

# Kokanee are early

By SMOKEY TRUMBLY

Not only will the kokanee spawn early this year in Okanagan Lake, at least two weeks early, this year's spawning fish are the largest and in the best shape I have witnessed for many years. The sign of an early spawn has been evident for weeks. As early as July 10, females were in advanced stage of ripe for that time of year.

Over the Labor Day weekend, fish caught confirmed the earlier than usual spawning date, which is during the dark moon in October of each year. This year the dark moon in October is during the first week, which is early compared to other years, but my reason for concern stems from the fact that some kokanee are ready to spawn now.

A local angler advised me earlier this week that he boated a four-pound kokanee male and it was in advanced stage of spawn (green head with pronounced curved snout and red body). Last weekend my boat landed several large kokanee that were also well under way with body change features that are typical prior to spawning. First stage is an increase in slime that covers the body to the point scales dislodge, and the whole body of the fish feels soft as the process of deterioration begins. Like their parent ancestors, the sockeye salmon, kokanee die after spawning.

## CONTACTED OFFICIALS

Kokanee in Okanagan Lake appear in the current regulations under the heading "Restrictions Specific to Certain Waters."

My concern is the restriction does not apply to kokanee in the north end of the lake, where there are two major spawning beds. The kokanee restriction closure appearing in the regulations is that portion of the lake within management unit 3-11 only. Our two spawning beds are located within management unit 3-22. The angling closure for kokanee on the entire periphery of the lake, within 50m of its shoreline becomes effective Oct. 1, to Nov. 15. I'm certain kokanee within management unit 3-11 will also be spawning two weeks early this year and the present closure date of Oct. 1 will be too late to protect fish in their spawning beds even in that area. With all the information in mind, I contacted P.L. and Wildlife Branch Offices, in Vernon and Penikese, and asked if they would consider moving the kokanee closure now shown in the regulations two weeks ahead, and also include management unit 3-22 in the closure.

A spokesman in the Vernon District Office said, "Angling pressure on the north end of the lake did not warrant such action, and kokanee abundance was such that anglers making new catches was insignificant. During the July 1 weekend our recs. show that only 34 anglers were checked on Okanagan Lake, now that's 54 anglers, not 54 boats closed." The spokesman also said, "I'm sure you get excited pretty easy, however, the Vernon detachment will keep an eye on the situation."

Chris Bull, our fisheries biologist with Fish and Wildlife in Penikese office, expressed sympathy with my concern and agreed with my request by the following statements: "Unfortunately, there is little that can be done this year to change the regulations. Provincial fisheries people are not like federal fisheries who do not hesitate to request an order of Directors Special Orders quite regularly. Provincial people shy away from that, unless absolutely necessary. Based on what you say, and the fact I agree, changes you suggest will be recommended to be part of next year's regulations."

Bull also stated, "We will be watching the situation carefully, and should any problems arise, we will not hesitate to apply your suggestion immediately." So, there you have it you kokanee fishermen. If there is anyone of you out there who disagrees with what I have said, or what I have done, speak out...

## BOUQUET OF THE WEEK

Goats to Terry Fox. BRICK OF THE WEEK. Goes to any fisherman who angles for, or catches kokanee, after Sept. 15, on the entire periphery of the lake, within 50 m of its shoreline (Okanagan Lake) unit 3-22.

## GUIDE TIP

Some sporting goods stores now carry a new hunting product that no hunter should leave home without at this time of year. Game bags are large enough to cover an entire deer, or moose. These bags keep flies off your meat while enroute home.

## BEST HOURS

Saturday from 9:15 until 11:15 a.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. until noon.

# More players arrive Need hopes to stay

More than 60 players were on the ice Wednesday night for the second session of the Vernon Lakers' training camp at the new French Valley Arena.

Lakers will continue daily workouts until their first exhibition game Sept. 14 against Revelstoke. About 10 new players arrived Wednesday and at least a couple caught the eye of Coach Russ Newton. Ken McNeil, a left winger from Trail, and Gord Simpson, a centre from Nanaimo, appear to be excellent skaters.

**FRANCIS MORDEN** Newton also praised the play of defenceman Bob Morden, who played with the Vernon midgets last year. "All we can judge these kids on right now is skating," Newton said. "We'll know a lot more once they handle the puck and we get down to some hitting."

One player in camp who everyone knows can handle the puck is forward John Neeld. Neeld collected 115 points with the Vernon junior club in 1978-79 and led Seattle Breakers of the WHL, in scoring last season with 83 points.

Neeld told the Daily News there is better than a 50-50 chance he'll be playing with the Lakers.

**LIRKS VERNON** "I liked Vernon when I played here with them a year ago and I'd like to stay," he said. "But, nothing is certain right now."

Neeld said the centre of controversy during the WHL Semi-finals last season. He was suspended by the Breakers, after a player vote, during the playoffs against Victoria Cougars.

Neeld said, "If I play here, and stay healthy, I think I could score between 130 and 150 points. When Ron Vincent went back to Penikese after a year in the one, he got 170 points."

Newton admits he would like to have Neeld in his lineup, but that he won't get any special consideration. Newton said, "John will have to earn a spot on the team and obey the rules... just like everyone else."

Lakers practice today from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

# Irish squad beats Okanagan



**LEFT-FOOTED** kicker Stephen Kirkwood was a standout for the North Okanagan and Penikese Irish and Football club in exhibition rugby action Wednesday at Vernon Senior Secondary School. Irish Tour Manager Dick Dennison praised the Okanagan team. "We had an extremely hard game," he said. "We were up against a team that knew what it was doing. The game has advanced a great deal in Canada since the last time we were here."

The visitors took a 12-3 lead at half-time and held off a determined Okanagan comeback in the second-half. **OFFENSIVE STAR** Stephen Kirkwood was the offensive star for NICFC. The 31-year-old kicker booted three penalty goals and a convert. Mark McElpatrick and Peter McCay scored tries for the Irish club.

Bruce Townsend, of Vernon, was a standout for the valley team with two drop goals, both from about 38 yards out. Rob Google, of Kamloops, collected a try for the Okanagan and Tony Tow, also of Kamloops, added a conversion. Dennison said several of the Okanagan players could hold

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their own in first division rugby, in northern Ireland. "They have several fine players on this club," he said. "Bill Dunn (Kamloops) in their second row was outstanding. And their fullback (Google) was also an excellent player."

Other Vernon players on the squad included Ron Shannon, Mark Slegmuller, and Stu Marshall. Marshall, who watched the game from the sidelines because of the flu, was impressed with the Irish side's poise.

Marshall said, "Their experience really showed. Once they got the ball, they didn't get it away. Their ball-handling was superb." "The only thing that surprised me about them was how much their backline

kicked the ball." Dennison also had words of praise for their hosts, the Vernon Rugby Club. "We hope to see a team from this area visit Northern Ireland in the near future. And we will try to entertain them the same royal way that they treated us."

**CLOSING NOTES:** Wednesday's game was about 45 minutes late starting because the Okanagan uniforms did not arrive on schedule... a disappointing crowd of only about 125 people was on hand for the game... Bob Shannon of Vernon refereed the match... the game will be televised by Vernon-Cable TV at a later date... next international match in the valley will be in Kelowna on Sept. 29 when the Okanagan Reps tackle University of Glasgow.

## Football league to start

The Carling O'Keefe Major Men's Flag Football League kicks off its 10th season with three games' Sunday at Vernon Senior Secondary School.

At 11 a.m., Tallmen meet Huskies and Toyota battles Black Russians. Then at 12:30 p.m., Homestead Drywall Natters take on Cobras.

Each of the league's six teams will play seven games, with playoffs slated to begin under way Oct. 28. The championship game has been scheduled Nov. 5. The league plays six-man football with 30 offensive plays in each half.

## LOOK BACK FIVE YEARS

**SEPTEMBER, 1978** Vernon Legion captured the third annual Enderby Baseball Tournament over the weekend at Riverside Park, going undefeated in the two-day six-team tournament.

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