

Buckaroos move into second spot in Interior

Kelowna Buckaroos moved into sole possession of second place in the BCJHL Interior division Tuesday night with a 7-4 victory over the visiting Salmon Arm Shuswap Totems.

The win puts Buckaroos three points back of the division leading Vernon Lakers with one game in hand on the Vernon squad.

Scott Shoffstall scored three times to lead the Buckaroos while singles came off the sticks of Enzo Caccavo,

Rod Schluter, Misco Antisin, and Rob Dirk.

Kelowna held period leads of 2-0 and 5-2.

Tim Coghlin, Brian Fuller, Cal Franson, and Glen Foll replied for Shuswap.

Ray Silvey made 29 saves in the Shuswap net while Randy Kirby blocked 22 for Kelowna.

In other BCJHL action Tuesday night, Richmond Sockeyes jumped to a 4-0 first period lead but need a

come-from-behind rally in the third period to defeat Burnaby Bluehawks 8-6.

Brian Campbell and Brooke Odenvald each scored twice for the winners while David Street got the winner on a slap shot from the point at 10:18 of the third.

Paul Bifano scored twice to lead Burnaby.

Ron Boyd stopped 29 shots in the Richmond goal, while Dale Stachowski made 40 saves for Burnaby.

Veteran Laker talks about club's success

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

The efforts of this season's version of the Vernon Lakers has all the earmarks of a "Rocky" success story. The result has made every member of the team happy not to mention the coaching and management staff, along with countless hockey fans in this city.

One young individual who is doubly happy with the Lakers' success is 18-year old Gord Simpson, captain of the Lakers, team leader, and one of just two veterans of last season's disastrous squad.

Simpson, a native of Vernon but whose family moved to Nanaimo eight years ago, tolled last season wearing the same jersey but this year there's a big difference in the way he wears it.

"Last year we lost a lot," said Simpson, sweat running in his eyes after a hard practice Tuesday night at the civic arena. "After a while that sort of thing makes a big difference to the team's attitude, and the way they play."

There's nothing in Simpson's style of play this season that would indicate he plugged along with a club that only won eight games last year. Despite missing a number of games, recently, with a broken hand, and half a dozen prior to that following a number of minor injuries, Simpson is among the teams' top five scorers.

In January, the veteran Laker was chosen most valuable player at the annual all-star game held in Kelowna. Despite losing that contest to the star-studded squad from the Coastal division of the BCJHL, Simpson impressed



GORD SIMPSON
... big difference

one and all with his performance.

With just two games remaining in the regular season, Vernon Lakers are just a hairs' breadth away from capturing the Interior Division's number one spot ... the first time in seven years a Vernon team will have accomplished such a feat.

Though Simpson's leadership abilities have been a big factor in leading the local club out of the darkness, the diminutive captain is quick to shift the reasons for their success onto the shoulders of others.

"Definitely the coaching has been a big difference," he said. "Murray (Lawrence) certainly knows what he's doing."

"Of course, with the kind of talent this team has this season, some would say it's hard to go wrong ... but then we had a lot of talent last season, and poor coaching and look where we ended up," he added.

Aside from the current coaching staff there are

others who received Simpson's praise. One of these is 17-year old Stacey Wakabayashi, a youngster who joined the team in mid-season but has since taken over the number one scoring position on the Lakers' roster.

"Stacey has really made a big difference," said Simpson. "Just his showing up for a game is a boost to our moral ... I mean if you've ever seen him play you'll know what I'm talking about."

"We've also got the best goaltenders in the league," he added. "Lately our defence has been playing kind of sloppy ... we've been outshot in our last three games but won them all and it's because of Rex (Grant) and Matt (Sekela)."

Simpson has plans for the future, and hockey will be a big part of them. However, junior hockey isn't the vehicle he chooses to go.

"I want to get a scholarship," he said. "I just want to get my education and be a teacher or something along that line."

In the meantime, the only thing on Gord Simpson's mind is helping his team go as far as they possibly can, and in his own words, that's going to be a long way.

Friday night the local club hosts New Westminster Royals, a club which the Lakers have met just once previously this season and a club which treated the Lakers to a 13-4 slice of humble pie. Undaunted, Simpson was clearly optimistic about the outcome this time around.

"I think we're going to blow them out of the rink," he said. We've got a bone to pick with those guys."

WINTER GAMES

Edgelow wins silver while team takes second

Vernon's Greg Edgelow, will return from the Canada Winter Games in Chicoutimi, Que. wearing a silver medal that he won for B.C. in the 82 kg. weight class wrestling competition.

Edgelow was just one of nine B.C. wrestlers who won medals at the games giving this province a second-place standing in wrestling, behind Ontario.

Edgelow lost his final match 4-0 to David Mottram, of Ontario. Mottram received the gold medal for his performance while David Bossey, of New Brunswick, received the bronze in the 82 kg. class.

Meanwhile, Pat Pine, of Burnaby, picked up a gold medal for his efforts in the 68 kg. class and Dan Payne, of Port Coquitlam, received the gold medal in the 100 kg and over class.

Silver medals went to Edgelow, Rod Supernault, of Port St. John (100 kg), Larry Thacker, of Maple Ridge (90 kg), Ben Pettit, of Burnaby (74 kg), and Gary Brassart, of Surrey (57 kg).

Bronze medals were won by Faustino Dibauda, of Port Coquitlam (52 kg), and Norm Spence, of Coquitlam (48 kg).

The B.C. wrestling team consisted of just 10 athletes.

Fulton table tennis team captures four of five honors



Fulton Junior Secondary table tennis team captured first, second, fourth and fifth place honors at the annual North Zone Junior High team table tennis tournament held last Friday at Fulton gymnasium.

The Fulton team took over the first place position from Armstrong school who were the defending champions since the tournament's inception in 1977.

Armstrong took third place at this year's championship, breaking the Fulton monopoly.

Members of the winning team were Alex Golin, Stacy Kuzel, Kevin Chenoweth and Rob Duncan. Fulton's number two team was comprised of Mark Ciupka, Darren Stenstrom, Tim Blaney, and Kelly Harmon.

The Fulton table tennis squad will now compete in the Okanagan Valley High School Championship to be held in Armstrong, March 4. Armstrong's high school table tennis team is favored to win first place honors in the valley championship while Fulton is favored to take the runner-up spot.

However, even at second place, the Fulton team will travel to the Provincial championship in Vancouver March 11 and 12. Armstrong high school took second place at the provincial meet last year so is heavily favored to be in the top running again this season.

WINNERS of the North Zone junior high team table tennis championship held last Friday night at Fulton gymnasium were this team representing Clarence Fulton

Junior Secondary. Back row, left to right: Alex Golin, and Stacy Kuzel. Front row, left to right: Kevin Chenoweth and Rob Duncan.

Cougars have chance to end Oliver series

Vernon Cougars host Oliver Bighorns in the fifth and possibly final, game of the North Okanagan Hockey League championship series Thursday, at 8 p.m.

Cougars thumped Bighorns 9-3 last Sunday, in Oliver, to take a commanding 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven affair.

Cougars' Coach Gary Swanson said his club wants to wrap up the series Thursday. "There is no way we want to go back to Oliver for another game," he said. "We could really use a rest before our next series."

Vernon will be at full strength for Thursday's game for the first time in the series. Centre Terry Lowe has served a two-game suspension and will be reunited high-scoring



TERRY LOWE
... suspension over

linemates Dave Caldwell and Gary Gilchrist. With Lowe back, Ernie Gare

will centre Randy Merritt and Murray Wilcox.

One decision Swanson hasn't made yet is which of his goalies will be between the pipes. In the two-goalie rotation, it is Charlie Briskham's turn. However, Briskham has allowed 13 goals against, in two games, while Ed Forslund has surrendered just six.

"I probably won't make my final decision on goaltending until Thursday," Swanson said. "There are a lot of things to consider."

Winner of the series will host Chilliwack in Coy Cup playdowns, March 11-13. Chilliwack recently won the Coast title by defeating Port Alberni 9-3 to sweep the best-of-five final series in three games.