they invade the confines of Kelowna Memorial Arena for an afternoon bout with the Buckaroos. Their next home game is New Year's Day with the Rockets once more their opponents.

In the original OJHL schedule there was a game set for Christmas Eve at the Civic Arena with Vernon playing the Buckaroos but this has been cancelled and put ahead to Tuesday, January 7.

### Game Summary

**First Period:** 1. Vernon, Sherk (MacKay) 3:30; 2. Vernon, Stein (Sherk) 6:03; 3. Kamloops, Owen (unassisted) 6:45; 4. Vernon, Rogan (Stein, Sherk) 15:07; 5. Vernon, Stein (Rogan) 18:10; 6. Kamloops, Owen (Steinke) 19:27. Penalties — Rinaldi (roughing) 14:54; Nuyens (tripping) 19:13.

**Second Period:** 7. Vernon, Rogan (Stein) 5:17; 8. Kamloops, Richards (unassisted) 16:51; 9. Vernon, Stein (Sherk, Nuyens) 17:39. Penalties—Steinke, McNeil (high sticking) 1:59; Harrison (tripping) 7:10; Stephen (tripping) 15:04.

**Third Period:** 10. Kamloops, Begg (E. Shishido, Rodgers) 7:37; 11. Kamloops, Richards (unassisted) 7:51; 12. Vernon, McNeil (Litzenberger) 11:04; 13. Vernon, Sherk (Stein, Nuyens) 12:10. Penalties — Steinke (elbowing) 17:11.

### Shots—

Woodward	6	11	7	— 24
Budarick	16	8	7	— 31

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