

Joe Tennant is demanding



Lunch with Vernon Vikings new coach and general manager Joe Tennant is seldom a dull affair and junior hockey players in Vernon this year are going to find playing hockey for Tennant is not going to be boring either.

Joe has his mind made up on what kind of hockey players he wants and if a player does not fit into the Tennant style, he might as well pack his bags.

In several ways, his philosophy is much like Philadelphia Flyers' coach Fred Shero. Tennant feels the key to a good hockey player is discipline and hard work.

Even the physical appearance of the players is important to Joe. Unlike Shero, Tennant is not going to have any bearded Bill Fletts on his club. He is strictly opposed to long hair and facial hair on his players.

Tennant, in short, is a disciplinarian. He wants a player who lives hockey. Someone who gives 100 per cent all the time, will not back down from anyone, and has the desire to be a pro.

He has everything tentatively planned for next season and feels the Vikings will have a good year. He plans on carrying 16 players so everyone on the club gets lots of ice time.

Tennant feels being Medicine Hat Tigers' number one farm club will be very important to Vernon and that the Vikings establishing their own farm organization, is a top priority.

It appears Joe and the Vikings will run a first class organization in Vernon this year. However, there remains one big question mark. Will the fans support the club?

The team lost a considerable amount of money the past two seasons and this year, under the new set up, expenses are going to be higher.

Just a guess, but the Vikings will probably need 1,200 fans per game to break even this year.

There is talk that if the crowds do pick up this season, Tier One Junior Hockey may come to Vernon in three or four years. One thing is guaranteed. Next hockey season will be interesting.

ANOTHER RAINY DAY

So far the weatherman is batting .500.

Tillicum Raceway has scheduled four race meets so far this season and two of them have been rained out. Saturday night was the second cancelled meet of the season.

Track Manager Sandy Boyd told the Daily News the most times in one season that races have ever been rained out is four. In an average year, usually rainouts occur once or twice. This could be a record breaking year.

Tillicum has switched its Sunday afternoon racing to Saturday nights so drivers from Penticton and Vernon can race not only at Tillicum, but also Sundays in the Peach City.

FAITH IN FANS

My faith has been restored in sport fans. In 1973, 1,500 people turned out for roller derby in Vernon. This year, when roller derby visited our city a couple weeks back, the crowd totalled only 800.

I would guess that if they come back in 1975, the crowd would be about 400.

Roller Derby makes no secret about it, it is entertainment not a sport. Even 'All-star wrestling,' resembles a sport more than roller derby.

As one Vancouver newspaper stated, "Roller Derby is in our city tonight and to the surprise of millions of Canadians we have a roller derby team in our country. And to the surprise of everyone, they are in first place."

By the way, I made it all the way in the 20 mile walk-a-thon and the donations to compensate my sore feet total about \$130.