

Rockets Sizzle Closer To Title

Blaze Past Blades 5-2 To Open 12-Point Lead

KAMLOOPS 5, VERNON 2

Kamloops Rockets, fierily bedecked in spanking new red uniforms, sizzled their way to within a game of cinching their second Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League title Tuesday.

Pushing the thermometer to 212 Fahrenheit with an all-out display of power in the final period the Rockets roared to a 5-2 victory to leave their hapless hosts, Vernon Blades, in smoking rubble.

The win, their 21st of the season, hoisted them 12 full points ahead of idle Kelowna Buckaroos in second place. Is was also their fifth triumph in a row and the second successive time, after numerous frustrating failures, that they had bested the Blades on Civic Arena ice.

With just seven more games left in their regular season itinerary the Rockets have all but sewed up first place in the OJHL. They may have already won the bundle if the league, due to playoff time limitations, decides to cut off the regular schedule prematurely as they did last year.

Good Game

Tuesday night's game here was good hockey to watch and the Blades, though losing, pleased the 160 or so fans on the scene by providing a good share of it.

The Blades more than matched the fire of the Rockets over the first two periods, holding them to a 1-1 tie in the opening canto and only trailing by a 3-2 score after second period hostilities had ceased.

But in the third period the Blades' spirited blaze turned to ashes, as did their hopes of another upset victory, when the Rockets swooshed off the pad for two more unanswered goals.

It wasn't that the Blues quit trying in the final 20 minutes. They did their damndest but what can you accomplish if your tongue's dangling down below your knee-caps from exhaustion.

Because that was the case. The Blades were 'plumb tuckered out' from skating furiously with Kenny Stewart's missilemen for two acts, and had no poop for the finale.

Consider, if you please: the Blades had 11 players Tuesday, the Rockets the maximum 15, including a starry newcomer from Williams Lake, Paul Levens. At first sight this doesn't look too startling, the Blades have faced these odds before and won.

Two Ailing

But it just so happened that Tuesday night two of these 11 were hardly fit to play. Corky Agar, under the weather with a 'flu bug, played the first two periods and even scored a goal but finally had to call it quits and missed the third period entirely. Allan Rogan was back in his first game after suffering a broken toe and was only able to operate at half speed.

This left nine healthy players. And putting nine Blades against 15 super-charged Rockets is like spitting at a typhoon, friend.

Diminutive centre Eric Shishido paced the Kamloops attack with two goals which kept him out in front in the league scoring race. He now has 52 points on 22 goals and 30 assists.

Alternate pivot Murray Owen triggered what proved to be the winner late in the second period and Dale Sandyke and Larry Roberge came through with singles for insurance in the third. Eddie Begg picked up three assists.

The ailing Agar scored for Vernon in the first period and Bobby Stein, who missed innumerable chances around the Rocket net, clicked in the second period. It was Stein's 26th goal of the season, putting him into the league lead with Kamloop's Roberge and Brian Fourn.

Both goal-tenders, Dennis Taylor for Vernon and Kamloop's Harvey Budarick, came up with stellar efforts, particularly Taylor. The young ex-Midget blocked 27, Budarick 26.

Three Penalties

Referee Alex Kashuba had

little work to do, only three penalties being issued. Two were to Vernon's Dave MacKay and one to Rocketeer Rick McShane.

In the first ten minutes of play, with any luck, the Blades should have taken about a 4-0 lead as they let loose a constant fusillade at the Rocket goal. Numerous shots hit a post, Stein deked Budarick completely out on one play only to see the puck slip off his stick past four feet of open net, Buck Sherk and Gordie Nuyens drove in shot after shot, most of them hitting assorted padding, sticks, etc.

Finally Agar, on a beautiful set up by Ike Coulter, picked a corner from the left side to draw first blood at 8:38.

Shishido tied it with his first goal at 15:08, rapping in a 30-footer from dead centre with Begg assisting.

A minute and 15 seconds into the middle frame Shishido edged the Rockets up 2-1 on a fancy play engineered by Bill Steinke and Begg.

Stein Replies

Stein replied at 7:35 with one of his customary low, hard bullets, breaking in fast on Budarick with an inch-perfect relay from Nuyens.

The Blades had a few more good scoring chances in the

second period but, alas, it was the Rockets who blinked the light, Owen connecting from Roberge at close range.

Kamloops' last two goals in the final period were masterpieces of precision. Sandyke struck first at 1:40, sifting in to blast Begg's rebound from the left side before Taylor had a chance to recover. Then, on a two-on-one situation, Roberge and McShane played some fast patty-cake with the puck to get around the lone Blade defenceman and beat Taylor, Roberge doing the honors.

The remaining 10 minutes of the game was nothing but a cat-and-mouse affair with the still-fresh felines from Kamloops passing circles around Vernon's fagged "meeces" to run out the clock.

The Blades take to the ice again Saturday night when they have a go at the Buckaroos in Kelowna. Their next home encounter, the following Tuesday, has Kelowna back here.

Game Summary

First period: 1. Vernon, Agar (Coulter) 8:38. 2. Kamloops, E. Shishido (Begg) 15:08. Penalty—MacKay (tripping) 18:24.

Second period: 3. Kamloops, E. Shishido (Steinke, Begg) 1:15. 4. Vernon, Stein (Nuyens) 7:35. 5. Kamloops, Owen (Roberge) 18:40. Penalty—McShane (holding) 9:59.

Third period: 6. Kamloops, Sandyke (Begg) 1:40. 7. Kamloops, Roberge (McShane) 9:50. Penalty—MacKay (hooking) 17:10.

Shots: Taylor 8 7 12—27
Budarick 10 11 5—26

60 Expected

Entries Pouring In For BC 'Spiel

Entries for the British Columbia Curling Bonspiel to be held in Vernon February 3 to 8, are pouring in and the committee in charge predicts a total of 60 for the big 'spiel.

Eight events are on the program with prizes of over \$2,500 offered. And the feature event, of course, will be the Provincial Playdowns which will follow the running off of the regular events.

The seven zone champions from the almost 40 affiliated clubs in the Kootenays, Okanagan, Cariboo, and Yukon will join with winners from the "A," "B," and "C" events

to decide the champion eligible to meet the lower mainland winner for the provincial title.

Nick Marsh, well known curler of Kamloops, has been appointed drawmaster for the 'spiel and B.C. Curling Association president Ken Kindard of Vernon will oversee it, assisted by his committee of Max DesBrisay, Chapman Camp; Walter Hobbs, Kelowna; Lance Merson, Trail; Walt Toews, West Summerland; Al Engstrom, Prince George; Bill Leamon, Trail; Nick Marsh, Kamloops; Walter Yeo, Terrace; and Lionel Stokes, Whitehorse, Yukon.

The annual general meeting of the BCCA will be held prior to the start of the provincial curling 'spiel, on February 2. Likely to come before this meeting is the suggestion that zone winners in the bonspiel events be not allowed to advance beyond the first three events so that play in the provincial playdowns will not be held up.

Doug French of Vernon is heading an active directorate which is fast finalizing the many arrangements for the week-long 'spiel.

Royalites Top Sportsmen Bowling—Again?

It's getting to be quite a habit with Royalite Super Service, every week they end up in first place in the Sportsmen's Bowling League.

This week was no exception as they topped the Monday night league at Del-Mar Lanes with 45 points. Second were Vikings with 43 and in third Del-Mar with 42.

Gertie Koss bowled the Ladies' High Single, a 219, and Lorie Hahlweg scored a 581 to take the Ladies' High Triple.

Andy Ingram dominated the men's end of it, bowling the high single (295) and the high triple (664).

Robbers Roost came through with the team high single (1,049) and also the team high triple (2,934).

Team Standings: Royalite Super Service 45, Vikings 43, Del-Mar 42, Limbos 37, North-Enders 33, Noca 32, Woolworths 30, Robbers Roost 27, Ho Bos 19.

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One-Two In Scoring

Everywhere Eric Goes, Larry's Right Behind

Like Bo Peep's sheep, everywhere that Eric Shishido goes Larry Roberge is sure to follow.

And it's been this way for the past three weeks with Shishido, slick young centre for Kamloops Rockets, leading the Okanagan Junior 'A' Hockey League scoring race and fellow Rocket Roberge right behind him by never more than one or two points.

Last week Shishido, according to statistics, had 48 points and Roberge 47. This week? You guessed it, Shishido is still in front with 52 points on 20 goals and 30 assists, and Roberge is right on his tail with 51 on 26 goals and 25 assists.

Not far back and still threatening to disrupt this exclusive two-player rivalry are Kamloops' winger Brian Fourt with 49 points and Kelowna Buckaroos' John Strong with 48.

Two Vernon Blade marksmen are also well established in the Top Ten. Bobby Stein, with three goals and an assist in the last two games, has edged into seventh spot

over Kelowna's Harvey Stolz with a total of 42 points. Stein shares the league goal-scoring lead with Fourt and Roberge of Kamloops, each having 26.

Corky Agar, since his return from Christmas holidays has also started to climb back into the top echelon and now holds down tenth spot with 36 points on 20 goals and 16 assists. He has scored three goals and assisted once in the last three games.

In the goal-tending department Kamloops' Lee Simpson still holds a slight edge over stand-in Harvey Budarick in average goals allowed. Simpson has a 3.62 average, Budarick a 3.64 mark.

Gordie Nuyens, Vernon's terrible tempered defence-man, has topped the century mark in the penalty parade with a total of 102 minutes spent in the penitence pen. Second is Rocket blueliner Bill Steinke with 71 minutes in misdemeanors.

In league standings Kamloops holds a next to insurmountable lead over Kelowna. Up to Tuesday it was 12 points but it could be 14 depending on the outcome of the Rocket-Buckaroo game Wednesday night in Kamloops.

League Scoring (Top 20)

	G	A	P
Shishido (K)	22	30	52
Roberge (K)	26	25	51
Fourt (K)	26	23	49
Strong (Kel)	22	26	48
Richards (K)	16	29	45
Sandyke (K)	24	20	44
Stein (V)	26	16	42
Stolz (Kel)	23	16	39
Bulach (Kel)	15	24	39
Agar (V)	20	16	36
Owen (K)	21	14	35
Begg (K)	11	23	34
Strong (Kel)	11	23	34
Steinke (K)	7	27	34
McShane (K)	12	17	29
Rinaldi (K)	5	24	29
Kasubuchi (Kel)	14	14	28
Sherk (V)	12	15	27
Verna (Kel)	16	10	26
Schnepf (Kel)	18	7	25

Goalkeepers Averages

	GP	GA	AV
Simpson (K)	16	58	3.62
Budarick (K)	14	51	3.64
Robinson (Kel)	25	120	4.80
Woodward (V)	15	148	5.92
Taylor (V)	6	44	7.33

All Comers Tournament

ems failed to win any of their four games to end up on the bottom.

The Panthers look particularly inept in the tournament, especially in their shooting.

The Red Devils walked over them, 55-30, Friday night and on Saturday they fell 34-23 to Salmon Arm and 27-21 to St. Ann's, clubs they are quite capable of beating.

Their only victory was over Immaculata Dons, a 35-24 decision that prevented the Kelowna school from getting a tie for top spot with Kamloops.

In action this week the Panthers are set to go against Summerland and Salmon Arm. For Vernon, this is the first meeting with Summerland this season.