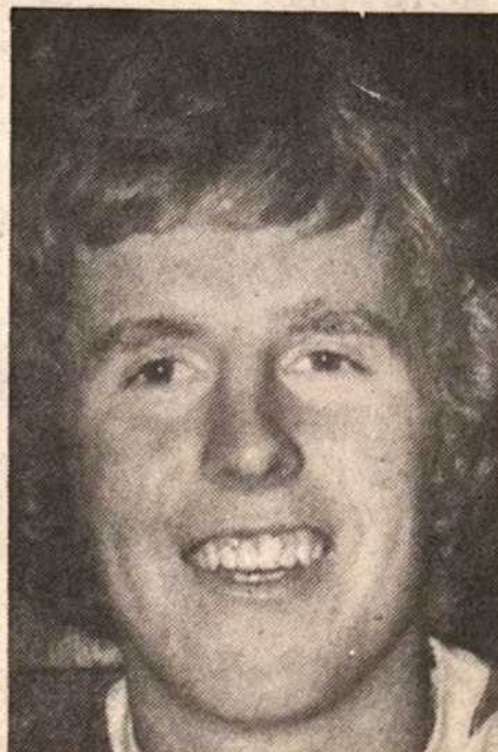




JACK LEFLEY
... scored two



GRANT SIDNICK
... him too



KIM HILKEWICH
... leads Nanaimo

WITH LITTLE TROUBLE

Vikings capture playoff opener

Vernon Vikings hammered Chilliwack Bruins 10-2 in the first game of their B.C. Junior Hockey League quarter-final series Friday in Vernon before 720 fans.

First-place Vikings had little trouble with the last-place Bruins as the shots on goal, 53-18, indicate.

Vikings' Coach Joe Tennant said he was pleased with his team's effort, but disappointed with the crowd.

Tennant said, "It is a little disheartening for the boys to play so well in front of a small crowd. I know Chilliwack doesn't attract the biggest crowds in the league, but I thought Vernon residents might want to see their team play."

TWO EACH

Grant Sidnick and Jack Lefley scored two goals each for Vikings while Clyde Goodswimmer, Calvin Halasz, Ken Stroud, Brian Griese, Gary Huth, and Rick Simpson added singles.

Peter Luhnkuhn and Rich Fournier replied for Chilliwack.

Score was tied 1-1 after the first period and Vikings led 4-1 after the second.

Bruins took nine of 19 minor penalties and a gross misconduct.

Second game in the series is

tonight in Vernon, at 8 p.m. Special trophy presentations, to two members of the Vikings, will be made after the first period.

BUCKS WIN

In other games Friday, Kelowna Buckaroos and Nanaimo Clippers took 1-0 leads in their series.

In Kelowna, 1,246 fans watched Bucks edge Penticton Vees 5-3.

Perry Schnarr scored two goals for the winners while Rob Wright, Wayne Krebs, and Mike Wills added singles.

Gord McKay, with two, and Shawn Dineen countered for Vees.

McKay's first goal came on a penalty shot after Kelowna goalie Vic Malli threw his stick to block a shot.

BLAZERS BOMBED

In Nanaimo, 1,200 fans saw the Clippers dump Maple Ridge Blazers 10-5.

George Fritz and Kim Hilkewich scored three apiece for Clippers while Brian Day added a pair. Singles went to John Gordon and Terry Graf.

Randy Betty and John Kelly scored twice for Blazers while George Phillipoff added a solo.

Only other game tonight has Kelowna at Penticton. On Sunday, Nanaimo visits Maple Ridge, and Merritt travels to

Langley for the second game of their series. Merritt won the opener Thursday 7-2.

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Can Canucks do it again?

Everyone in British Columbia will be watching the boob-tube tonight at 5 p.m. to see if Vancouver Canucks can continue their incredible choking routine.

Canucks are now tied with Chicago Black Hawks for first place in the Smythe Division, and with only a few weeks left in the schedule, every game is a must-win for Vancouver. Black Hawks have two games-in-hand.

Hawks tangle with Minnesota North Stars tonight in a game which should produce a sure two points for Chicago. Canucks are taking on New York Rangers, a team with Phil Esposito, Carol Vadnais, Rod Gilbert, and no wins.

Rangers are suffering through a disastrous season, but Canucks too have their problems.

Everytime Vancouver get to within smelling distance of first place, they conveniently lose two or three in-a-row. Several times this season Canucks have been given the opportunity, thanks to Chicago's inconsistency, to move into first. But, each time, the club has blown their chance.

COULD BE WORSE

Things could be worse for Vancouver — they could be in a different division. In any fo the NHL's other three divisions, Canucks would be battling for a playoff berth, not first place.

Vancouver may still take the lead in the Smythe Division, due partially to what the doctor ordered. Mike 'Shakey' Walton is the best thing that has happened to Canucks since they acquired Gary Smith.

Walton, although a headache to management at times, is an excellent offensive player. Vancouver has an abundance of good checkers and diggers, but what they were lacking was a guy who can score 40 goals a season. And Shakey can do just that.

He missed the last two road games with injuries, but is expected back in the line-up tonight.

PLAYOFF HOCKEY

Hockey fans in the North Okanagan will have all the playoff hockey they can handle this weekend.

Tonight, Vernon Vikings host Chilliwack Bruins in the second game of their B.C. Junior Hockey League playoff series. Also tonight, at 8 p.m., Lumby Flying Frenchmen host Salmon Arm Aces in the third game of the Monashee Hockey League finals.

Fourth game in the Monashee finals is Sunday, at 1:30 p.m. in Lumby Sunday night, Vernon Canadians host Rutland Packers in the second game of their best-of-three Okanagan Junior B final series.

Packers lead the series 1-0.