

# Eddie is free

Vernon's contribution to the National Hockey League, Eddie Johnstone, is now officially a free agent.

Johnstone's option year with New York Rangers ended on Wednesday, at 12 midnight.

As of now, 24-year-old Eddie doesn't know where he'll be playing next year, or in what league.

He said, "I don't really know if New York is still interested in me. I wouldn't mind staying with the Rangers but, it is up to them. If they offer me an attractive contract, I'll sign it."

Until he was a free agent, Johnstone couldn't legally talk to any other teams. However, he hinted that he is waiting to hear from a couple of clubs.

**WILL PLAY ANYWHERE**

He said, "I don't care where I play. I wouldn't mind playing in Vancouver - I'll play anywhere they want me."

In 50 games with the Rangers this past season, Eddie had 13 goals and 13 assists for 26 points. For the first 30 games, he was getting lots of ice time. But, after that, he went into a slump and became the fourth right winger.

With the signing of Swedish star Anders Hedberg, who is a right winger, Johnstone might not figure in the Rangers plans. They also have Vernon Viking Don Murdoch, along with rookie stars Lucien DeBiols and Ron Duguay, on that side.

Johnstone said he knows I can play in the NHL and I think I can help the Rangers."

In his four years as a professional, Eddie

has seen a lot of cities. After a sensational junior career with Medicine Hat Tigers of the Western Canada Hockey League, he signed with Michigan Stags, of the WHA.

He spent six months in the Michigan organization, both with the Stags and their farm team in Greenboro, of the now-defunct Southern League. He missed several paycheques when the Stags got into financial trouble.

**WENT TO AHL**

After leaving Michigan, he went to the American Hockey League where he spent most of the next two seasons with Providence Reds and New Haven Panthers.

He started the 1976-77 season with the Rangers, but after a brief stint, was sent down. He was second in the AHL scoring race, in 1976-77, which earned him another crack at New York.

Johnstone said, "I have to admit, I'd think twice before I went back to the WHA. I'd have to have some pretty good guarantees before I'd sign."

Eddie has no hard feelings about the Rangers, or former General Manager John Ferguson. He said, "I think Ferguson was a good shot. But, when I went into that slump and they started juggling lines, it really hurt my ego."

There are a lot of teams who can use a young, hard-working, aggressive, right winger. So, it is safe to assume Eddie will be playing regularly somewhere next season, either in the NHL or WHA.



## ZONE PLAYDOWNS

Tracy Mathews will be representing Vernon in the ladies zone round-robin play-downs this weekend, at the Vernon Racquet and Squash Centre. The play-off, which also includes area representatives from Trail and Kamloops, is the first round of qualification for the B.C. team, which will go to the Canada Winter Games. In preparation for the "stiff" competition, Mathews has been taking lessons from Vernon's Gregg Caulfield, one of the interior's top players. (Daily News Photo)

## Tiremen take over top spot

Kal Tire took over first place in the Vernon Major Men's Football League by dumping Lumby Athletics 7-0 on Thursday night at the Lumby Ballpark.

The victory gives Tiremen 14 points, one more than Kal Hotel. Trudeland Realty is third with 12 points followed by Lumby Royals with 11, and the league's two new teams, Shirt Shack and Athletics with two points each.

Jave Johnson did most of the damage for the Tiremen, he cracked a double and home run, to knock in four runs.

Bob Magnus replied with a solo homer for the A's.

Dave Friesen, who surrendered seven hits, was the winning pitcher while Norm Roy, who gave up six hits, got tagged with the loss.

## Tennis finals this weekend

Kalamatika Country Club annual tennis championships will wind up Saturday and Sunday.

Biggest surprise of the playdowns, to date, has been the performance of young Rick Harley, Harley, who has beat several experienced players, will take on Bob Corbett in the men's singles semi-finals, on Sunday, at 11 a.m.

The other semi-final will see Ray Kimoto battling John Johnson. The final match will be Sunday afternoon.

Men's doubles semi-finals will be played Saturday, with the finals on Sunday afternoon.

## DAILY NEWS SPORTS ALERT

- TRACK AND FIELD**  
Six Vernon athletes competing in B.C. track and field championships at Swangard Stadium, in Burnaby.
- MAJOR MEN'S FOOTBALL**  
8:30 p.m., Alexis Park, Lumby Royals vs. Shirt Shack.
- SENIOR LACROSSE**  
8:30 p.m., Armstrong Arena, Vernon Tigers vs. Armstrong Shamrocks.
- MINOR SOCCER**  
Division 9: OK Builders vs. Elks and Roy's Tire vs. Kal Tire (5:30 p.m. at MacDonald's); 1 and 2 Electric vs. Lumby (6:30 p.m. at Creekside).  
Division 8: Traktion Masters vs. Nick's Kandy and ThreeRat vs. Husky (6:30 p.m. at MacDonald's); Vernon Sport vs. Post Centre (6:30 p.m. at Creekside).
- COMMERCIAL WOMEN'S FASTPITCH (6:30 p.m.)**  
Commonage Kittens vs. Setters and Nolan's Baseburners vs. He and She at VSSS; Royal Bankers vs. Money Bunnies and VMP Chevettes vs. Canadans at Alexis School; Toros vs. National Hotel and Nooners vs. Haira deck at West Vernon; Speichan's Carpets vs. Gunter at Armoury Park; Sluggers vs. Almada at Bearloto.
- BICYCLE CLINIC SATURDAY**  
10 a.m., Recreation Complex.
- MINOR LACROSSE (Civic Arena)**  
9:30 a.m. Kimmen vs. Husky (pee wee)  
11 a.m. Armstrong vs. Bennetts (pee wee)  
12:30 p.m., Village Green Inn vs. M and K Ready Mix (hastam).
- SWIMMING**  
Thirty-seven members of the Vernon, Kokanee Swim Club are competing in a three-team meet in Letbridge.



**IN R.C. MEET**  
Four students of Charles Bloom Secondary School, in Lumby, have qualified to compete in the B.C. track and field championships, this weekend at Swangard Stadium, in Burnaby.

Burnaby: They are from left, pole vaulter Tim Deuling, hurdler Susan Albert, and javelin thrower Keith Williams. Missing is long distance runner Colena Campbell. (Allyns-Tull Photo)

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## Canucks chase Swedes

VANCOUVER (CP) - Vancouver Canucks have made general contract offers to Swedish defencemen Lars Lindgren and Lars Zetterstrom, general manager Jake Milford said Thursday.

The players were scouted by Babe Pratt, a member of Hockey's Hall of Fame, at the recent world championships in Prague. Pratt is a member of the Vancouver club's public relations staff.

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