

Lakers play Cougars in exhibition contest

Vernon hockey fans get to see the Vernon Lakers, of the B.C. Junior Hockey League, and Vernon Cougars, of the North Okanagan Hockey League, play at the same time tonight.

Lakers and Cougars faceoff in the Civic Arena, at 7:30 p.m., for an exhibition game which will determine the best hockey team in town. It will be the first game in 12 days for Lakers who are using the match as a tuneup for Friday's regular season contest against the Burnaby Bluehawks of the Coastal Division.

Burnaby is in second place in its division with a 7-4 record while Lakers are fourth in the Interior Division with a 3-4 mark.

Lakers are a much-improved club since last season, the year when Lakers won nine games and finished last in their division.

Working to make Lakers a contender this year is 20-year-old defenceman Mike Enemark, who came to Vernon via the Penticton Knights, defending BCJHL champions.

LATE CUT

Enemark was a late and somewhat controversial cut of Penticton and caused a minor uproar by Knights' fans when he was released.

"It was sort of an internal conflict, at least that's the way I see it," said Enemark. "They didn't give me a reason why I was cut, he couldn't come up with one."

When released, Enemark had a choice between Lakers and Shuswap Totems. In the five games he has played with Vernon, Enemark has scored four times and added 6 assists for 10 points.

"Earlier in the year I really wanted to play for Penticton," said Enemark. "But now that I'm here, I'd never go back to Penticton, I'm really happy here."

Enemark, by his own admission, is a little sluggish when it comes to skating speed, but he more than makes up for it with his offensive output. Last season with Quesnel, of the Peace Cariboo League, Enemark scored 40 goals and added 70 assists for 110 points, second in league scoring. He was also voted the league's top offensive defenceman.

"The way my dad taught me was if you always have the puck, it doesn't matter how fast you go," said Enemark.

WORKING HARD

However, even Enemark realizes he can't have the puck the whole game and has started to work with coach Murray Lawrence on the defensive aspects of his game.

"Murray has really been working with me and I have started to improve on defence," said Enemark. "I've got to get rid of some old habits and get into our system."

It's Lawrence's system, which Enemark believes will make Lakers the top junior club in B.C.

"Murray is a great coach and has a very simple system," said Enemark. "Everything he does involves the whole team and he's always leading us into something else, something a little more complicated."

"By the end of the year there won't be anybody in B.C. who will be able to beat us, we're improving every game."

Enemark is a travelled player, having spent time with Medicine Hat Tigers, of the Western Hockey League, under the guidance of Paddy Ginnell; and also with Drummheller, of the Alberta Junior Hockey League. His player's rights were later traded to Victoria Cougars, also of the WHL, but Enemark never attended Cougars' camp.

SCHOLARSHIP

Rather than play tier one, Enemark's goals are to represent B.C. in the Centennial Cup playdowns and obtain an U.S. scholarship in order to further his hockey career.

"I've talked to Colorado (College) and (University of) Denver and what they're saying is don't get hurt," said Enemark. "Colorado has pretty well guaranteed me a scholarship as long as I don't get injured."

Enemark was safe from injury during Lakers' 12-day layoff and said the team is geared up for the Bluehawks.

"I think the layover has done us a lot of good, I know I'm ready to go, I was getting sort of tired of practicing all the time," said Enemark. "The guys really want to play hockey and I think we'll come out with a different attitude from what we had before the break."

Lakers have practiced every day during the layoff.

"We have a lot more practice with this team than I did last year," he said. "You have to get a little more sleep and stay out of trouble."

As for what Lakers can expect from Bluehawks, "they're small."

"We've also heard they're a pretty good skating club, but I don't think anyone will be able to outskate us," said Enemark.



MIKE ENEMARK has been one of the outstanding performers for Vernon Lakers so far this season. Enemark has 10 points in just five games with the club. (Jeff Brandt Photo)

Former pro in the line-up

Vernon Cougars' General Manager Gary Swanson announced today his club will have two newcomers in uniform tonight for its exhibition game against Vernon Lakers.

Forward Murray Wilcox and defenceman Jeff Bandura are working in Vernon, on a temporary basis, with the Department of Highways.

Swanson said, "They want to play and they certainly won't hurt us."

Bandura was Vancouver Canucks' first pick, in the second round, of the 1977 junior draft. He played with Vancouver's affiliate, Dallas Black hawks, of the Central Hockey League.

He retired from pro hockey in 1980. Bandura played in Cougars' Tournament, last November, with Burnaby lakers.

Wilcox, who starred in college hockey with SFU, played in an unregistered senior league, on the Coast, last year.

Swanson said, "I know if we could get Bandura a job, he'd love to stay here permanently. We're going to see if we can find him some employment because he would be a real asset to our club."

LOOK BACK FIVE YEARS

OCTOBER, 1977
Clarence Fulton boys' and girls' volleyball teams have both cap-

tured league pennants. The girls' squad boasts an impressive record of 20 wins and no losses.