

Blades Eye Kamloops As Way Out Of Cellar

OJHL Losers Battle In Crucial Doubleheader

This weekend will make or break Vernon Junior Blades as far as the early rush placings in the Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League goes.

Vernon plays a double header this weekend against the only other losers in Okanagan League play, Kamloops Kraft Kings.

However, Vernon and Kamloops haven't met as yet so there is one important issue at stake this weekend as far as the critics who like to make rash early judgments are concerned.

The question to be resolved is who will finish last in the league this year. While admitting there is hardly enough league play under anyone's belt to judge, trends can be noted from the opening game.

At the present time Pen-ticton and Kelowna seem to have the nod for first and second — at least neither have lost yet.

Vernon and Kamloops share the other end of the stick—neither have won a league game yet.

Unless they split—one team is going to come out of the weekend with a four point bulge over the other who will be slated for the dismal depths of the league cellar all season if past trends mean anything.

Saturday night Vernon goes to Kamloops for the crucial first test. If they can win here half the battle is won and they will have a psychological advantage heading for home ice.

Make no mistake about it. The Blades are out to head for the Vernon game

Sunday afternoon in third place in League standings by virtue of a win Saturday night.

The Sunday game is set for two o'clock and it is hoped a large crowd will be on hand to cheer the Blades along.

Coach Hap Schaffer advises the boys will be going all out to get some points to their credit in the league standings.

"They really want this one badly," he said. The Vernon team is noted for their hustling and now that they are in increasingly better condition as ice time this season lengthens should be able to forecheck to good effect.

Blades announced some line-up changes for the weekend. They will dress forwards Ed Spelay and Ted Palm for the Saturday game as well as their two recent imports Ivan Melnosky and Gil Morrow.

Melinosky is a speedster

from Quesnel who last weekend showed he can skate with the best.

Morrow is a solid defencemen also from Quesnel who adds depth where the Blades most need it — in their rather porous Blue line squad.

Dale Sorochnik and Bob Stein come to mind first and foremost when scoring is mentioned. The smooth skating Stein and the hard working Sorochnik are annually the two most effective scoring forwards the Blades ice.

Vern Colley and Rick Riley, two juvenile forwards off last year's B.C. Championship squad are quick in making the adjust-

ment to Junior hockey and are looking better each time out.

Rookie defenceman Gord Clark expects to be over ailments left as a memento of the Moose Jaw game in time for full duty this weekend.

Blades will not dress import center Patty Phillips who is out of town for the weekend.

Coach Hap Schaffer cannily announced Blades might have "more surprises" by the time the weekend rolls around.

"We are in contact with a couple of boys" was all that could be prodded from the close-mouthed brass of the Blades.

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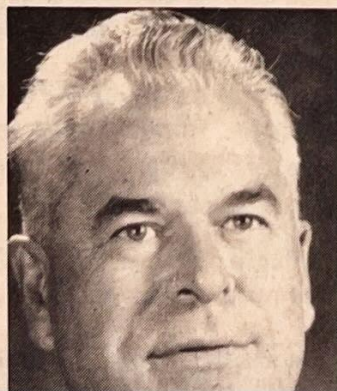
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