

Caps confident of improvement

VANCOUVER (CP) — Vancouver Whitecaps are counting on the strength of their native players for an improved performance in the North American Soccer League in 1982.

The Whitecaps, blessed with several standout Canadian players, opened training camp Monday at Empire Stadium, apparently confident they can improve upon a 21-11 regular season record last year.

"I would like to think we have the players here to do the job," said coach John Giles told a news conference Tuesday. "And, hopefully, we will go further in the playoffs than last year."

Vancouver won the Northwest Division handily in 1981, but folded quickly in the playoffs, losing in two straight to Tampa Bay Rowdies, the last-place team from the Southern Division.

The NASL has ruled that each team must have at least four North Americans on the field at all times of one from last year.

The Whitecaps, with a wealth of locally produced talent, are sure they have the depth to produce another stellar season.

CLUB HAS OBJECTIVE

"We will have no problem putting four good, solid North Americans on the field," said president Tony Walters. "Our development program has been aimed all along at producing local talent for the club."

This is an intriguing season, to say the least. We have the best schedule in the NASL history, and with 14 teams, we are seeing more games than ever before. It will be a severe test for us.

The Whitecaps have made few changes, other than in goal, where Barry Siddall will be replaced by either Dave Harvey or Tim Lettner.

Harvey, 34, played just four games last season before suffering a broken neck in car accident. He played in the team's post-season tour in Europe and has been pronounced fit for full-time duty.

Lettner, 24, was acquired from the defunct Minnesota Kicks in the dispersal draft. He's a Canadian citizen — born in Italy and raised in Montreal — who has had considerable international experience with the Canadian national team.

LOOK TO YOUTH

Defender Rocky Kenyon and winger David Thomas won't be back with the Whitecaps and Walters is looking to Canadian defender Cameron Shearer and English striker Peter Beardsley as young players who will pick up the slack.

Shearer, 21, is a 6-foot-3, 200-pounder who played this winter at the University of Dublin while on loan. He also scored 15 goals in 26 games last year as an NASL rookie.

The league should be 25-per-cent better this year with fewer injuries and the spreading of exciting talent among the teams," said Walters. "We expect the Whitecaps will be more than 25-per-cent improved because most of the players have been together at least a year."

"Togetherness in the dressing room produces team spirit and energy, and the key to our team. Team spirit was brought back to the Whitecaps last season by John Giles. All improved the team in his first NASL season. This will be the Whitecaps' last season in 32,000-seat Empire Stadium in downtown Vancouver is scheduled for completion in July, 1983. Vancouver also is slated to host the 1983 Soccer Bowl game for the NASL championship.

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In other playoff action, Penitents Knights skunked Merritt Centenials 10-2, New Westminster Royals trounced Richmont 10-2 and Cowichan Valley Capitals beat Abbotsford Flyers 6-4.

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Mueller named as man to beat

ASPEN, Colo. (AP) — Peter Mueller of Switzerland is the man to beat in two World Cup downhill races in Aspen this week — at least that's the opinion of Canada's Steve Podorski.

Mueller recorded the fastest time during a pair of training runs Tuesday and Podorski said he didn't expect to surprise him.

"Peter had a lot of trouble earlier in the year," said Podorski. "I said then that once he gets going he'll be tough."

"Now he's going to be tough," Mueller said. "The World Cup downhill champion in 1979 and 1980, suffered through an injury-plagued season in 1981 and was slow to get started this season. But he won last week's downhill at Whistler, B.C., moving into a tie for second place with Austria's Harti Weirather of Toronto, leads with 115 points, while Mueller and Weirather both have 85 points.

Even if Mueller wins both Aspen races — on Friday and Saturday — he can't win the Podorski for first place, and the Canadian would prevail because he has better overall results. Weirather could steal the title from Podorski for a second straight year, but only by winning both races.

Mueller, 24, was clocked in one minute, 46.80 seconds on the second training run of the day Tuesday — getting a half-second faster than the 1:47.28 turned in by teammate Franz Heinzer, also on the second run.

Another Swiss skier, Gustav Oehrl, was third in 1:48.07.

SWISS PREVAIL

Fourth in the run was Canadian Cathomen of Switzerland in 1:48.70, followed by Josef Walcher of Austria in 1:48.88. Podorski finished seventh with a 1:49.07, just behind Weirather, at 1:49.01.

Neither Podorski nor Weirather finished in the top 10 in the first training run of the day Tuesday, which featured slower times.

Oehrl paced the run with a time of 1:48.11, followed by

Lindstrom scores five as Jets defeat Flyers

By The Canadian Press

Willy Lindstrom became the fourth player this season to score five goals in a National Hockey League game when he led Winnipeg Jets to a 7-4 victory over the Flyers in Philadelphia on Tuesday night.

Lindstrom, Winnipeg's Swedish right winger, joined Wayne Gretzky of Edmonton Oilers, Bryan Trottier of New York Islanders and Grant Mulvey of Chicago Black Hawks in the elite five-goal circle.

Lindstrom and Gretzky and Trottier all scored their five goals on Philadelphia goaltender Pete Peeters.

"I just went my way tonight," said Lindstrom, who also had an assist.

"It was the night of his career," Winnipeg coach Tom Watt said.

Morris Lukowick also had an outstanding night with four assists, three of them to Lindstrom.

Philadelphia, 22-26-5, is tied with New York Rangers for second spot in the Patrick Division.

Elsewhere, it was: Islanders 6, Calgary Flames 3; Edmonton Oilers 3, Montreal Canadiens 3; and Boston Bruins 2, St. Louis Blues 1.

Islanders 6 Flames 3

In Utica, N.Y., Bryan Trottier scored three goals, giving him a single-season career high of 48 and extending his club-record consecutive game points streak to 21. John Tonelli, Clark Gillies and Denis Potvin also scored for the Islanders, 44-147, who have lost only one of their last 21 games.

Guy Chouinard, Paul Reinhart and Bill Clement scored for the

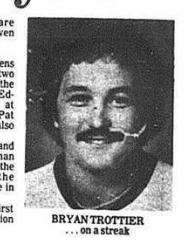
Flames, 23-28-15, who are winless on the road in seven games.

Canadians 3 Oilers 3

In Montreal, the Canadiens held Wayne Gretzky to two assists, including one on the game's final goal by Edmonton's Glen Anderson at 5:41 of the second period. Pat Hughes and Paul Coffey also scored for the Oilers.

Keith Acton, with his 30th and last goal, and defenceman Larry Robinson scored for the Canadiens, who like the Islanders have lost only one in the last 21 games.

The Canadiens are in first place in the Adams Division with a 36-12-17 record.



BRYAN TROTTIER ... on a streak

Sixteen clubs will qualify for NHL post-season play

By The Canadian Press

Playoff matchups are taking shape with little more than a month left in the 1981-82 National Hockey League season.

Sixteen of the 21 teams qualify for post-season play and appear likely there will be only one newcomer — Winnipeg Jets.

The Jets, who finished 21st last season, were a vastly improved 13th after beating Philadelphia Flyers 7-6 Tuesday.

Last winter, when the NHL realigned its four divisions, it also rearranged the playoff system. No longer does the team

with the best overall record meet the last playoff qualifier, No. 16 overall.

That format worked fine with a balanced schedule in which each NHL club played the 20 other teams four times. Realignment brought an unbalanced schedule and made that playoff format inequitable.

This year, for the first time in NHL history, teams will play the first two post-season rounds within the four divisions. The opening round will be a best-of-five, with the first-place finisher meeting the fourth-place team,

and No. 2 taking on No. 3. Then come best-of-seven division finals.

The winners of the two divisions within the Campbell Conference — the Norris and Smythe — will meet in a best-of-seven conference final. So will the champions of the two Wales divisions — the Adams and Patrick.

The conference winners then will meet in the Stanley Cup final, also best-of-seven, with the Wales Conference having the extra home game by virtue of a coin flip.

Two teams tied for curling lead

REGINA (CP) — Eastern Regina were the tallies in the Canadian women's curling championship Tuesday.

Quinell, skip of the New Brunswick team from Campbellton, shook up Nova Scotia 7-7 in an extra end in the seventh draw to help Colleen Jones of Halifax to a first-place tie with Cathy Shaw of Edmonton.

Quinell, who entered the draw with one win and four defeats compared with Jones's 5-1 province and the power of positive thinking for helping her pull the major upset.

"We were a little bit down but we had a few fans encouraging us — New Brunswick delegates — who said, 'You can curl better than that,' and when they kept encouraging us it brought up our morale," said Quinell, 30, a teacher.

Lori Quinn, skip of the Newfoundland team from Corner Brook, started the Eastern draw when she upset Doi Rose of Winnipeg 10-4 by scoring three points in each of the sixth and eighth ends.

Quinn, who said her rink was settling down and relaxing more on the ice, fell back on the losing track in the night draw, however, dropping a 6-4 decision to Helene Toussaint's Quebec rink from Trois-Rivieres. It was the first victory in the round-robin schedule for Toussaint.

Despite the surprises, Western rinks appeared poised to continue their domination in the championship, in its 22nd year. Victories by New Brunswick in 1962 and Quebec in 1975 have been the only Eastern successes in the competition.

Close behind Nova Scotia and Alberta, both with 5-2 records, were Barb Parker of Glenora, B.C., Arleen Day of Regina and Manitoba, all at 4-2. Ontario skip Carol Thompson of Toronto was 3-3, with Arelia Felker of Whitehorse, Y.T., and Newfoundland at 3-4.

New Brunswick was 2-4, with Gloria Large of Charlottetown and Toussaint's Quebec rink both at 1-5.

"Things didn't go away and once they (New Brunswick) started making their shots they didn't really miss much," said Jones, who got a bye in the eighth round this afternoon before meeting Newfoundland in tonight. "You can't take anything away from them — they probably had the game of their lives."

Quinn stole the three in the seventh end to wipe out a 5-3 deficit, then played the takeout game with success to set up the extend.

In their seventh-round games, Alberta stole one in the 10th end for a 7-5 win over Saskatchewan, Manitoba stole four in the seventh on the way to an 11-5 victory over B.C., and the Territories swiped a total of seven points in blasting Ontario 11-1. Prince Edward Island had the bye.

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