

# Blades' Worst Season At An End... At Last

## Lowly Jrs. Bow 7-4 To Bucks In Final '63-64 OJHL Fixture

KELOWNA 7, VERNON 4

Vernon Blades finally and mercifully put an end to the worst season of their Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League career Friday night.

Last rites were held in Kelowna Memorial Arena with the hosting Buckaroos nailing down the Blades' coffin lid to a tuneful but funereal 7-4 beat.

It was the final game of the regular 1963-64 season and the Blades, bless'em, finished up with the following record: seven wins and 27 losses in 34 games for 14 points, 22 behind the second place Buckaroos.

Although the Blades had fewer points in their first season of operation (1961-62), 13, on six wins and a tie, they only had 21 losses. This year's 27 is an all-time high in horrific hockey for Vernon's perennial losers.

Their "best" season was in 1962-63 when they ended up with a nine win—22 loss record but only through the good graces of Penticton Junior Vees who happened to

be everybody's fat patsy that year.

But do not despair, oh, long suffering fan! The Blades still have a chance to write off their wretched record this season—in the playoffs, starting Wednesday night, February 5, in Kamloops.

Although the Blades might have liked to close their season on a winning note Friday, little was expected in the way of upsets. Not with nine players anyway, which was all coaches Jim Moro and Hap Schaefer could scratch up for the trip to Kelowna.

Missing were defencemen D. MacKay and Gordie Nuyens who were otherwise occupied in Winter Carnival activity. This left two to beef the blueline, Jim Stephen and recent returnee Wilf Tantrum. Plus six forwards and a goal-tender.

Mighty slim pickins', pardner, when you're faced with a fully stocked roster of 16 in Buckaroo buckskins, including three first stringers back from suspensions.

This isn't to say the Blades didn't make a battle out of it. They did, for a time, scrambling back from an apparently hopeless 5-1 deficit with three unanswered goals in the third period to come within an ace of spitting in the Buckaroos' eyes at level distance.

However the Buckaroos were quick in turning thumbs down on this situation and wasted little time salting away their 17th victory of the season in the final four minutes of the game with two more insurance tallies, courtesy Richard Bullock and John Strong.

### Strong's Pesky

The peskiest pair of Bucks as far as the Blades were concerned had to be the brothers Strong, Terry and the above mentioned John. Terry capped a brilliant rookie season by scoring three goals and assisting once and older frere John flashed the red light once and set up all three of Terry's tallies.

Other Kelowna singles were notched by Bullock, Roy Ueda and defenceman Ken Hokazono.

Corky Agar ended a long goal-scoring slump by pacing the Blade attack with two goals and one assist. Bobby Stein and Ike Coulter took care of the other two. For Stein it was his 29th of the season, leaving him just short of 50 points in league scoring with 49.

The game had its rough moments, for players and officials alike. Vernon's Dale Sorochnik went at it hot and heavy with Buckaroo captain Harvey Stolz and they each drew "fighting fives." Tantrum and John Strong collected roughing calls as did Vernon goalie Brian Woodward, Agar and Kelowna's Bullock and Don Evans.

And linesman Johnny Culos got his lumps, literally. In the second period an unintentional though well aimed puck caromed off his head into the crowd and caused some anxious moments for referee Tony Winichuk and linesman Peter Munoz. Culos recovered, only to get struck in the hand with another shot later in the period.

Speaking of shooting the Blades were edged out in this department, 34-21. The two teams each took eight of 16 penalties.

Agar gave Vernon a quick lead in the first period but Kelowna came back on goals by Ueda, Hokazono and a pair by Terry Strong. Young

Winner of the Playdown, expected to run from Thursday through to Saturday, will then advance against the rival Pacific Coast Curling Association champion for the B.C. title and entry into the Dominion Brier Playdowns at Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island in March.

Of the 46 rinks entered, 12 are from Vernon including John Corner, Bill Clark, Doug French, Tom Foord, Sonny Hall, Ken Kinnard, Siggie Ogasawara, Al Pogge, Miller, George Morrow, Willie Schmidt, Harley Shockey and Doug Wetherill.

The seven zone winners competing are: Buzz McGibney of Trail, Kootenay West; Eric Bisgrove of Kimberley, Kootenay East; Dick Topping of Osoyoos, South Okanagan; Joe McKinnon of Kamloops, North Okanagan; Al Harris of Quesnel, East Central; Gus Levins of Kitimat, West Central; Henry Arthur of Whitehorse, Yukon Territory.

Although the first draws were run off this morning and early this afternoon the grand opening of the week-long bonspiel wasn't scheduled until 3:45 p.m. to allow late-arriving curlers to be present. Mayor Ellwood Rice was on hand at the opening ceremonies held in the Civic Arena.

Chairman of the bonspiel is Lawrence Ferguson and secretaries are Georgie Cail and Hazel Price. Drawmaster is Nick Marsh of Kamloops.

Terry made it 5-1 with a single in the sandwich session, then the Blades blazed alive with counters by Coulter, Agar and Stein. But the Bucks soon quit the scene thanks to Bullock and John Strong.

### Game Summary

First period: 1. Vernon, Agar (Coulter, Tantrum) 6:33. 2. Kelowna, Ueda (Verna) 12:58. 3. Kelowna, Hokazono (Bullock, Evans) 14:40. 4. Kelowna, T. Strong (Stolz, J. Strong) 16:16. 5. Kelowna, T. Strong (J. Strong) 16:56. Penalties — Stephen (tripping) 9:56; Kasubuchi (kneeing) 12:23.

Second period: 6. Kelowna, T. Strong (J. Strong, Stolz) 3:05. Penalties — Tantrum (high sticking) 2:25; Tantrum, J. Strong (roughing) 4:12; Schnepf (interference) 5:41; Tantrum (elbowing) 10:00; Chisholm (tripping) 13:34; Woodward, Agar, Evans (roughing) Bullock (double roughing minor) 17:20 Stein (hooking) 18:25.

Third period: 7. Vernon, Coulter (Sorochnik) 9:01. 8. Vernon, Agar (Sorochnik, Rogan) 11:17. 9. Vernon, Stein (Stephen, Agar) 16:14. 10. Kelowna, Bullock (Kasubuchi) 16:39. 11. Kelowna, J. Strong (T. Strong, Verna) 18:02. Penalties — T. Strong (elbowing) 0:31; Sorochnik, Stolz (fighting) 18:45.

Shots: Woodward 17 10 7—34 Robinson 5 5 11—21

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