

# Clippers move closer to first-place Vikings

Vernon Vikings are making things easy for Nanaimo Clippers.

Second-place Clippers, who have been chasing the league-leading Vikings for three months, moved to within four points of first-place Thursday by blasting Penticton Vees 8-3.

Meanwhile, in Vernon, Merritt Centennials beat the Vikings 5-3.

Less than 300 fans were on hand to see probably the worst game of the season in Vernon. Neither team appeared to want to win as checking was non-existent and hitting unheard of.

## GOOD GOALTENDING

Only the goaltenders, Brad Earp for Merritt, and Darrell Furmanek for Vikings, kept the score respectable. Earp played his best game of the season with 50 saves while Furmanek was called on to block 40 shots, including 21 in the second period.

Pat Dupuis gave Cents a 1-0 lead early in the first period when Vernon defencemen Brian Griese and Brian Maser were unable to clear a loose puck from the crease area.

Grant Sidnick tied the game on a power play, but before the period ended, Anthony Thomas put Merritt back in the lead.

Bob Wasson put Cents ahead 3-1 early in the second before Darcy Wilkinson again moved Vikings to within one goal

mid-way through the period. Despite the 21 saves by Furmanek, Vernon had several good scoring chances and missed three two-on-one breaks.

Ken Stroud tied the game for Vikings at 6:17 of the final period and Vernon appeared to start carrying the play at that point. However, Earp made sensational saves off Darrell Billsten, Sidnick, and Wilkinson, to keep the game deadlocked.

Then with Ken Oulton sitting out a penalty, veteran Greg Agar put Cents in the lead to stay, at 14:09, when he was left

unattended in the slot and drilled a shot past Furmanek.

Agar rounded out the scoring, at 19:42, into an empty net.

Sidnick had a great chance to tie the game with 50 seconds remaining, but rattled a shot off the post.

Vikings were assessed four of seven minor penalties.

In Nanaimo, Brian Day and Gary Lupul scored two goals each for the Clippers.

Maple Ridge plays at Kelowna and Penticton is at Langley tonight. Vikings host Maple Ridge Saturday, in Armstrong.

# Dismal attendance at Phoenix game

## The Canadian Press

If a warning that Phoenix was in danger of losing its hockey team was supposed to strike terror in the hearts of the city's sports fans, it failed its first test miserably Thursday.

	World Canadian Division					
	W	L	T	F	A	P
Winnipeg	38	20	1	249	174	77
Quebec	34	18	4	252	219	72
Calgary	27	23	3	202	179	57
Edmonton	20	34	3	193	243	43
Toronto	15	33	5	218	266	35
x-Ottawa	14	26	1	134	172	29

Eastern Division						
N. England	25	25	5	179	188	55
Cleveland	22	27	5	185	195	49

one of the league's best gate attractions.

In Thursday's only other WHA game, Minnesota Fighting Saints stalled Quebec's drive for the Canadian Division lead by overcoming the Nordiques 6-4.

Houston goalie Ron Grahame stopped 31 shots, including 14 in the second period. He was nursing a 4-0 lead when Del Hall spoiled his shutout in the last period.

The Aeros grabbed a 3-0 lead in the first period on goals by Mark Howe, Larry Hale and Larry Lund and Andre