

# Grudge Series Opens Tonight

## Razor Sharp Blades Face Fizzling Rocket Squadron

Will history repeat itself? Will Vernon Blades once again send Kamloops Rockets spiraling down to inglorious defeat? Or will the Rockets rise up to wreak revenge?

Tune in tonight to the latest episode of the thrilling hockey saga starring the Blades and the Rockets and you'll get your answer.

Starting at 8:30 p.m. sharp the two arch-rivals go at it no holds barred at Vernon Civic Arena in what just has to be the bitterest grudge match of the Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League season so far.

The Rockets, currently soaring along in first place atop the OJHL, are out to erase the memory of that 8-2 humiliation perpetrated by the Blades three weeks ago here in Vernon.

And the Blades, way back in third but looking stronger with every game, are fixing to silence any cries of "fluke" that may have arisen on the heels of their stunning upset.

If either team fails to prove its particular point tonight they'll get another chance Sunday afternoon in Kamloops.

It's a series that any

true blue puck fan just can't afford to miss out on, be he from Vernon or Kamloops.

On their record in league play to date the Rockets would seem to have the edge but don't you believe it.

Ever since that 8-2 loss (they hate being reminded of it) the Rockets have been getting their lumps with embarrassing regularity. Although they momentarily recouped by clipping Kelowna Buckaroos twice, they got jolted right out of their long Johns when lowly Penticton-Summerland Broncos hammered them 4-2 and 5-3 in a back-to-back series last weekend.

Now they're right back where it all started on that memorable night of Nov. 14.

Back here at the Civic Arena against a club that has yet to taste defeat since giving the Rockets their due.

The Blades go into tonight's action, boasting

two wins, three ties and a share of third place in OJHL standings.

And if they continue to play the kind of hockey they've exhibited since mid-November the Blades could well make it six straight without a loss.

"If we check them as closely as we did last time and keep them bottled up in their own zone we can take them," states coach Hap Schaefer. "That's the only way to beat them. If you let them loose in your own end they'll kill you."

The Blades have the personnel to do the job. Between the bone jarring body work of Jim Stephen and the smooth poke-checking of Gary Koski the Rockets will have a hard time pushing an attack beyond the blue line.

Then up front there's pesky varmints like Ralph Litzenberger and Ike Coulter to complicate matters even more with their fore-checking.

The Blades have not only been checking well of late, they've developed some solid scoring punch as well.

The big line of Buck Sherk, Bobby Stein and Dale Sorochnik has collected 25 points in the last five games, made up of 11 goals and 14 assists.

The second line of Litzenberger, Coulter and Rogan hasn't been idle either. In the same five-game period they have amassed 11 points on seven goals and four assists. In addition this trio has done a stand-out job of penalty-killing.

There's been noticeable improvement in Norm Schiman's goaltending too. Before that five-game period his average was well over five goals a game, very close to six in fact. Now he has brought it down to a respectable 4.61.

While the Blades and Rockets snap at each other's throats the Broncos and Buckaroos tangle in another two-game series starting tonight in Kelowna and ending Saturday in Summerland.

The outcome of the two series could leave either Vernon or Penticton alone in the league cellar.

## 16 Vernon Skaters Enter

## Kelowna Hosts Annual Figure Skating Finals

Vernon Figure Skating Club members will be competing in the 12th annual Okanagan-Mainline figure skating championships hosted by the Kelowna Figure Skating Club on Saturday and Sunday, this weekend, in the Kelowna Memorial Arena.

Entries total 185 for the 27 events with 107 skaters participating.

Lynne Sawicki, silver medalist, Vernon club's highest test skater will be defending her Okanagan-Mainline senior ladies title won last year in Penticton, and in Summerland

Neilson are pupils of Miss Busch.

Sandy Ryan, 17, silver medalist, will be competing in the Novice Ladies' singles. Miss Ryan has two silver dances to complete for her silver dance medal and has been a Vernon club member for the past 10 years.

Also entered in Novice Ladies is Jo Watson and Diane King, bronze medalists, working on their fourth figure test. Both are Miss Busch's pupils. April Prentice, bronze medalist, age 11 will try for the Juvenile Ladies' singles title.