

Bucs Given Scare By Spunky Blades

Lowly Vernon Jrs. Force Overtime Before Dying

KELOWNA 5, VERNON 4

Lowly Boston Bruins rocked the professional hockey world by toppling Toronto's mighty Maple Leafs 11-0 Saturday and equally humble Vernon Blades the same night sent a shiver through the Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League by almost upsetting Kelowna Buckaroos for their first road victory of the season.

Almost—but not quite. The Buckaroos, trailing 4-3 in the third period with defeat but ten minutes away, faced the reality of their unfamiliar straits in time and surged back to take a tight 5-4 overtime decision and keep the Blades' spotless and winless road record intact.

Winger Terry Kasubuchi, who has been a particular nemesis to the Blades in recent games, tipped in a pass from Richard Bulach at the four-minute mark of the overtime session to bag it for the Bucks.

Earlier Harvey Stolz had locked the score at 4-4 when, with Kelowna a man short of all things, he snared a loose puck on a break-away to beat Brian Woodward.

Best Road Game

Yes, the Blades got axed again—for the 24th time this season—but in losing there was no shame because without a particle of doubt they played their best road game of the year Saturday night.

They played the kind of hockey they have usually only shown, and rarely at that, on home ice. Hockey that's capable of matching strides with either Kelowna or Kamloops.

Hockey that'll have to be reckoned with come playoff time in February when league standings are kaput and the chips are down.

Twice the Buckaroos had to fight from behind Saturday. The Blades, at one time, held a 2-0 lead as late as the second period but the Bucks recovered with an unanswered hat-trick to take a 3-2 edge early in the third.

Then the Blues recouped with another sudden pair and the Bucks found themselves looking down the gun barrels again. Alas, for the Blades, they made another comeback and this time they made it stick.

Stolz was Kelowna's big boomer, scoring two goals including that all-important third period equalizer. Singles were notched by Doug Chisholm, Terry Strong and, of

course, that bothersome Mr. Kasubuchi.

Scoring for the Blades was defenceman Jim Stephen and wingers Allan Rogan, Dale Sorochnik and Buck Sherk. A fifth goal was tallied by centreman Ike Coulter in the second period but it was disallowed, the whistle having already blown on a penalty call.

Vernon had the edge in the penalty parade but were out-shot 39-29, Woodward doing a spectacular job in the Blade nets, particularly on break-away situations.

The first period was hard-checking and close to the vest but Stephen finally got through to flash the red light for Vernon, slapping in a hard bullet, unassisted.

In the second period the Blades upped their lead to 2-0 on a real "weirdo" if there ever was one. The Vernon squad was short-handed at the time and the Bucks were applying tremendous pressure with their power play platoon out in full force.

On one particular scoring sally by Kelowna Woodward came far out his net to cover up, slipped, fell and lost possession of the puck. Stolz picked it up and came screaming in with a shot at the empty net. It missed, took a big bounce off the back boards to the blueline where Allan Rogan was all alone in the clear. Zippo! he was gone and had the puck in the net before Kelowna goalie "Red" Robinson could wink an eyelash.

Chisholm Scored

Chisholm put the Bucks on the goal trail for the first time shortly after this shocking reverse of fortune, drilling in one of his ever dangerous golf shots.

Then Terry, the younger member of the Strong duet, clicked on a pass from Ken Kivisto to tie it. Coulter, with Kelowna two men short, followed up with a power goal from Corky Agar only to see it go for nought.

Stolz and Bulach started off the third period with a bang, stick-handling through the entire Blade aggregation to score, Stolz doing the honors. This made it 3-2 and it looked like curtains for the Blues at last.

Not so, said Sorochnik and Sherk, who promptly put the Vernon crew, 11 strong, back in the saddle and in spitting distance of an upset with two quickies.

Then Stolz gave the Blades a taste of their own medicine by scoring while the Bucks were short-handed and under the squeeze.

Kasubuchi's tip-in settled the argument for good and all but the Blades came inches-close to salvaging a 5-5 tie with a furious rally in the dying seconds of overtime.

Rangers Rock Hawks, Habs To Strengthen Hold On 3rd

Rangers pulled off two big victories last week to grab a firm hold on third place and also lay threatening claim on second place in the Bantam minor hockey House League.

Thursday the Rangers knocked off rival Black Hawks 3-1 to crack a third place tie and Saturday they dumped lowly Canadiens 4-1 to jump four points up on the Hawks and within a point of second-running Red Wings.

In the other Saturday contest, Bruins, who wrapped up first place weeks ago, picked up their 14th win of the season against only one defeat by downing fifth place Maple Leafs 4-2. They have 28 points, 11 more than second place Wings with 17.

Bob Mayer rattled in two goals to lead the surging Rangers over their neck-and-neck foes, the Hawks, on Thursday. Mike Sigalet added a single goal and Ken Tarnow was credited with one assist. Countering for the Hawks was Randy Seabrook, assisted by Wayne Balcombe.

Saturday Ken Tarnow was the big gun for the Rangers, firing in two goals and adding an assist while Mike Sigalet scored and assisted once and Allan Alexander sniped

David Myles were the play-makers. For Leafs John Ross scored unassisted and David Mitchell clicked from Larry Fisher.

Next Thursday sees the start of the Okanagan-Mainline Bantam playoffs with the Vernon Bantam All-Stars hosting Kelowna in the first game of a best of three series at 6:30 p.m. at the Civic Arena. Following this game at 8:30 p.m. the Black Hawks and Red Wings go at it in regular House League play.

There are no House League games scheduled for Saturday, January 25 but all Bantam players are asked to be at the arena ready to play and take part in Minor Hockey Night which starts at 6:30 p.m.

The second game of the scheduled best of three Valley series between Vernon and Kelowna takes place the same day in Kelowna at 10 a.m. A third game, if necessary, would be played back here in Vernon.

Team Standings

	G	W	L	T	P
Bruins	15	14	1	0	28
Red Wings	14	8	5	1	17
Rangers	15	7	6	2	17
Black Hawks	14	5	7	2	12
Maple Leafs	15	5	9	1	11

Blades Battle Buckaroos Here Tuesday Night

If Vernon Blades can continue where they left off Saturday night down in Kelowna, local fans should be in for junior hockey action at its best Tuesday night when the Vernon squad hosts the Buckaroos in a return engagement at the Civic Arena.

The Blades, fired-up to a degree they have rarely reached this season, waged a titanic struggle with the Buckaroos for three periods Saturday, forcing an overtime tie before giving up the ghost, 5-4.

This was accomplished with a minimum of players, 11, and a maximum of guts, go and spirit—playoff spirit.

There is not much at stake as far as advancing themselves up the Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League ladder because they have already clinched last place but the Blades will certainly be out to up-end the Bucks in this, the last Civic Arena appearance of the Kelowna crew until the playoffs in February.

Game time Tuesday is 8 p.m. Lucky number programs will be on sale as usual at the door.