

Wikings need your support

The year 1978 is rapidly drawing to a close and one who will be glad to see the end of this year behind him is Vern Vikings' General Manager and principle owner Vern Dye.

Dye who has been involved with hockey in Vernon forever and a day, regained control of the Wikings this year when he bought out Joe Tennant. Since August, when he took over, he has been busy by Silver Star.

He has lost one coach, had trouble finding a replacement, quelled a couple small player revolts, had problems getting the players to practice, and the team, and above all, in having trouble getting people into the rink.

It is the same story, just a different year. If Wikings lose money this season, it will be the fifth straight year. Last time the club made money was 1972 when Vern Essau won the B.C. title.

However, the club doesn't drop dollars on purpose. Vern Dye loves hockey, but not enough to donate \$30,000 a year. And that figure is just about what the club's average loss has been the last three seasons.

BUDGET CUT

In a determined effort to make ends meet this year, he trimmed the budget from \$100,000 to about \$60,000. That was accomplished by hiring a non-paid coach, cutting down on transportation, by raising scores, collecting phone calls, eliminating player spending money, and restraining all other expenditures.

It is possible the team may end up in the red this season. Wikings need between 800 and 1,000 fans per game to break even, however, the average to date has been about 450. If Vern manages to break through two rounds of playoffs, there is a chance of breaking even with smaller crowds. But, the playoff gamble is pretty risky.

Dye said, "It is hard to understand why people don't come out to the games. I think we have a good club that plays an entertaining game."

"I guess a little bit of the fault lies with the arena. The entrance is terrible. You have to stand outside in the cold buy tickets. Another problem is that the arena, if we had an up-to-date facility, I'm sure our crowds would double."

That statement was proven last year in Nanaimo. When Clippers, also of the B.C. Junior Hockey League, moved into their new arena, attendance increased between 30 and 40 per cent.

NO VIOLENCE

Dye said, "Everyone was crying about violence a couple years ago and our league has eliminated" the rowdies now. But, since then, the rowdies have gone down.

Will not be in Vernon always has a second-rate team. Over the years dozens of great players have "iced on skates in the Vernon Civic Arena. In recent memory those include Don Kerr, Steve Rangan, Bob Gassoff of St. Louis Blues, Tom Servino of Calgary Cowboys, and Tiger Williams of Toronto Maple Leafs.

Several minor league stars such as Eddie LeDuc, Ken Holland, Ken Gassoff, Jim Marsh and Bob Craig started their junior careers here.

Only four of the 10 BCHL clubs are having serious attendance trouble this season. Maple Ridge Bruins and Langley Lords are up against the old rival, over-attendance of hockey in the Lower Mainland. Kamloops Braves are not drawing fans against the tier one Kamloops Chiefs. But, why no fans in Vernon?

On the surface, it appears to be a matter of money. If we are there is a remedy. Vern Dye would like to be the first one to know.

He said, "I'm willing to try just about anything. If we want junior hockey to survive here, the citizens are going to have to get behind us a lot more."

"Wikings are in action Wednesday when they host Joe Tennant and Merritt Centennials. For the price, you can't beat the entertainment."

Swedes reunited with Golden Jet

TORONTO (CP) — Anders Hedberg, Winnipeg Jets speedster, last week announced he would be the third player in the World Hockey Association to score 20 goals this season.

While that's not a memorable occasion for the young Swede, what made it more than just another goal was that it was the first goal that Bobby Hull, out since the season started, was reunited with his linemate Hedberg and Luf Nilsson and drew an assist on the goal—the first point of the season.

The line had been the highest scoring unit in professional hockey in two seasons and the loss of the Golden Jet was expected to slow the trio's production.

But the output of the two Swedish expected to slow the trio's production. Hedberg and Nilsson eventually with the return of Hull, hasn't abated Hedberg stands second in the scoring results announced Monday by the WHA with 45 points, three ahead of the league's top scorer, Quebec Nordiques.

Nilsson, not quite as prolific a goal scorer as Hedberg, is still among the leaders, standing 11th with 30 points.

Scoring leaders: G A P Pim
 Cloutier, Que 22 25 48 20
 Hedberg, Wpg 20 25 45 24
 Nilsson, Minn 18 23 38 28
 Forek, Phi 19 21 40 40
 Harris, Lon 17 20 37 35
 Harris, Lon 14 24 38 8
 Gault, Minn 13 23 36 27
 C. Bordow, Que 11 24 35 4
 Gault, Minn 11 23 34 2
 Oudry, Cin 12 21 33 18
 Gault, Minn 12 21 32 25
 Sall, Phi 16 15 31 25
 Leduc, Cin 13 18 31 21
 Gault, Minn 11 19 30 2
 Lacroix, Wpg 7 24 31 10
 Gault, Minn 11 19 30 2
 Lindros, Wpg 16 13 29 12
 Gault, Minn 11 18 29 12
 P. Bordow, Que 13 14 27 8
 Kirk, Bos 9 17 26 37

that and San Francisco's running backs Delvin Williams and Wilbur Jackson, working behind a San Francisco three-line attack, gave Minnesota castoffs, gave the Vikings defence a night it would rather forget.

"It felt great, especially after the disappointment of last week," said Williams, who scored his 15th yards in Monday night's 20-16 upset victory by the Vikings.

The blockers for Williams and Jackson included guard Steve Lawson and Andy Sbera, whose offence finished with 88 net yards in that defeat, its fourth in a row, which virtually killed the 49ers' chances of reaching the National Football League playoffs.

The 49ers, 7-6, will be eliminated from contention by San Francisco's 49-10 loss.

"I'm sure they were embarrassed last week and didn't want to be embarrassed again," said Vikings coach Bud Carson, who saw Williams and Jackson combine for 106 yards in the first quarter.

Williams led the game early in the fourth quarter when he twisted an ankle on a 26-yard run which put his season total at 1,012 yards. Jack Warrick had 686 yards for the year, carrying the running load for



Little Wesley Hutchison reads the winner's name in the Vernon Boxing Club's recent Beef Draw. Winner of the beef was M. Johnson, of 3608-17th St. Harley Smith won second prize of a 20-pound turkey while Wilf Lettie picked up third prize of a 12-pound turkey. All proceeds from the raffie go toward the boxing club. Helping Wesley with the draw is Barry Littlewood. (Daily News Photo)

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The SPORTS Page

DON KENDALL—Sports Editor
 PHONE 545-0671
 10 VERNON DAILY NEWS, TUESDAY, NOV. 20, 1978

Sports champ rejoins Bucks

One of the most exciting players to ever lace up a pair of skates in the B.C. Junior Hockey League is back.

Eighteen-year-old centre Mike Willis returned to the Kelowna Backrocks Monday after a five-week stint with New Westminster Bruins.

Willis, who won the BCHL scoring title last season, had 26 points in nine games when he left the Bucks Oct. 17 after 17 games with Bruins. He had four goals and eight assists.

"Besides being a great player, Wayne North said he is elated to have Willis back. North said, 'Besides being a great player, Mike is a team leader.'"

When Willis left, Kelowna was contending a line with John O'Brien and Rick Benhoff on the wings. However, Doug Davis was pulled out of that unit, so no decision has been made as to where Willis will play.

Meanwhile, Vernon Wikings received some bad news Monday from Vernon Jubilee Hospital.

X-rays revealed newcomer Gary Mann has a broken nose and thumb, picked up in a fight Saturday against Nanaimo. However, Mann is being equipped with a mask to protect his nose, and it is thought that may enable him to play this week.

Armstrong hammered Vernon's Arts' Gulf 101-57 in Men's Commercial Basketball Monday at the school.

Armstrong shot an impressive 48 per cent from the field on route to his fifth consecutive meeting Sunday. Tony Wolcott was top scorer for the winners with 20 points while Bob Thomson and Ian Houchin sunk 16 each.

Gary Lang was Gulf's big gun with 23 points while Ed Gulk added 10.

Gulk, the defending league champion, stayed relatively close until half time when he trailed 43-30. However, Armstrong completed the comeback in the second-half with a 60-27 margin in scoring.

In Monday's other game, Vernon juniors edged Lumby 64-61.

Mike Sorba led the Juniors' attack with 20 points while Tony Smith and Bob Herring added 11 apiece.

Jim Furlong paced Lumby with 14 points and Sandy Ramsey sunk 10.

Butcher Boys suffers loss Tradeland dominated Butcher Boys 52 Sunday to hold onto first place in the Vernon Pee Wee League's tier one standings.

Tradeland holds a one-point edge over the second-place Vernon Sport aced Pee Wee Regs 5-4.

BOSTON (AP) — Veteran slugger Carl Yastrzemski, who enjoyed his most productive year since 1970, the past season, was named by the Boston Baseball Writers Saturday as the Red Sox most valuable player in 1978.

Yastrzemski, 37, will receive the first Thomas W. Yonkers Award at the writers' 38th annual dinner Jan. 27. The award has been named for owner of the Red Sox who died in July.

OLYMPIANS TO COMPETE JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Defending champion Harold Stoen of the Australian team, No. 2 seed, beat fellow American Brian Gottfried in the final of the South African Open tennis championship, 6-2, 6-7, 6-3, 8-6, Monday.

Stoen, a 24-year-old Australian, went down Gottfried on a hot, windless day. The result was a replay of last year's final, when Stoen beat Gottfried, 5-7, 6-4, 6-2.

CONTEST TO COMPETE CHRISTCHURCH, N.Z. (Reuter) — Top swimmers from Canada, Australia, Japan and the United States will compete in New Zealand for information in a contest announced Monday.

MURDOCH IS 14th

Lafleur and Shutt battling for lead

MONTREAL (CP) — Montreal Canadiens completed a perfect three-game road trip in Montreal by beating the four-point edge on Boston Bruins in the National Hockey League.

Montreal, however, has played 26 games while the Islanders and the Bruins both have played 23.

Two Montreal players are in a heated race for the NHL scoring lead. Right winger Guy Lafleur, last season's winner, scored four goals and three assists last week to bring his total to 21 goals and 23 assists for the year.

Lafleur's 44 points were two better than linemate Steve Shutt, who led the league with 20 goals and also has 18 points.

Marcel Dionne of Los Angeles Kings is third with 13 goals and 23 assists for 38 points.

While disposing of their opponents last week, the Canadiens regained the lead in the goaltending race. Ken Dryden gave up only two goals in as many games and Benny Larocque allowed three in the other. Dryden's combined average jumped to 2.35 from 2.11 last week as Glenn Resch and Billy Smith gave up 13 goals in four games.

They would seem to have a good chance to be back near the top next season and Jackson enjoys the spotlight that follows a winning team.

He could not have had that with the two other main contenders for his services, Montreal Expos and San Diego Padres.

EXPOS TRIED In Montreal, John McHale, president of the National League's Expos, said his club had a full shot at Jackson.

"We did everything we could," he said. "We met with him for two days here and spent a full afternoon and night with him in Chicago."

"It just came down to his own decision on where he wanted to play."

McHale said the Expos "offered what I understand to have been the best offer."

EXPOS OFFERED MORE Other clubs offered more money," said Jackson. "I think certain things are a lot more meaningful than money."

One of those things was Stinbrenner who apparently caught Jack, "a fancy guy and his personal, man-to-man approach to bargaining."

"Money's not going to get you everywhere you want to go," said Jackson. "Everybody that's an athlete is going for the big money. I just wanted to take less to prove a point."

There were other factors, of course. The Yankees are defending American League champions, a proven winning team with the Most Valuable

Costly closure for Star

The lack of snow in the North Okanagan is costing the operation of Silver Star Sports Ltd. about \$20,000 per week.

Silver Star Ski Area Manager, Woody Wolcott, told the Daily News the late opening this year is becoming extremely costly for the area.

Woodman said, "We were expected to open Nov. 15. Perhaps that was a little optimistic, but we felt we would definitely be open by Nov. 27, the earliest date opening Dec. 4 (this week) are becoming remote."

There is currently a five or six inch base on the Star, but no new snow has fallen.

"Saturday's against Silver Star has opened, Mike, the latest is only two weeks away, Dec. 14.

Armstrong records easy win

Armstrong hammered Vernon's Arts' Gulf 101-57 in Men's Commercial Basketball Monday at the school.

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SPORTS BRIEFS

KINSMEN WINS Kinrmen Club dumped Tri-Lake Cougars 6-1 in Pleasant Valley on Saturday.

Bernard scored three goals for the Cougars.

FOUR MATCHES Four matches were played in Homeowners' Volleyball League last week.

Friends beat Team Cannabis 15-8, 15-8, and 16-12; Chimroo dumped Tri-Lake Cougars 15-11, 15-11, and 15-11; Minnie defeated Goodlanders 15-8, 15-11, and 8-12.

GETS DIPLOMA Debra Jack of Whiskey Jack Ranch on Mabel Lake Road north of Lumby has received her Canadian Professional Horseman's Association Exam in conjunction with the National Equestrian Association of Canada. This gives her a diploma as a riding instructor.

LADIES' HOCKEY SALMON ARM Newcomers are welcome to get involved in the Salmon Arm ladies' ice hockey team. They play every Friday evening from 10:30 p.m. to 12 midnight.

AT CANOE SALMON ARM A variety of programs will be set up for grades five to 10 students at the South Canoe Elementary gymnasium every Monday evening from 6 to 8:30 p.m. The activities will include: Basketball, floor hockey, and volleyball. They will be under the supervision of the District Recreation Department and program workers Barbara Swensen and Dean Semograd. More information is available by phoning 832-6818.

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