

Lakers facing tough weekend ahead

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

The Salmon Arm-Shuswap Totems will cruise into town Friday but as far as the Vernon Lakers are concerned it could just as well be the Soviet National squad.

In many ways the Totems resemble the Soviets, but on a much smaller scale of course.

FEW SHOTS

For one thing, the Totems, like the Soviets, get very few shots on an opponents' net during a game. In fact, the Lakers have directed more rubber toward the Totem net in a single game than the Salmon Arm crew has mustered in four games against Vernon.

Like the Soviets, though, very few of those shots are wasted. For example, the Lakers put a barrage of 69 shots in the Totem's direction during their last encounter and still came up on the short end of a 3-2 score.

Even more humiliating is the fact that the Totems scored their three goals with only 19 shots on the Lakers' net.

Most of the credit has to go to Totem's 20-year old netminder Troy Hankin. On one other occasion, during the second game of the season for the Lakers, they outshot the Totems 50-28 and also lost that encounter by the same 3-2 score.

POOR SHOOTING

Some of the blame, however, can be attributed to the shooting skills, of the Lakers.

It's no secret to any Laker fan that their team is considerably weaker than most other clubs in this department. During the Laker's recent 12-day layoff, coach Murray Lawrence has put his charges through a great deal of shooting practice.

"We've been going through a lot of shooting practice lately," said the Laker mentor. "If we can just overcome the Totem's excellent goaltending, I think we can win this one."

The Lakers' record against the Shuswap Totems is dismal . . . one win against three losses. That's particularly distressing in view of the fact that the Totems are currently pressing both Vernon and Kelowna for second place in the BCJHL Interior Division. The Lakers have two games in hand on the Totems but this Friday's contest will still be considered a four-point game by both coaches.

Meanwhile, the Lakers will learn, early

Friday, exactly how serious in nature the shoulder injury to forward Glen Doucette is.

OPERATION

"We'll find out whether or not he (Doucette) will need a shoulder operation to correct the problem," said Lawrence. "Regardless, he'll be out of the lineup until after Christmas, and if the operation is necessary, he'll be out for the remainder of the season."

Another Laker, Larry Wiburg, will not be dressed this weekend either. Wiburg is nursing a bruised kidney and a back injury back to health.

Jerry Kisor, though, will be in a Laker uniform Friday night. Kisor is the defenceman who hails from California. Coach Lawrence was impressed enough with his play in exhibition, to give him a shot at a permanent spot on the Vernon blueline.

Dan Baker will make his debut with the club as well. Baker, a 17-year old recently traded from the Cowichan Valley Capitals, is already a BCJHL veteran and could provide the Lakers with years of good use if he's up to standard.

In return for Baker, the Caps get the services, if they want them, of former Laker Regan Desrocher. Desrocher is currently residing in Nanaimo where the 17-year-old is completing high school.

The Lakers will be looking to even up the score with the Shuswap-Totems on Friday. Local hockey fans should make a point of getting out to this game.

EXCITING GAMES

"Every game we play against Shuswap is very exciting and very entertaining for the fans," said Lawrence.

Saturday night, fans will get a chance to see the Cowichan Valley Capitals in action against the Lakers as they make their first and only appearance of the year at the Civic Arena.

The Caps boast a great defence, led by the likes of Brian Burley and Jeff Doerr, whom any coach in the league would gladly consent to having on their roster. They are led up front by Dave Randall, who, according to Lawrence, is one of the best forwards in the league.

It's interesting to note that in the BCJHL statistics released recently, the Coastal division has all of the League's top ten scorers. However, five of the League's top seven goaltenders play in the Interior division.