



Dye controls hockey team

Once again, Vern Dye is calling the shots for Vernon Vikings.

Dye announced Tuesday he has bought out Joe Tennant, giving him 74 per cent of the club's shares. It was also confirmed that Tennant will not be back this season as coach and general manager.

Who owns the team does not matter too much to you or I, but Vikings just lost one of the best junior hockey coaches in Western Canada.

Tennant does a remarkable job developing young players, as his record proves. More than a dozen men in the NHL and WHA started their junior hockey careers with Tennant.

Many players don't like him while on his club, but a couple years later, they usually have nothing but praise for the fiery coach when they realize what he did for them.

Joe is currently working from dawn-to-dusk at his first annual hockey school in Enderby. The school is a huge success, but when it ends later this month, Tennant's future is up in the air.

It is pretty late to find a hockey job, for the 1976-77 season, in August. However, at the present time, Tennant says he is just glad to get the whole mess cleared up.

He did everything for Vikings last season except sell popcorn at the games. Club President Les York and Dye couldn't even agree with Tennant on the time of day. So, he was on his own.

But, Dye probably did him a big favor by buying him out. Tennant feels the club can run successfully on a \$100,000 budget. However, it just won't work.

BUDGET SOARS

The club's budget last season soared to \$106,000. As close as we can figure the team lost about \$22,000. It doesn't take a genius to see when a team takes first place and shatters every league record, but still drops \$22,000, the BIG budget is not financially feasible.

Dye plans on reducing the budget as much as possible, perhaps down to \$60,000. Even if he can get down to \$75,000, ends might meet.

In the meantime, Dye's biggest problem is finding a part-time coach. One man who said he'll take the job is Joe Beggs.

Beggs coached Penticton Vees last season, but was relieved of his post recently by General Manager Bryan Couling. Reason for his dismissal was discipline problems, so you can bet Beggs won't be coming here.

Odie Lowe has to top the list of local candidates, however, he hasn't indicated if he'll accept the position. Other possibilities include Gordie Nuyens, Jim Moro, and Tom Williamson.

Dye says he hopes to confirm his coach by this weekend. With only seven weeks until the season starts, the new coach will have a lot of work in front of him.

Meanwhile, for Joe Tennant, a new chapter in his life is just beginning.