

Wikings meet Vees in playoff opener

120 SKIERS IN RACE

B.C. Junior Hockey League playoffs open tonight with Vernon Vikings travelling to Penton to meet the Vees in the first game of a best-of-seven quarter-final series.

Vees, who finished second in the league's Interior Division, are heavily favored to win the series. Penton compiled 89 points, 29 more than the third-place Vikings. However, Vernon General Manager and Coach Vern Dye told the Daily News not to count out his club.

Dye said: "The attitude of our club is good — and they are ready if we can stick to our game plan, we'll be alright."

Robbie Jacobsen and Gary Marz... Abbotsford Defenceman Randy Will, who has been sidelined two weeks with rib injury, will be back in the rotation with Brian Maaser, Jim Miesner, Ron Rogers and Brad McDonald.

Second game in the series is scheduled Thursday in Vernon, with the third game Friday in Penton and the fourth game back here on Sunday. Other games will be played March 8, 16, and 11, if necessary.

Advance tickets for the home games are on sale at Vern's Family Recreation and

Ernie's Esso Station.

Meanwhile... Abbotsford Flyers and Merritt Centennials will play make-up games tonight and Wednesday in an effort to unscramble the confused BCJHL playoff schedule.

Abbotsford is tied with Bellingham for the fourth, and Merritt trails the Interior's fourth-place club Kamloops by two points, but can force a sudden-death playoff by winning one game against the

About 120 skiers from throughout Western Canada, skied in near-perfect conditions at Silver Star Monday in a Pontiac Cup giant slalom race.

Lori Dirk, 16, of Coquitlam placed first in the ladies' event with a time of 78.41 seconds on the 4.6-kilometre National team member Lori Kettle of Jasper, Alta., was second in a time of 79.34 seconds.

Kelowna's Tim Gilhooley had the fastest first run in the men's giant slalom, but lost a ski near the end of the second run.

Bob Allison of Golden took the men's event with a total time of two minutes, 37.3 seconds on the two 4.6-kilometre courses. Calgary's Bob Roosen was second followed by Jay McKim of Nelson.

Vernon's Terry Watts, one of two local skiers competing, took ninth place in a time of 2:39.20.

A second giant slalom was scheduled today at Silver Star.



(Daily News Photo)

SOCCER REGISTRATION

Rob and Susan Zimmerman, being registered by Anne Yarmchuk, were two of 234 youngsters who signed up to play in the Vernon Minor Soccer Association this year. The association will hold its second, and final, registration on March 12, at the Recreation Complex. About 300 players are expected to sign up at the next session.

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KENDALL'S CORNER

Calder — up for grabs

Just when it appeared Don Murdoch had everything going for him, the rookie winger injured his ankle.

At first, New York lingers announced the injury would keep him out of action about 10 days... then came the truth. Murdoch, who has been nicknamed Murder, will be out for the season.

At Christmas, it appeared certain the 20-year-old Cranbrook native would shatter the National Hockey League rookie scoring record. He was well ahead of the pace set by Richard Martin, of Buffalo Sabres, when he set the goal scoring record of 44.

However, after Christmas the teams started paying more attention to Murdoch and he fell into a slump. Just as he appeared to be snapping out of the slump, he hurt his ankle in practice.

It has been a bad season for the Murdoch family. Older brother Bob, who plays with Cleveland Barons, was off to his best start ever in the NHL with 14 goals in 33 games. Then, he was injured.

Murder's disability leaves voting for the Calder Trophy, emblematic of the league's top rookie, up in the air. He still leads all rookies in scoring with 22 goals and 56 points, in 58 games. However, the popular opinion is he will not get the award because of his low productivity in the second half of the season.

Right now, the leading candidate would have to be Toronto Maple Leafs' goalie Mike Palmater. Palmater, who shares lead goaltending duties with veteran Wayne Thomas, has three shutouts and a 2.00 goals against average.

Colorado Rockies' centre Paul Gardner is one of the top scoring first-year players, despite missing part of the season with an injury. In his first 37 games, Gardner had 43 points, including 20 goals.

Atlanta Flames are touting two of their players as the best rookies in the league. Rugged winger Bill Plett has not only been the club's policeman, but had also scored 22 goals in his first 41 NHL games.

The other top-rated Flame is defenceman Richard Mulhern. Mulhern, an offensive-minded rearguard, has 10 goals and 25 assists heading down the home stretch.

Third highest scorer on Minnesota North Stars is rookie Glen Sharpey. Sharpey has 21 goals and 45 points to date.

Rick Green, who was chosen by Washington Capitals as the first amateur pick in the draft, has been hampered by injuries this season and is not a serious threat for the Calder.

Pittsburgh's first pick, Blair Chapman, has been a disappointment with only eight goals in his first 67 NHL games.

Everyone knows who the best rookie in the league is — but it doesn't look like Donny is going to win the Calder.

Pee Wee Reps blank Kamloops

Vernon Watkin Motors Pee Wee 10's have advanced to the Pee Wee Hockey League finals. Vernon blanked Kamloops 5-0, in Kamloops last Saturday, to sweep the best-of-three semi-final series in two straight games.

Vernon now meets Penton in the league's quarter-final series. David Spicht scored a pair of goals for the winners while David Wenzley, Rod Ducheherr, and Tom Day added singles.

Norman Schwing earned the shutout.

In Bantam House League play, the Pee Wee topped Vernon Daily News 5-2.

Kevik Nisakozky, Robbie York, Greg Kowal, Ducheherr, and Spicht scored for the Pee Wees.

Abbotsford hosts Royals

Vernon Royals travel to Abbotsford this week to decide the final berth in the B.C. High School girls' basketball championships.

Royals, who placed third in last weekend's Okanagan tournament, will battle Abby, the Fraser Valley's third-place team, on Thursday for the right to compete in the provincial tourney.

The B.C. finals will be held March 10-12 in Penton.

Barons earn win over St. Louis

ST. LOUIS (AP) — A defenceman's skate helped Dennis Maruk score an early goal for Cleveland in the National Hockey League Monday night, but coach Jack Evans insisted the Barons centre earned it.

"You might say it was kind of lucky, but he shot the puck where he wanted it," said Evans on Maruk's behalf.

"This was a game we really needed," Evans emphasized

after Maruk led Cleveland to a 5-2 triumph over St. Louis Blues in the only NHL game of the night.

"Our guys have been skating well," he added. "We'd just run into a tough schedule and the puck hadn't been bouncing our way."

Cleveland snapped a seven-game winless streak while St. Louis suffered its third loss in a row.

Maruk set a BCJHL record this season with 79 goals while Maxwell established a new scoring record with 148 points.

The Vernon GM said, "Naturally we'll be giving Maxwell and McKay a little extra attention, but we're not going to put specific men in there."

THREE LINES

Wikings will employ three forward lines and rotate five defencemen. Winger Jack Lefley is being moved onto a line with Darcy Wilkinson and Grant Siddick, while Byron Smith will take Lefley's spot with Gary Huth and Derek Rideout. Third unit will have Cam Torstein between

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Aces nearing berth in finals

Salmon Arm Aces are one victory away from reaching the Monashee Hockey League finals.

Aces won twice last weekend over Grindrod Elks, to take a 3-1 stranglehold in their best-of-seven semi-final series.

On Saturday, Elks led 6-2 after the second period but Aces came roaring back to post an 8-7 win.

One line did most of the damage for Salmon Arm as Dave Caldwell scored four times, Gord Lyons binked the red light twice, and Jeff Todd added a single. Ron Armour got the other Aces' goal.

Rick Miesner, with two,

aces nearing berth in finals

Doug Wiffen, Scott Wenger, George Fargher, Ron Hagarat, and Ricky Reilly replied for Elks.

On Sunday, despite an outstanding performance by goaltender Ed Forslund, Grindrod dropped a 4-3 decision.

Rick Harris scored two for Salmon Arm while Gord Manson and Lyons tallied singles.

Jim Sparrow, Fargher, and Hagarat replied for Elks.

"ALDOUS WIN

In the other semi-final series, Nakusp Falcons won a pair to even their series with Revelstoke Selkirk at 2-2.

Falcons recorded 4-2 and 6-3 victories.

Lions' camp in Courtenay

B.C. Lions announced Monday they are moving their training camp back to Courtenay, the Vancouver Island site they left in 1968.

The announcement and speculation the team would be coming to Vernon, Penton, or Kamloops this spring.

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