

EMBARRASSING LOSS

Royals whip Lakers

There have been few embarrassing nights for Vernon Lakers this season.

However, New Westminster Royals humbled the much-improved Lakers 13-4 in B.C. Junior Hockey League action, Wednesday night, in New Westminster.

Vernon has an excellent skating team, but is somewhat vulnerable in a rough game and New Westminster took advantage of its physical superiority over Lakers.

Royals' Coach Al Patterson said, "The key to the game was that we came out hitting right from the start and threw Vernon right off stride."

Cliff Ronning led the New Westminster attack with three goals while Stu Orpen, Mike Nottingham,

Geoff Harrigan, and Dave Phipps added two apiece.

LED LAKERS

Stacey Wakabayashki replied with two goals for Vernon while Mike Enemark and Gord Simpson notched singles. Wakabayashi has scored five times in Lakers' last two outings.

Dave Roach turned aside 35 shots in the New Westminster net while Shawn Oswald stopped 25 for Lakers.

The victory moved Royals to within three points of first place Abbotsford Flyers in the Coast Division.

Penticton Knights lead the Interior Division with 38 points followed by

Kelowna Buckaroos with 34 and Vernon with 30. However, Lakers have three games-in-hand on both the Knights and Bucks.

HOME ICE

Vernon returns to the ice Friday night when it hosts Esquimalt Buccaneers. On

Saturday, Merritt Centennials visit the Civic Arena.

In Wednesday's only other BCJHL game, Burnaby Bluehawks defeated Cowichan Capitals 7-4.

In the Burnaby contest, Bobby Ginnetti scored two goals to lead the Bluehawks to their victory.

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Simpson leads as captain



By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Diminutive, small, runty, the list of adjectives used to describe someone of small stature in the world of sports goes on and on.

Needless to say, they all have been applied, at one time or another, to Gord Simpson, captain and leader of the Vernon Lakers.

On occasion he's even been affectionately labelled "Tatoo" by team-mates who'll joke about his size, but never his ability to breathe life into a reborn hockey team like the Lakers.

At the commencement of a new junior hockey season, a brand new Laker coach, Murray Lawrence, found himself with a bunch of new players. In fact, Lawrence had just three veteran players at his disposal so he chose to rest the job of captaincy on the slight, yet powerful shoulders, of Simpson.

ANSWERS CALL

The little 18-year old answered the call well, aiding the team to rise from the cellar of the BCJHL last season to contention in just one year. It is Simpson's second full season with the Lakers and the B.C. Junior Hockey League.

But the list just begins here.

Lawrence has also been able to put the finger on another other veteran — Rob Kossan, as a leading figure. Kossan has forged to the head of the team in scoring statistics, including a handful of clutch goals. His style of play has been a guiding light to some of the other young forwards on the team and because of it he wears an "A" on his jersey.

Another standout in the leader department has to be Mike Enemark, a slick defenceman. Enemark, proclaimed to be one of the league's top defencemen, has no trouble living down that handle.

Tuesday night in Abbotsford, his first period goal lifted the spirits of the Lakers so much that they came within a breath of tying the game, falling short only through outstanding goaltending on behalf of the Flyers' net-minder in the dying seconds.

A real strength has been found, also, in the style and play of a couple of Alberta residents who travelled West to join the ranks of the Lakers this year.

The two are defenceman Gavin Shuya and forward Todd Ewen. Shuya brought with him a wealth of experience that includes time spent with the Spokane Flyers, of the Western Hockey League. His presence on the Laker blueline obviously gave them much-needed depth this season. Shuya also happens to be very popular back in St. Albert, Alta. from whence he came.

FROM ST. ALBERT

Recently, the sports editor of the St. Albert Gazette phoned to get a bit of insight on just how well Shuya and Ewen were faring out in this part of the country. Being relatively new to these parts myself, all I could relate was the manner in which Laker coach Murray Lawrence has spoken fondly of the blueliner. It seemed to be enough as the chap expressed his delight in having accumulated such knowledge.

There's no doubt in my mind, Laker fans will take Shuya under the wing of their affec-

tions by season's end as well.

Ewen, though slow to develop his goal-scoring ability at this point, has been an immeasurable aid to the local squad.

Though just 16 years of age, the gangly winger is virtually fearless. Very early in the season he established himself as a force to be reckoned with when gloves and sticks hit the ice. Though it may be argued this isn't a bonafide aspect of the game, staking the Lakers' territory early in the year has left the remainder of the Vernon forwards much freer to wander around the opposition's net area.

A STANDOUT

And, speaking of the Lakers' forward thrust, one name immediately sticks out — Stacey Wakabayashi. "Wak", as he's commonly called by his team-mates, was the last cut, of the tier I Kamloops Oilers, of the WHL. After joining the Lakers just a few weeks ago, Wakabayashi has already become one of the most prolific scorers and playmakers on the squad.

Call him fiesty, hard-nosed, or what you will, Wak is one of those players that will take a hard check to make a play. He fears no corner, and has been a prime reason for the success of the Vernon power play since joining the team.

So there it is folks. If you were looking for solid reasons as to the Lakers' success this season, here's a mittful of good flesh-and-blood ones.

Meet you at the Civic Arena, Friday night.