

Vikings stretch lead over Vees

By **DON KENDALL**

Daily News Sports Editor

Vernon Vikings strengthened their hold on first-place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior Division by dumping Merritt Centennials 6-4 before 450 fans Tuesday at the Merritt Arena.

The victory, Vikings' 16th in their last 18 games, moves them nine points ahead of second-place Penticton Vees.

Vernon's powerplay was dismal, but it had so many opportunities, it finally connected for two third period goals.

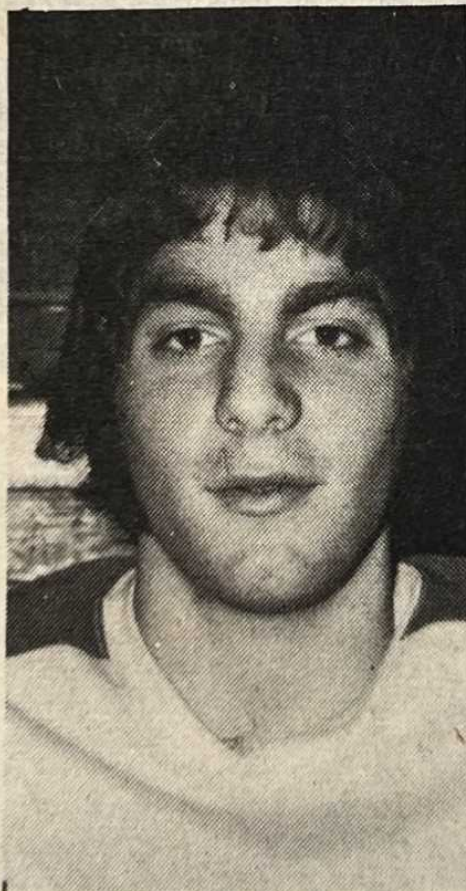
Merritt picked up 12 of 17 minor penalties and the game's only misconduct.

Darcy Wilkinson and Dean Pratico gave Vikings a 2-0 lead but Anthony Thomas narrowed the gap to 2-1, before the first period ended.

OUT OF BOX

Kirk Aulin tied the game for Merritt at 2:58 of the second period, but Clyde Goodswimmer came out of the penalty box at 8:29, and tipped in Gary Gassoff's rebound off the post, to put Vikings back in the lead.

Wilkinson scored his second goal of the game, on a powerplay, to give Vernon a 4-2 lead early in the third period. It was the best goal of the



DEAN PRATICO

... scored one

night as 'Wilkie' combined on a beautiful passing play with Ken Stroud.

Aulin added his second goal of the night, and Perry Wray scored less than two minutes later, to again tie the score.

But, Steve Danshin at 11:53, and Rick Simpson, on a powerplay at 14:34, put Vernon back in the lead to stay.

Both defences coughed up the puck numerous times in their own ends, so the goaltenders and goal posts had busy nights. Vernon netminder Darrell Furmanek blocked 54 shots while Brad Earp turned away 47 shots for the Cents.

The teams combined to hit nine goal posts, including two within nine seconds. Merritt's Greg Agar rattled a shot of the short-side post, and Calvin Halasz hit the post in the other end, just nine seconds later.

Wilkinson continued to be the best man on the ice for the Vikings. He had an assist to go with his two goals.

Tennant praised the rookie centre saying, "Darcy (Wilkinson) improves every time he steps on the ice. He's going to be a good one."

TIED FOR LEAD

Aulin's two goals tied him for the league lead in goals, with Gary Lupul of Nanaimo, with 27 each.

Nanaimo plays at Chilliwack in the only game tonight. Vikings next game is Friday in Penticton.

Tennant did not use newly acquired John Mori, from the U.S., in Tuesday's game, but he expects to dress him on Friday.

Dynamiters blasted by Cranbrook Royals

CRANBROOK, B.C. (CP) — Bill Martin and Jim Miller fired two goals each to lead Cranbrook Royals to an 8-3 victory over Kimberley Dynamiters in a Western International Hockey League game Tuesday night before about 1,000 fans.

It was the only game of the night and increased Cranbrook's lead to six points over second-place Trail Smoke Eaters.

Miller's two goals gave him 15 in 23 games this season, one more than David Lee of Kimberley, who also scored twice.

Other Cranbrook goal scorers were Joe Mutch, Rick Barefoot, Chris Becker and John Young, Kimberley's other goal came from Dennis Schick.

The teams were tied 2-2 after the first period and Cranbrook led 4-3 after the second. The Royals outshot the Dynamiters 20-4 while

scoring four unanswered goals in the final period.

Kimberley goaltender Wayne Bell turned back 41 shots, while league-leading goaltender Leo Karchie of the Royals blocked 29 shots.

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