

Battling Blades Stretch Series To Limit

Force 7th Game With Comeback Push Sunday

VERNON 7, KELOWNA 5

Vernon Blades, after a whole season of frustration, finally rode Kelowna Buckaroos down to defeat on Vernon ice Sunday. It couldn't have come at a better, or more critical, time.

Behind three games to two in their best of seven Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League semi-final playoffs series with the Buckaroos the Blades had to win this one or else. No ifs, ands or maybes.

So they won it and in stirring comeback fashion as usual, obliterating a dangerous 4-2 Kelowna lead with five big goals in the third period to send a near capacity crowd of 2000 rooters into hysteria.

The victory forced necessity for a seventh and deciding playoff game be-

tween these two bitter rivals. It will be played Wednesday night at 8:30 p.m. in Kelowna Memorial Arena.

The winner will meet Kamloops Rockets in another best of seven series for the OJHL championship. The Rockets won their semi-final with Penticton-Summerland Broncos with a 5-3 decision in the seventh game Saturday night in Kamloops.

It was a Penticton-Summerland castoff who sparked the Blades to their



MARVIN MAIER

... sparks rally.

eleventh hour triumph Sunday afternoon.

Fast skating Marvin Maier, who was released by the Broncos and picked up by the Blades back in November, drilled in three goals in by far the finest individual performance of the game.

Allan Rogan added a pair, including the winner while singles were chalked up by

Ike Coulter and Bobby Stein. Coulter also picked up two assists as did Buck Sherk and defenceman Gary Koski, who made the scene in Blade livery after a week-long absence.

Kelowna scoring was spread around between Doug Bullock, David Couves, Terry Kasubuchi, Dave Cousins and John Strong. Norbert Wildemann hit for a pair of assists.

The Blades played rather ragged, uninspired hockey in the first period and it showed on the scoreboard: Kelowna three, Vernon one.

In the second the Blue and White machine got rolling in earnest but, though they peppered 17 shots at Kelowna's Mike Gaal, they still trailed by two going into the final 20 minutes.

Four unanswered Vernon goals did the trick in that fateful third and, though the Bucks managed one reply, an insurance tally into an empty Kelowna net in the dying seconds prevented any opportunity for the Cowboys to pull this game out of the fire as they had done the Sunday previous.

With the return of Koski the Blades' roster looked half decent for the first time in three games. Both Koski and Dale Sorochnik helped Jim Stephenman the blueline while serving stints up front as well.

The Bucks were also well padded with the re-appearance of Gordie Schnepf in a red sweater. Schnepf, who now attends UBC, was a star with Kelowna last season.

Rogan tipped in a pass from Coulter at 1:31 of the first period to open scoring but the Cowboys clicked three times in succession, courtesy Bullock, Couves and Kasubuchi, to toss a monkeywrench into the works.

A fourth Kelowna counter by Cousins early in the second really put a dark complexion on things but Maier livened local hopes somewhat with a picture goal at 7:58 from Koski and Sherk.

Starting at 4:47 of the third came the Big Push. Coulter converted a Koski-Rogan relay into paydirt, Maier struck for a pair of rapid-fire markers to lift

the Blades into the forefront and Rogan again connected from Coulter for what turned out to be the clincher.

Strong tallied for the Bucks at the 15-minute mark and in the final minute coach Don Culley

pulled out all stops including his goalie to strive for the equalizer but Stein sent a shot streaking down the ice with two seconds to play and school was out for Kelowna.

On the game the Blades had most of the play. They

outshot Kelowna 36-29. The game was a bit of a roughie with 15 penalties being assessed, 10 to the Bucks.

A large Vernon contingent is expected to make the trek to Kelowna Wednesday night for the all-important seventh game.



Takes 'A' Event

Willie Wins It All