



Happiness . . . is hockey

Having just turned 16, Gordie Merritt is the youngest member of this year's Vernon Essos hockey team. Called in to join the team from his home in Prince George, Merritt has shown constant improvement over the past few months. Lately he has started to show his checking, passing and scoring ability, and become a real asset to his team. The Essos see action Friday and Saturday this weekend with a home-and-home series against the Kelowna Buckaroos. Friday, the teams face off in Kelowna and return to Vernon for action Saturday.

From the Sports Desk

by WES RUSSELL

After last Saturday's performance by the Vernon Essos, it's time to pass along a few observations picked up from practice sessions and from previous games.

The Essos as a team lack the initiative and drive to win games. As a team, they refuse to workout to any degree during practice sessions. And, as a team, they're carrying too many lazy kids who are in Vernon for a holiday and nothing else.

Having dropped in to at least 10 different practices for various reasons I constantly observed that Jim Mowat is either absent or

spends most of the session in the dressing rooms... a fact that becomes very obvious every time he takes to the ice during a game.

Both goalies in my estimation could care less what happens to the team in this their final year. Instead of attempting to finish the season in a blaze of glory and carry away some happy memories, neither Gilroy or Alexander ever settle down to a serious practice for more than 5 minutes during a session.

Although Lawrence Quechuck is still high on the league scoring list, his position is in grave danger due to the fact that he's not extending himself at all like he did at the beginning of the year.

It would appear that the "good life" has finally got to him and he's slowly but surely slipping behind.

Another disappointment in recent games is the performance of young Jack Marsh, although this has just been on a couple of occasions and everyone is allowed a slump of some sort.

The fellows have forgotten that the reason that they are here is to play hockey. Manager Vern Dye verified this statement with the comment that "We would be better off using local boys . . . and sending some of these imports back home."

Comments from the fans after last Saturday's 8-4 loss to Victoria ranged from "they play like a bunch of bums" to "I don't care if I ever see another Junior Hockey game again". And rightly so!

The Essos made every mistake in the book, and even invented a few new ones in getting swamped by a team that was tired from a tough game the night before against the Penticton Broncos.

There is one thing that will change peoples minds. Action! And to be an active team the Essos have got to work a lot harder in practice and during the games.

Two wins this weekend against the faltering (but tough) Kelowna Buckaroos would do much to restore the faith of the fans.

For the sports fans, the supporters of Junior Hockey I would say this much

hockey ings out

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