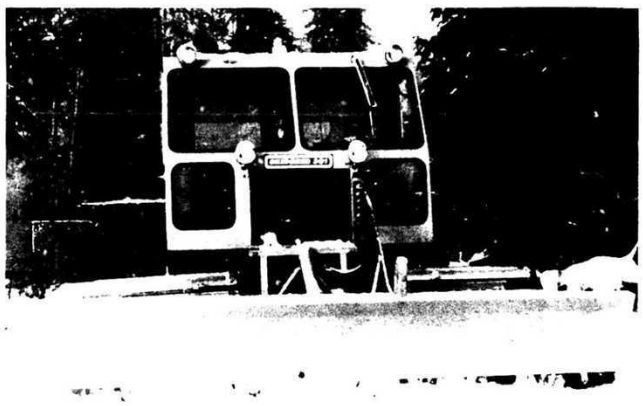

TILLICUM SKI Manager Sandy Boyd grooms the hill with the area's Skidozer 301. The machine, purchased this year from Silver Star, had several attachments added and is now valued at more than $16,000. Both Silver Star and Tillicum report good conditions and lots of skiers. (Daily News Photo)

Snow brings skiers out by the thousands

Thousands of skiers flocked to the Vernon area over the weekend to enjoy good-to-excellent conditions at Silver Star Mountain.

Unusually warm weather this winter has greatly handicapped the skiing industry in Western Canada, and several inches of snow over the weekend gave Silver Star probably the best conditions in the province.

Area Manager Woody Woodman told the Daily News it is great to see some people on the slopes.

Woodman said, "By opening so late this year, we lost a lot of revenue. We spent $1 million on renovations and improvements in 1976 and we sure can't afford a bad season. This recent snow has really helped."

Woodman estimates 2,200 skiers were on the mountain Sunday, and about 3,000 on Monday.

He said, "We also enjoyed one of our best Christmas Day crowds ever. We're finally starting to get up to our season averages."

FROM TEXAS

One group of skiers from Texas ended up at Silver Star last Friday. One of the group told the Star's maintenance manager Walt Keckalo, "We started driving north looking for snow, and this is the first place we found with good skiing."

Despite the large crowds, Woodman said the longest lift line-ups were between 12 and 15 minutes on Monday.

TRAFFIC JAM

Biggest problem facing skiers was a huge traffic jam Monday morning, at about 9:30 a.m. At one time cars were backed up about five miles on Silver Star Road as icy road conditions played havoc with motorists. However, the situation was cleared up in about 90 minutes.

All seven lifts are open this week, including the new Blue Chair.

Down the road at Tillicum Valley, Area Manager Sandy Boyd said he is very pleased with conditions.

GOOD CONDITIONS

Boyd said, "We had a few inches of snow on the weekend which really helped. Everyone seems pleasantly surprised with our conditions."

Tillicum is now open for both day and night skiing.

Boyd said, "We had good crowds on the weekend. There were several hundred people on the slopes Monday afternoon."

The t-bar and handle tow are open for day and night skiing.

KENDALL'S KORNER

Super Bowl getting close

The Super Bowl is less than two weeks away, but before the National Football League's two best teams meet head-on there will be more bowls on television than you'd find in a china shop.

We'll be watching the Rose Bowl, Orange Bowl, Hula Bowl, Peach Bowl, Sun Bowl, and about a dozen others. Let us hope the upcoming bowl games provide us with a little more excitement than the NFL playoff games have this year.

With the exception of the Oakland-New England game two weeks ago, none of the playoff encounters have been barn-burners. The Dallas-Los Angeles game was a squeaker, but a poorly played game.

The game that was supposed to be the Game of the Year, Oakland vs. Pittsburgh, turned out to be a frustrating afternoon for the defending champion Steelers. Oakland, led by quarterback Ken Stabler and a newly-found running attack, demolished Pittsburgh.

Earlier on Boxing Day, Minnesota Vikings had little trouble with Los Angeles Rams.

There has been some great football played, but not the exciting type we're used to seeing from across the border. How many times have you seen Roy Gerela, George Blanda, Garo Yepremian, Fred Cox, or another NFL kicker, put a field goal between the posts, in the dying seconds, to give their club a victory?

Only the Oakland-New England game, with Stabler crossing the goal line in the final minute, provided fans with edge-of-seat excitement.

Hopefully, the Super Bowl will provide the flavor we're been missing. It puts Stabler, probably the best signal-caller in football, against Minnesota and the old veteran, Fran Tarkenton.

With the likes of Chuck Foreman, Sammy White, and Tarkenton on offence; along with a tough defence led by Carl Eller, Vikings are highly-rated. But, the way Oakland knocked off Steelers, you have to put your money on the Raiders.

A LITTLE POTPOURRI

Tammy Woodman, daughter of Silver Star's Manager Woody Woodman, is recovering at home after a car accident last week. The injury appeared serious at first, but everyone was happy to learn she was home in time for Christmas.

Tillicum Ski Area has several new runs cut above the current slopes. Sandy Boyd tells us he will be towing skiers up to the new area, with a snow-cat, as soon as a little more snow falls.

Former Vernon Esso player Ernie Gare, now a member of Spokane Flyers, was in town last weekend to spend Christmas with his in-laws, the Roy Sammartine family. Gare drove all day Sunday to get to Trail to play for Flyers, against the Smoke Eaters. The long drive didn't seem to slow him down as he scored three goals.

Another former Vernon player, Gary Gilchrist, is back home for the holidays. Gilly is also playing in the Western International Hockey League, with Nelson Maple Leafs. He has 15 points in 10 games, but has missed much of the season with back and knee injuries.

Rumor around city hall is the long-awaited arena referendum could be held in February or March. Subject to a pending report, the referendum may call for massive renovations to the current arena and covering of the outdoor Centennial Rink.

Look for Kamloops Chiefs, of the Western Canada Hockey League, to move to Seattle, Wash., next season. Chiefs lost a bundle of money during the 1975-76 season, and crowds are down this year. However, the BCJHL Braves will probably remain in Kamloops.

VERNON TEAMS ARE UNBEATEN

Three Vernon Minor Hockey Association rep teams were undefeated going into today's play in tournaments.

Vernon Pup Reps are in first place in the Kelowna Invitational Tournament after back-to-back wins Monday. The locals bombed Rutland 16-1 and then dumped Penticton 7-3.

Vernon's stiffest competition could come today when they tangle with North Shore Winter Club.

In Red Deer, Alta., Vernon Pee Wee Reps thrashed Fort Saskatchewan 7-1.

The locals are back in action today against a Calgary team.

Vernon Bantam Reps edged Kamloops Jardines 3-2 in the opening game of the Cranbrook Tournament on Monday.

Vernon is slated to tangle with the host team today, and Saanich on Wednesday.

Cougars eat up Screaming Eagles

Vernon Sport Cougars overcame a 2-0 deficit to defeat Vernon Screaming Eagles in North Okanagan Hockey League action Monday night at the Civic Arena.

Tony Sparrow and Mike Grywacheski gave Eagles a 2-0 lead, but then Barry Dye and Steve White went to work.

White, the Cougars' captain, scored once, Dye picked up a hat trick, and White then added two more, to give their club a 6-2 lead early in the third period.

Brian Hunt and Wally Bevan were the other Cougar marksmen.

Grywacheski finished the night with three goals while Larry Louis added a pair for Eagles.

Eagles were assessed eight of 11 minor penalties and the game's only misconduct.

Meanwhile, in Pleasant Valley Hockey League action Monday, Blues bombed the Raiders 14-3.

Bruce Ritchie scored nine goals for the winners while George Watson added a pair. Singles went to Cal Ford, Bob Hawkins, and Tom Williamson. Williamson also had four assists.

Art Johnson, Conrad Cober, and Norm Amiel replied for Raiders.

NOHL league play resumes New Year's Day, in Winfield, when Raiders host Kal Hotel at 2 p.m.

On Sunday, Lumby Flying Frenchmen visit Vernon to tangle with the Sport Cougars in a 6 p.m. contest.

BARRY DYE ... hat trick

Winnipeg is third after trip

TORONTO (CP) — Winnipeg Jets went off to the Izvestia international hockey tournament in Moscow. When they came back they found they had a lot of catching up to do.

The defending World Hockey Association champions, slammed by the East Division-leading Quebec Nordiques their first game back, woke up to find they had not only relinquished their West Division lead but stood third behind San Diego Mariners and Houston Aeros.

And Jets winger Anders Hedberg, who made motions as if to run away with the scoring derby, now stands second with 60 points, three behind the leader Real Cloutier of Quebec, just back off a five-game injury.

With 37 points, the Jets are nine points back of the Mariners, who have put together seven wins in their last eight starts.

And it's no flash-in-the-pan performance by the West Coast club which has reached its lofty position by having the most productive power play in the league this season along with the most efficient penalty-killing unit.

San Diego has scored on 26.9 per cent of its power play opportunities (28 of 104) while allowing the opposition just 13 goals in 99 short-handed situations.

Scoring leaders:

	G	A	Pts	Pim
Cloutier, Q	30	33	63	26
Hedberg, Wpg	31	29	60	28
S Bernier, Q	27	29	56	40
Florek, Phx	24	30	54	54
C Bordeleau, Q	16	35	51	10
Nilsson, Wpg	17	32	50	29
Leduc, Cin	18	30	48	25
Napier, Bir	30	17	47	4
Lacroix, SD	11	36	47	24
Tardif, Q	24	22	46	22
Webster, NE	20	24	44	33
Harris, Ind	18	26	44	15
Sobchuk, Cin	17	26	43	20
Norris, SD	17	26	43	21
Dudley, Cin	16	27	43	24
Keon, Min	13	30	43	2
Stoughton, Cin	21	21	42	29
P Bordeleau, Q	19	21	40	28
Antonovich, Min	21	18	39	28
Lyle, NE	23	15	38	29
Rogers, NE	10	28	38	4

Goaltending Leaders:

	Mins	GA	SO	Avg
McLeod, Cal	1539	71	3	2.77
Wakely, SD	1119	52	3	2.79

Cincy coach calls Soviets "a dirty team"

CINCINNATI (AP) — The Russians may holler about rough-stuff in hockey, but they can dish it out too, according to Terry Slater, coach of the World Hockey Association's Cincinnati Stingers.

"They're a rough team, a dirty team," said Slater, whose Stingers play the touring Soviet Union team here tonight. "If you ask any of our guys after they've played the Russians, I think they'll tell you they've never been so bruised.

"They like to whack you on the ankle or the head, any spot that's not padded. They use their sticks as weapons and they're very, very strong people. A disciplined team."

Last winter, it was the Russians who were doing the hollering after playing Philadelphia Flyers of the National Hockey League. They claimed the Flyers "tried to hurt us" and "didn't play the game as it should be played."

The tactic that won for Philadelphia, however, wasn't simply muscle.

PINPOINTS WEAKNESS

"If they have a weakness," Slater said, "it's handling the puck in their own end of the ice. They like to set up, then go. Once they're over your blue line . . . well, they're tremendous puck handlers, tremendous skaters and passers.

"Let 'em run their players and you'll see some passing you wouldn't believe."

Cincinnati's strategy, then, will be to attack the Soviet club in its own end of the ice, breaking up patterns before they start.

"We've got to have two men on top of the puck all the time," Slater said. "Yes, it will put a lot of pressure on our forwards. They'll have to be playing all the time.

"If we can beat 'em, it will get us more recognition than anything we could possibly do. This is the best team Russia's ever put together. They were embarrassed in the Canada Cup. Now they have all their key people together."

Lacrosse club meets tonight

Vernon Lodge Tigers lacrosse club will be holding its annual meeting tonight at 6 p.m., in the Vernon Lodge Hotel.

Topics on the agenda include election of officers for 1977, budgeting, and general business.

Anyone interested in lacrosse in Vernon is invited to attend.

The SPORTS Page

DON KENDALL—Sports Editor
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Vikings reach the crossroad

Vernon Vikings are at the crossroads in the B.C. Junior Hockey League season.

In the next six days, Vikings play four games. To take a late-season run at the two Interior Division leaders, Vernon must win at least three of those encounters.

League-leading Penticton Vees have 60 points, three more than Kelowna Buckaroos. Vikings are well back with 40 points, however, fourth-place Kamloops Braves have only 24 points and cellar-dwelling Merritt Centennials are another four behind Braves.

28 LEFT

Vernon has played 40 of its 68 games, and to take a serious run at Vees or Bucks, will probably have to win more than 20 of its remaining 28 games.

That long uphill battle begins Wednesday, at 8:30 p.m. when Vikings host Braves. The same teams do battle Thursday in Kamloops. New Year's Day Bucks host Vikings, and Sunday, Kelowna visits Vernon for a 2:30 p.m. game.

Vikings' General Manager Vern Dye told the Daily News he hopes to have his club intact this week.

Dye said, "We're healthy and I expect all our players to be back from Christmas break in time for Wednesday's game."

The Vernon GM has an iron in the fire he isn't talking about. An unidentified player has approached Dye and asked if he can play for Vikings. He is reportedly a good player, but Dye said he will not say anything about the newcomer until he secures his release.

In the only BCJHL game over the weekend, 1,855 fans watched Sunday night as Kelowna romped to a 9-2 victory over Penticton in the Regatta City.

Four Cardinals named to NFL's all-pro team

NEW YORK (AP) — St. Louis Cardinals, eliminated from the National Football League playoffs before they ever started, made a better showing on The Associated Press all-pro team announced today.

Although they missed the playoffs on the final day of the season, four Cardinals were named to the all-pro squad, giving St. Louis the largest representation of any NFL team.

A countrywide panel of 84 sportswriters and broadcasters picked tackle Dan Dierdorf, centre Tom Banks, cornerback Roger Wehrli and placekicker Jim Bakken from the Cards.

Two players, linebacker Jack Ham of Pittsburgh Steelers and quarterback Bert Jones of Baltimore Colts, were runaway winners at their positions. Ham received 83 of the 84 votes and Jones was named on 51 ballots.

Joining Jones in the all-pro offensive backfield are O.J. Simpson of Buffalo Bills, who won his fourth rushing championship in the last five years, and Walter Payton of Chicago Bears, who lost the rushing crown to Simpson on the final day of the regular season.

Other offensive line selections were guards Joe DeLamielleure of Buffalo and John Hannah of New England Patriots and tackle Ron Yary of Minnesota Vikings.

The three receivers selected were tight end Dave Casper of Oakland Raider and flankers

O. J. SIMPSON ... with Payton

Drew Pearson of Dallas Cowboys and Cliff Branch of Oakland.

Another Oakland player, Ray Guy, was selected as the punter.

RAMS DOMINATE

Los Angeles dominated the first team defence, placing end Jack Youngblood, linebacker Isiah Robertson and cornerback Monte Jackson.

The middle linebacker pivoting for Ham also Robertson is another Steeler, Jack Lambert. Up front with Youngblood are tackles Wally Chambers of Chicago and Jerry Sherk of Cleveland Browns, and end John Dutton of Baltimore.

In the secondary with Jackson and Wehrli are Dallas free safety Cliff Harris and strong safety Tom Casanova of Cincinnati Bengals. The kick return specialist is Rick Upchurch of Denver Broncos.

Oakland's Ken Stabler, statistical leader among NFL's passers, was named quarterback on the second team. His pass receivers are wide receivers Roger Carr of Baltimore and Isaac Curtis of Cincinnati and tight end Russ Francis of New England. The second team running backs are Chuck Foreman of Minnesota and Lydell Mitchell of Baltimore.

The second team offensive line is composed of Rayfield Wright of Dallas and George Kunz of Baltimore at the tackles and Conrad Dobler ofSt. Louis and Gene Upshaw of Oakland at the guards with Miami's Jim Langer at centre.

On defence, the second-team line has Pittsburgh's Joe Greene and Alan Page of Minnesota at the tackles with Tommy Hart of San Francisco 49ers and Harvey Martin of Dallas at the ends. The linebackers are Ted Hendricks of Oakland, Bill Bergey of Philadelphia Eagles and Robert Brazile of Houston Oilers. New England's Mike Haynes and Ken Riley of Cincinnati were selected at the corners with Pittsburgh team-mates Mike Wagner and Glen Edwards picked as the safeties.

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