

# Blades To Rebuild In Try For Playoffs

## Understaffed Blades Plagued With Injuries

Vernon Blades are out to build a team that will be hitting full stride at playoff time.

In a release from the new management of the club, Blades were reported not hoping to finish third — a realistic statement considering they are nine games off the pace — but are aiming for a berth in the Okanagan League finals.

Right now the team is having player difficulty insofar as numbers are concerned.

With a bare minimum in the fold when they took over this week the new executive are immediately faced with acute player shortage.

To date Gord Clarke is still sitting out a suspension that from the sounds of

things could stretch out into quite a retirement if rumors can be counted. Official word is expected late today on the decision over Clark who allegedly belted a Kamloops player over the head with his stick last weekend.

Vern Colley is expected to be out a month with a badly bruised shoulder.

Star centerman Bob Stein is nursing a sore chest but expects to be in the lineup for this weekend's action.

Dale Sorochuk leaves for Simon Fraser University at the end of this month.

The juveniles that have been padding out the lineup all year will revert to their

own division come the end of the year.

All this adds up to a vigorous recruiting program by the new management. One bright light has broken the list of bad breaks however, Bill Nixon, the hard checking forward with the B.C. Champions Juveniles of last year has come out of retirement and is fast whipping himself into shape.

Some of the regular team members are taking advantage of time made available in the morning to get in a lot more ice time and work themselves into much better condition as well.

Maurice Wernicke has suddenly turned into a good man to have around the opposition's nets. Always a tough aggressive player, Wernicke scored his first two goals of the year in last weekend's action after being put on a new line.

Ivan Melanoski is another good feature in the lineup this weekend. The speedster from Quesnel adds a lot of hustle to the attack and was missed in recent games. Melanoski has been sidelined with a leg injury.

Coach John Zahara admits that feelers have been put out to nab players from other junior teams in Western Canada. However, he said in an interview last night that if there were local boys who wanted to play they were more than

welcome to turn out. In fact, local players will be given first refusal on open positions with the club.

Vernon will play two away games this weekend Friday night in Kelowna and Saturday night in Kamloops.

Blades will dress Juvenile players to fill out their roster for the games. Heading the list will be Allan Southward, a speed artist who has scored four goals in two games with the junior club.

Also dressing will be Graham Elliott, a hard hitting defenceman who looked great in last weekend's game, and King Cam who scored in his first junior game.

However, come January and they will be officially back in the Juvenile ranks to stay. And rightly so as they are strong contenders to retain their Juvenile provincial crown. Not one of the Juveniles who has jumped to Junior for a few games has shown he has the ability to stick around even though the game is a trifle faster.

Vernon hockey fans should mark off December 27 on the calendar as on that date 10 door prizes will be awarded to lucky patrons.

Following the last two home games of the Blades fans can rest assured they will get their money's worth of entertainment.

Game time on the 27th will be two o'clock.

## Lumby Climbs In NOHL Stats

Lumby Flying Frenchmen have begun one of their famous marches to the top of the North Okanagan Hockey League.

The red hot Lumby squad sizzled past league leading Grindrod Elks last Sunday to close the gap to four points while holding a game in hand over the Elks.

of Armstrong is second in this department with a highly respectable 2,40.

The up to date statistics have been released as follows:

	Standings						
	W	L	T	G	F	G	A
Grindrod	5	1	1	27	18	11	
Lumby ...	3	2	1	26	23	7	
Arm	3	3	0	16	14	6	