

VERNON LEADS DIVISION

Lakers rally to defeat Bucks

Vernon Lakers scored five unanswered goals in the final period to beat Kelowna Buckaroos 6-3 in B.C. Junior Hockey League action Friday night, in Kelowna.

The win leaves Vernon in sole possession of first place in the BCJHL's Interior Division with 51 points. Penticton Knights are in second spot with 50, while Kelowna is third with 48.

It has been eight years, since Vernon occupied top spot in the division this late in the season. The 1975-76 club, coached by Joe Tennant, was filled with talent and character. The current team has similar qualities.

HAS CHARACTER

"This team has a lot of class and a lot of character," said Lakers' Coach Murray Lawrence. "That's evidenced by the way they came from behind."

"I think at the start of the third period we had 40 seconds left on a power play. That put Kelowna on the defensive right away. It seemed to carry on for the first five minutes."

"When we started popping them in our guys started to come alive. You could see a letdown on the Kelowna team."

TOOK LEAD

Buckaroos took a 1-0 lead in the first period and were ahead 3-1 after the second before Lakers opened up.

Greg Kowal, Stacey Wakabayashi, Ron Berezowski, Gord Simpson, Brent Doucette, and Bob Wensley scored for Vernon.

Wakabayashi and Wensley have been on a scoring rampage in recent games. Wakabayashi is on a five-game goal scoring streak and has blinked the red light 28 times, in 26 games.

Wensley has given goals, in six outings, since joining Lakers earlier this month.

Shawn Harrison, with a pair, and Shawn Pettyjohn replied for Buckaroos.

29 SAVES

Vernon netminder Matt Sekela, who was released by Buckaroos earlier this season, made 29 saves. Randy Kirby kicked out 33 shots for Kelowna.

Buckaroos took 10 of 15 minor penalties and Lakers' defenceman Kelly Kozak was given a 10-minute misconduct.

Vernon returns to the ice Sunday night, at 7 p.m., when it hosts Revelstoke Rockets. Lakers are 30 points ahead of Rockets in league standings, however, Lawrence said his club can't afford to take any team lightly.



STACEY WAKABAYASHI scored once to help Vernon Lakers dump Kelowna Buckaroos 6-3, Friday. Wakabayashi, one of the hottest

snipers in the league, is riding a five-game goal scoring streak.

(Daily News Photo)

"Every game is crucial for us if we want to stay in first place," Lawrence said. "And Revelstoke always seems to give us trouble."

In other games Friday, Langley Eagles stopped Esquimalt Buccaneers 6-4, Penticton dumped Revelstoke 6-2, and Shuswap Totems doubled Burnaby Blue Hawks 8-4.

PENALTIES COSTLY

In Langley, the Eagles capitalized on penalties in their win over Esquimalt Buccaneers, scoring four of their six goals on power plays.

Esquimalt led 2-1 at the end of the first period, but the teams were tied 3-3 at the end of the second.

Jim Dupuis put the Eagles ahead with a power-play goal at 1:54 of the third period and Rod Ware scored the winner, also on a power-play, at 2:47.

Ware finished the night with two goals.

Randy Horswill scored three goals for Esquimalt. Dan Gerarden scored two goals to lead the Knights to their 6-2 home-ice win over Revelstoke Rockets.

Kelly Para, Derrick Ruppel, Chris Obst and Murray Winnicki added singles for the winners, who led 2-0 and 4-1 by periods.

Brian DeLeeuw and Wade Watters replied for the Rockets.

Penticton netminder Mike Jeffrey made 20 saves while Revelstoke's Roy Drohobyski turned aside 47 shots.

In Burnaby, Greg Cyr and Joe Blodeau scored two goals each for the Totems. Don Friesen led Burnaby with a pair.

Burnaby netminder Dale Stachoski and Shuswap goalie Ray Silvey both made 32 saves.

B.C. WINTER GAMES

Local wrestlers on team

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Bruce Ritchie is a proud coach and he has every