



BRIAN MASER
... makes debut

Merritt to host Vikings

Vernon Vikings travel to Merritt tonight to take on the Centennials in B.C. Junior Hockey League action at 8 p.m.

It will be the first time this season the two clubs have met. It will also be the first game for Vikings' defenceman Brian Maser.

Maser, who played last year in Vernon, returned to the club this week and has looked good in practice according to General Manager Vern Dye.

Dye will be behind the bench for the third consecutive game. He took over control of the club when Coach Gerry Wenman resigned last week.

Meanwhile, Frank Spring, president of the B.C. Amateur Hockey Association, said Monday the BCJHL has rejected a proposed agreement that would have ended the outlaw status of the league.

Spring said the rejection leaves no alternative but for the BCAHA to officially suspend the BCJHL and its members from any further participation within the amateur branch.

Spring had struck a committee to meet with the tier two junior league to try and resolve the problem of the league withdrawing from the association after applications for franchises in Abbotsford and Bellingham, Wash., were turned down by the BCAHA.

He said the suspension brings with it several sanctions, among them one disallowing the league from representing the province in Centennial Cup competition.



Help arrives for defence

Vernon Vikings might have just what the doctor ordered.

Big defenceman Brian Maser arrived in Vernon on Sunday, and the happiest man in town is Vikings' netminder Keith Ferner. Ferner played with Maser last season and knows exactly what the 215 pound bruiser can do in front of him.

Maser came to Vikings' camp last year as a big, tough kid. He left here as a big, tough hockey player. Over the season, he was probably the most improved player on the record-setting Vikings.

Medicine Hat Tigers' Coach Jack Shupe was drooling over the prospect of having Maser on his club this season. Brian went to Tigers' camp, was outstanding, and made the squad. However, only days later he quit for personal reasons.

Now he is back in Vernon and the Vikings are happy to have him. He is a defensive-style defenceman, particularly adept at clearing bodies out of his goalie's way.

With Ron Rogers continuing to improve every game, Vernon now appears to have a well-rounded defence. Ken Oulton, Randy Wills, and Brad McDonald are among the best puckhandlers in the BCJHL, and now there is lots of muscle behind the blue line too.

While on the subject of the BCJHL, league president Ernie McLean has obviously adopted a get-tough policy. McLean has already handed out several stiff suspensions and promises he will get tougher if violence becomes a problem.

That sounds kind of strange coming from the guy who runs New Westminster Bruins, the junior A version of Philadelphia Flyers.

CANUCKS IN TROUBLE

Vancouver Canucks' Coach and General Manager Phil Maloney has predicted several times since his club's training camp opened, Canucks would win the Smythe Division of the NHL.

Either Maloney must have a lot of tricks up his sleeve, or else he has been dreaming.

Canucks have won only one of their first five games and now head out on a five-game road swing. He weeded out troublemakers Andre Boudrias, Paulin Bordeleau, Tracy Pratt, and Gary Smith, but got nothing in return except veteran netminder Cesare Maniago.

If anything, Vancouver is weaker this year than in past seasons. Rookies Andy Spruce and Bob Manno certainly don't provide the answers.

Chicago Black Hawks will be much-improved with Bobby Orr and Jim Harrison, St. Louis Blues are much stronger with Emile Francis directing operations, and Colorado Rockies (nee Kansas City Scouts), are better than most people give them credit for.

Canucks could find themselves battling for third place in the division with Colorado and Minnesota North Stars.

YEAR-END DANCE

In the past few years, George Stein has built up quite a reputation as a dance organizer, and he is at it again.

Stein is one of the organizers of the Oct. 30 year-end soccer dance and banquet at the Vernon Lodge Hotel. Minor and senior soccer are working together on the event and will split the profit.

Stein spearheaded the recent Immigrants' Dance and has helped with several other projects.

Get your tickets early at the Lodge or Coldstream Hotel. Sounds like a lot of fun.