

KENDALL'S KORNER

Too much hockey!

Hockey appears to have killed the goose that laid the golden egg. National Hockey League and World Hockey Association officials were not content with depleting the calibre of professional hockey by increasing teams, they have now oversaturated the international market.

Back in 1972, when Team Canada beat the Soviets in one of the most thrilling hockey series ever witnessed, fans everywhere proclaimed international hockey to be the greatest. Not only was there great competition, but the pride of Canada was also on the line.

In the following years, more and more people got into the act. In 1974, there was a Team Canada made up of WHA players. In 1976, there was Super Series, with the NHL and Bobby Hull against the world. Not to mention the world junior championship, the world middleweight championship, and numerous touring teams crisscrossing North America.

This season, Alan Eagleson and company have really outdone themselves. There are so many foreign teams travelling around Canada and the U.S. that nobody cares.

The recent junior championship attracted sparse crowds in Quebec. Most exhibition games between NHL and Czech or Russian opponents have drawn audiences far below capacity.

Winnipeg Jets recently played a Russian team in Tokyo. Quebec Nordiques represented Canada in the Evreux Tournament in Europe and a Soviet team is currently touring the U.S. playing minor league teams.

Even the kids have gone international with European teams visiting Canada and minor teams from this country going overseas.

So, to say the least, international hockey has lost its flavor and excitement.

DISMAL CROWDS

After the dismal crowds, hockey executives are starting to realize they goofed. Officials are calling the amount of international games to be played. But that decision is about two years too late.

"People aren't interested in paying \$8 to \$12 to see watered-down NHL," says one play European team's executive. "Fans can get excited about cheering for their country, but not for a team playing a mean-nothing exhibition game in the middle of the NHL season."

As for the junior tourney, why play it at the same time of the professional international games and the U.S. college football bowl game — when even the most avid sports fan turns off his television for a breather?

Between last Saturday and Monday, in just three days, there were 23 sports programs on television.

To add insult to injury, Harold Ballard (fast becoming known as the Charles O. Finley of Hockey) embarrassed Canada and the U.S. by signing the Toronto Maple Leafs team against the Czechs. Without Mike Palmater, Ian Turnbull, Borje Salming, Lanny McDonald, and Brian Proby (all players of the NHL), the Leafs would probably finish 18th in the 18-team NHL.

In Detroit, where the fans have been flocking back to see the rejuvenated Red Wings, just about every fan was on hand to watch Detroit upset another Czech club.

Obviously, it is time the governing hockey bodies got together and put a stop to this over-exposure. Otherwise, when a legitimate international series is offered to the fans — they're going to turn their heads the other way.

Snowmobilers

Lions' Club 'Timmy' program for crippled children will be the beneficiary of the Vernon Snowmobile Association's upcoming ride athon.

All proceeds from the ride-athon, scheduled to be held Feb. 19, on Swan Lake, will go to the Timmy program.

Snowmobile club Vice-president Bob McDonald told the Daily News he is hoping \$10,000 can be raised.

McDonald said, "We're looking for people, organizations, and businesses to challenge each other. We'll do our best — now we're asking for the help of community."

Anyone wishing to ride, or make a pledge, can do so by phoning McDonald at 545-4748.

100 MILES Participants will cover 100 miles by completing a five-mile circuit 20 times. Hedges

will be accepted on a per-mile basis. McDonald said, "Our association, which has about 100 families, will be out in force. And we expect many snowmobilers, who do not belong to our club, to lend their support."

NEED SUPPORT Organizers hope the event will gain the same support as Vernon's March for the Handicapped has received in recent years.

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Skiers flock to local areas

Skiers shattered all records at Vernon's two ski areas, Silver Star and Tilticum, over the Christmas holidays.

Woodman told the Daily News he estimates 25,000 skiers hit the slopes in the eight-day period between Christmas and New Year's.

Woodman said, "Because of season pass usage, it is impossible to give an exact total. However, we feel the 25,000 figure is fairly accurate."

The previous record was 22,000. Woodman said, "To be honest, we didn't expect as many people. We forecast a 10 per cent increase in day tickets, when in fact, we were up about 14 per cent."

At Tilticum, Manager Sandy Boyd does not have his figures tallied, but he said there is no doubt all attendance records were broken.

Boyd said, "We enjoyed good crowds throughout the holidays. And despite all the skiers, we still have perfect conditions. The snowmakers, combined with new snow over the last few days, have made skiing super."

One thing that has Boyd puzzled is a slight decrease in night skiers.

He said, "The people don't know what they're missing. I'd venture to say we haven't had conditions this good since we opened in 1969."

RIDING DOWN SOUTH

Vernon cowboy Oliver Lous, above, along with Mel and Will Hyland of the Salmon Arm, will be taking part in the National Western Rodeo next week in Denver, Colorado.

Lous, who recently won the World Indian Bronco Riding Championship in New Mexico, will be the first of about 80 rodeos this year.



Panthers beaten in opening round

VANCOUVER (Special) — Britannia Bruins edged Vernon Panthers 6-3 during opening day action in the Britannia Invitational Basketball Tournament.

Panthers' biggest enemy was fouls. Four of Vernon's starting five fouled out in the second half.

Coach Rick Inrig told the Daily News he is confident his club would have won if it hadn't been for the number of infractions.

NO HORSES Inrig said, "We were playing well in the second half, but we just ran out of horses."

Britannia held a 12-point lead at halftime, however, Panthers came back and took the lead late in the third quarter. Then, Vernon's top scorer and leading rebounder, Brent Zimmer, was assessed his fifth personal foul.

Seaton teams post victories

Seaton Sonics trounced Armstrong secondary school boys' basketball action on Thursday.

All eleven players dressed for the unbanquet Sonics put points on the scoreboard. Kelly Olsen and Greg DeLeenher were the top snipers with 14 and 13 points respectively.

In girls' play, the Seaton Sonettes dundused Armstrong 42-29. Fay Zwarych and Janis Turk were standouts for the Vernon girls.

Next game for Seaton is at home, Jan. 12, against Lumby.

Forward Robert Fisher left the game early in the fourth quarter, then Glen Sirges and Mike Ondtch fouled out, seconds apart, late in the game. When Sirges and Ondtch left, the score was 62-62.

Harvey Eng led the Britannia offense with 30 points.

Zimmer was Vernon's top sniper with 20 points while Sirges sunk 18. Ondtch and Mike Kakoske added 10 apiece.

Inrig said, "I don't want to make excuses, but it was our first game in three weeks and I think our guys got tired."

Overall, Inrig pleased with their performance.

Panthers play Magee Lions in the consolation round, today at 5 p.m. Lions were defeated by powerhouse West Vancouver, 77-58, on Thursday.

Vikings start trip in Langley

Vernon Vikings start their three-game coast swing tonight in Langley against the Lords.

The trip resumes Saturday when they meet the Clippers in Nanaimo and the final game is Sunday in Bellingham when they battle the Blazers.

"Vikings" Coach Hank Wensley told the Daily News tonight's game is the most important.

Wensley said, "Langley is in last place on the coast and I don't think they're any better than us. If we can win tonight and get a positive attitude going, I think we can go home with two wins."

Meanwhile, Merritt Centennials moved into first place in the Interior Division of the BCHL, by smashing Revelstoke Bruins 13-2 on Thursday night.

Merritt now has 49 points, one more than Penitenc Vees and three more than Kelowna Blues.

In the only other game, Don Stewart and Don Werbeniuk scored three goals as Abbotsford Flyers defeated Bellingham Blazers 10-4.

In Revelstoke, the Bruins stayed with the Centennials in the first period, trailing only 4-2, but then the gates opened as Merritt skated to a 10-2 second-period lead and coasted to the easy victory.

DISTRICT (AFL) — Detroit Red Wings of the National Hockey League have reduced their roster by one. Sent to Detroit's Central Hockey League farm club at Kansas City on Thursday was forward Tim Sheehy and defence Larry Giroux. Called up from Kansas City was defenceman John Filthor.

Minor hockey stats released

Okanagan-Mainline Minor Hockey Association released statistics this week for the pee wee, bantam, and midget divisions.

Pee wee scoring stats are not available, but may be published next week.

Table with columns: PEE WEE REPS, GP, W, L, T, Pts. Rows include Kelowna, Vernon, Kelowna, Rutland, Kamloops Outdoor Shop, Penitenc, Merritt, Santam Reps, Kamloops Jardines, Penitenc, Kamloops Sid Smith, Rutland, Merritt, Kelowna, Westside.

Table with columns: MIDGET REPS, GP, W, L, T, Pts. Rows include Kelowna, Penitenc, Kamloops, Vernon, Merritt, Rutland.

Table with columns: INDIVIDUAL SCORING PLAYER (Bantam) TEAM, G, A, Pts. Rows include Jan Kato, Brad Moore, Vernon, Don Nugent, Rutland, Eric Huser, Merritt, Tom Derries, Vernon, Brent Group, Jardines, Robbie Kossan, Jardines, Randy Stevens, Gord Naka, Rutland, Turner, Dave, Kelowna, Jeff Armitage, Kelowna, Bob Prochnau, Sid Smith.

Snowmobilers to help crippled

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Advertisement for 'THERE'S NO LIFE LIKE IT' featuring career opportunities in electronic and mechanical trades. Includes photos of people and text about training and job prospects.

Advertisement for BOYARSKI TOURS, RENO SPECIALISTS, 762-3435.

Large advertisement for Ruder beer, featuring a large image of a beer bottle and the text 'BEER BIÈRE Ruder EASY.' Includes contact information for Bob Johnson Firestone.

Advertisement for 'DID YOU KNOW?' featuring quick service and parts for Mercury and Tri-Lake. Includes contact information for Bob Johnson Firestone.

Advertisement for 'Oil Change Lube & Filter ONLY \$9.95' featuring house oil house parts, labour included, most cars. Includes contact information for Bob Johnson Firestone.