

NORTH SPORTS OKANAGAN



denis

feser

If you are a Vernon Blade fan and you travelled to Penticton Tuesday evening to bear witness to the 7-1 drubbing they received from the Broncos in the first game of the Okanagan Junior Hockey League semi-finals, you would probably agree that the most exciting thing about the mis-match was watching the guy on the cute little tractor with squeaky brakes flood the ice between periods.

And you found Wednesday that you were asking yourself, despite being a never-say-die puck fan who supports the home club right down to the last whistle, why you expect them to perform any differently in the playoffs than they have been all year. However, by this morning, you had talked yourself

right around the circuit and are convinced that the Blades not only will win tonight, but that they will sweep the series. Sure, and Santa Claus will buy North Vietnamese war bonds, Easter will fall on a Tuesday this year and Vernon will get the Okanagan Regional College.

Oh, to have a winner

Which means to say, if the series continues tonight the way it has thus far, junior hockey in Vernon should come to a halt sometime this Sunday afternoon.

It was a poor game in Penticton Tuesday evening. It was not good hockey. It was not even a good game of shinny. Yes. Blades tried harder because they were number three, but the Broncos displayed a special taste for skating just a little bit faster, and thusly, scored a few more goals.

What should be even less surprising is that they do all this. Look at the record. This past season the Blades were on the outside looking in at all the pretty candy. The only trouble was that Broncos owned the store.

For a while, about a

month back, the Penticton proprietor, George Stoll, was having trouble satisfying some of his players. And his chief shopkeeper, coach Jack Taggart, kept up a running battle with one of his players, captain Larry Palanio, as to who was really running the team.

For a while it looked as if Palanio, like Ron Rebelato, would walk out. It was reported that Terry Luxton, the built-like-a-bull right winger of the Pentictons, was out of a job and considered returning to Alberta. And Moe Hays, who just came back from the US pro golf tour walking miles a day as a caddy, wasn't expected.

The House that George built was, indeed, at the point of crumbling.

Then, a magic touch

Then, by some act of magic, miracle or luck, or a combination of all three, the Broncos jelled again, settled down and prepared themselves for the playoffs as a team. Tuesday night they proved they were ready.

Either they were ready and the Blades were not or they were not ready. One thing was certain though, the Blades definitely were not.

They struggled around like an uninvited guest just in from the cold but afraid to stand too close to the fire.

Tonight, as they are prone to say in junior hockey circles (especially around Vernon), is another day altogether. Word has it Blades can "get up" for at least one of the two remaining matches scheduled for Vernon Civic Arena. It would not force a third contest for the local coliseum but it would earn them a little more respect.

Whichever way you look at it, if Blades are going to win, they better win this evening. It's either that or inviting the guy with the funny little tractor to town Sunday afternoon to perform between periods.

Penticton here tonight, Sunday

Blades lose opener

Broncs-Bucks take to lead

The Vernon Junior Blades dropped the first game of the Okanagan Junior Hockey League "A" semi-finals 7-1 at Penticton Tuesday evening, but could even the series tonight when the Broncos invade Civic Arena for the second game of the best of seven affair.

The game tonight has been set for the special time of 8 p.m. one half hour earlier than the regular 8:30 starting time.

Meanwhile, at Kamloops last evening, the Kelowna Buckaroos took a two game lead in series "B" against

the Kraft Kings when they registered an 8-0 win. Bucks had won the initial contest 9-7 at Kelowna Monday night.

At Penticton, Blades appeared a step behind the play for the first two sessions and consequently trailed by scores of 4-0 and 6-0 after the first and second periods respectively.

OJHL scoring champion Gene Peacosh slammed in three goals for Broncos. Ray Picco authored two and singles came from Wayne Schaab and Terry Luxton.

Tom Serviss scored Vernon's single tally while try-

ing to pass the puck to Ivan Malinosky standing in front of the Penticton cage.

A total of 16 penalties were called, nine to Blades.

Coach Odie Lowe praised the line of Rick Reilly, Mike Perepolkin and Wayne Dye for their efforts. The young trio, which provided locals with their best two-way line, had the best luck skating with the Broncos.

All three youngsters will be in the line-up again this evening when the Broncos seek a short cut to the finals. Third game of the series will be played back in Penticton Saturday evening with the fourth returning to Vernon Civic Arena Sunday afternoon at 2:30 p.m.

Broncos 7, Blades 1

Summary—

First period—1. Pen, Picco (Palanio, Luxton) 3:42; 2. Pen, Peacosh (Palanio, Schaab) 7:17; 3. Pen, Picco (Hays, Luxton) 15:50; 4. Pen, Peacosh (Mowat) 19:45. Penalties—Williamson, Malinosky, Connors, Taggart, Williamson (misconduct).

Second period—5. Pen, Schaab (Peacosh) 10:45; 6. Pen, Luxton (Picco, Hays) 13:46. Penalties—Quechuck, Williamson, Elliott.

Third period—7. Ver, Serviss (unassisted) 6:46; 8. Pen, Peacosh (unassisted) 19:54. Penalties—Evans, Palanio and Smith, Elliott, Taggart and Williamson (majors), Taggart, Palanio (misconduct).

Basketball

Panthers to finals

Vernon Panthers will be one of eight teams slated for the Okanagan High School basketball finals at Penticton this weekend.

Panthers will join favored Kamloops Red Devils, champions for the last three years; Salmon Arm Golds and Penticton Lakers, who are expected to fight it out for the second valley berth to the B.C. fi-