

Lakers training camp gets underway Tuesday

By GORD SMILEY
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers of the B.C. Junior Hockey will enter the 1982 season with a restructured front office and revamped player personnel.

Lakers training camp begins Tuesday, at the Priest Valley Arena with only three returning players expected to attend. Gordie Simpson, Richie Odiorne and Mike Wiebe are the only Lakers from last year's team which will take to the ice for Lakers opening day.

At the front office level, Ray (Dick) Williment purchased the team in the off season and hired Murray Lawrence to coach the team. Aside from Lawrence the team will operate with three assistant coaches; Chuck Tapp, Bob Gregorash and Kim Weberg. Gregorash and Weberg were just named to the team this week.

"We feel with the two extra coaches it will allow us to work on individual skills," said Lawrence. "Both these people have specific talents that will come in handy to us."

Lakers are coming off two miserable seasons which had them

finishing dead last in the Interior division with eight wins two years ago and nine wins last year, ending the season on a 23-game winless streak.

However, Lawrence promises nothing of the sort this season and goes as far as to say a playoff spot is a definite possibility.

"What we've gone for is quality people with good hockey ability," said Lawrence.

Among the 70 players which will attend Lakers camp are Tom Roy, 18, of Montreal. Roy is a 6'1", 200-pound defenceman destined to strengthen Lakers anemic blueline. The team has also scouted 5'10", 170-pound John Maley from Surrey. Maley, 17, was originally scheduled to attend the training camp of the Medicine Hat Tigers of the Western Hockey League but subsequently decided to come to Vernon. Lakers are also bringing in Kevin Weremey from Quesnel, at 6', 180 pounds, to patrol the wings.

"I believe we'll have a competitive club this year and I think we've had a successful recruiting program," said Lawrence.

For local interest, the team is bringing in from last year's bantam reps, Jeff Finely, Derek Webb and

goaltender Darin Newton. From last year's juvenile team comes Nick Kapicki, Richard Harries, Greg Kowal, and goaltender hopeful Norm Schwing. Chris Saunders from the midget reps is also expected to be in camp.

Registration begins Tuesday at 9 a.m. at the Recreation Centre. From there the 70 prospects will be divided into two groups with the first group to hit the ice at 7:15 p.m.

From Wednesday to Friday the team will be running two-and-a-half hour sessions from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., then two dryland sessions from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. After that the players are back on the ice again from 7:15 p.m. to 10:15 p.m.

Within a week Lawrence said he'll start making cuts in preparation for the team's first exhibition game, scheduled for Sept. 18, 8:30 p.m. at the Civic Arena. The following night at 8 p.m. Kelowna Buckaroos will be in town to take on the Lakers.

Regular season gets underway, Sept. 25, when the team travels to Salmon Arm, to take on the newest entry to the BCJHL, the Shuswap Totems.

Lakers also need five or six more billets, anyone wishing to help out the Lakers can call 542-7016.