

Four teams known . . .

Fight for playoff position continues

Vernon 9, Kelowna 4
Kamloops 5, Kelowna 3

It was a valiant try but Kelowna Buckaroos of the B.C. junior hockey league are storing their gear until next season thanks to a pair of back to back losses suffered the past two days.

Contributing to the demise of the Kelowna team from a chance at the playoffs was a 9-4 drubbing at the hands of Vernon Tuesday night, then Wednesday they dropped a 5-3 heartbreaker at the hands of the Rockets in Kamloops.

Kelowna began these final two games of their 60 game regular schedule with a strong chance of gaining one of two playoff spots based on the fact while they were in fifth place, they were only one point away from a share of fourth or two points from a share of third place.

Along with their close position of making it to one of the four playoff spots, Bucks had shown an amazing record of wins plus several ties starting at game 42 after holding down last place for most of the season.

In those 16 games up to last Tuesday, Kelowna had won 11 and tied four with only one loss intermixed during that time. As a matter of fact Vernon had contributed by taking three straight losses during this interval.

One thing is now know for sure at this point, Vernon, Penticton, Kamloops and Chilliwack are assured a place in the best of seven semi-final series due to start next week. The sixth team in the league, Richmond Centennials already were out of the playoff picture with only 38 points as of the past weekend.

Had Kelowna won either of their last two games, the pressure would have really been on Chilliwack and Kamloops, particularly Kamloops because they still have two games to go before they round out their regular schedules.

Kamloops are to face Vernon twice this weekend, Friday night here and back at their own rink Saturday night. These games will also fill out Vernon's 60 game schedule but they have the league title wrapped up based on 41 wins and one tie for 83 points in 58 games.

At the same time, second place Penticton take on Chilliwack in a pair of weekend games in the Fraser Valley centre.

This is where the real story will be told, Vernon could really help their own financial cause if they take Kamloops twice while Penticton lose to Chilliwack at the same time.

Reasoning is, first place Vernon will meet the fourth place team and second place Penticton will have to meet the third place squad in the semis'.

Wins by Chilliwack and losses by Kamloops will move the Bruins into third and drop the Rockets to fourth place, forcing Penticton to do the travelling to the coast while all Vernon would have to do is make the 97 mile jaunt to Kamloops.

Kamloops have 55 points based on 23 wins and nine ties in 58 games played to date, with Chilliwack three points behind with a 52 marking on 24 wins and four ties in 58 games played so far.

Here at Vernon Tuesday, Essos and Buckaroos put on a dazzling display of exciting hockey for two periods before Kelowna sagged under a barrage of Vernon goals within the space of the first six minutes of the final period. Both teams had swapped the lead in the initial periods with the third session starting them fresh with a 3-3 tie.

Kelowna jumped into a 2-1 first period lead with Vernon coming back with two goals to one in the middle stanza.

Ken Weninger and Ken Selinger did the Kelowna first period tallies with Jim Lawrence scoring on a power-play, his first of a two goal performance in the game.

Second period saw Jeff Shirley pull the Essos into a 2-2 tie early in the second period with Vic Sloan putting Essos ahead just 16 seconds later, with these goals coming at 3:41 and 3:57.

Buckaroos however were not to be outdone as they rounded out the second period on their third goal with Murray Hanson getting the honor at 9:57.

Another Vernon power-play at 1:04 of the third with Jim Lawrence again the feature man on the play, started the Essos rolling and 43 seconds later Glen Walton found the mark to go two goals up.

Vernon's sixth goal followed 28 seconds later when Les Salo drove a hard shot past Kelowna goalie Ron Bourcier at the 2:15 mark. This was to prove to be the end for Bourcier who was promptly pulled in favor of juvenile goalie Ian McCrimmon.

The tactic didn't work for the beleaguered Bucks as Ernie Gare and Wayne Dye scored Essos seventh and eighth goals a minute and 32 seconds apart, these goals coming at 6:12 and 7:44.

A power-play goal at 14:04 cheered Kelowna fans as Bruce Gerlach found the mark while

Riding clinic for Easter

The Vernon District Riding Club will be holding an English Equitation course Monday, April 3 to Friday, April 7 inclusive.

Instructor will be Mrs. Marie O'Berpos of Calgary.

Classes will be: 1. Novice-equitation. 2. Intermediate-equitation. 3. Advanced-elementary dressage.

Each lesson will last approximately 1 hour. Fees: \$12.00 per member rider, \$15.00 for non-members, per class.

Registration Saturday, March 25, Postill's Arena.

Ernie Gare was sitting out a charging penalty, but this proved to be all for Kelowna with Les Salo adding Vernon's ninth goal at 18:08, his second effort and assure Vernon of the win.

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