

Lakers narrow gap on division leaders

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Latest league statistics, released by the B.C. Junior Hockey League, show Vernon Lakers in close pursuit of their Okanagan rivals in both Penticton and Kelowna.

In fact, trailing Penticton Knights by just a single point means that a Vernon victory over the Richmond Sockeyes, Friday night at the Civic Arena, would give them sole possession of second place in the Interior Division.

Lakers currently have two-games-in hand on the Knights, with one of their games this weekend being a four-pointer against the division-leading Kelowna Buckaroos.

Some other interesting statistics prove why the Lakers, under Coach Murray Lawrence, are just where they are.

Although the local team are a dismal ninth, overall, in league scoring as a team, they hold down third spot in the league in the goals-against department.

SOLID DEFENCE

These statistics were made possible mostly because of a solid defensive department on the Lakers' squad.

Starting in the singular position, goaltender Rex Grant, with a goals-against average of 3.66, is fifth overall, in league goaltending records. He is third in the Interior Division.

The only goaltenders with better averages is the Buckaroos' tandem of Mike Taylor and Randy Kirby.

Taylor currently leads the league with his 2.66 average while Kirby, in second place, holds an average of 2.79. However, neither goaler has logged as much time between the pipes as Grant.

With the likes of defencemen Gavin Shuya and Mike Enemark, both BCJHL all-star defencemen, in front of him, it's little wonder Grant is sporting a good record.

Shuya is the only Laker to make the top 20 scorers. He is fourth among the Interior Division's top scorers.

Leading him in Interior scoring are Rod Schluter of Kelowna, Derek Ruppel and Brett Hull of Penticton.

At his current pace, Shuya could easily make the top 10 scorers in the league since only eight points separate the 19-year old from 10th spot at this time.

Indications, lately, are that the Lakers are fast on the road toward improving their standing in the goals-for department.

ENDS SLUMP

Rob Kossan, formerly the only Laker among the top 20 in league scoring, fell into a slump, which he only recently pulled out of, with a pair of goals last weekend against Merritt Centennials.

Along with this news, comes the impressive statistics compiled by Stacey Wakabayashi. Since joining the team just 22 games ago, Wakabayashi has become their most prolific scorer, averaging two points per game.

If Wakabayashi were to continue his present scoring clip, he would, in theory finish the season with better than 90 points which would also boost him into the league's top 10 category.

Incidentally, Wakabayashi could be a cinch to win the league Most Gentlemanly Player award. The 17-year old centre has yet to sit out as a two-minute shift in the sin-bin.

GUIDE REPORT

Snowmob

By SMOKEY TRUMBLY

Snowmobile Magazine recently conducted a reader potpourri survey and some of the answers accomplished just what was expected, absolutely nothing.

It did prove that snowmobilers like to have fun, and that given an inch they'll take a mile when it comes to down and dirty craziness.

One reader that participated said it best when he wrote, "I wish you much success with your first annual potpourri, however, because..."

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