

LAKERS HOST ROYALS TONIGHT

Vernon Lakers host New Westminster Royals, tonight, in a game that could decide first-place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League' Interior Division.

Lakers currently hold a three-point lead on Kelowna Buckaroos and five-point margin on thirs-place Pen-ticton Knights. However, Bucs have three games to play, Knights three, and Lakers just two, including Sunday against Kelowna.

Vernon Coach Murray Lawrence said he is treating tonight's contest like a playoff game. "This one means a lot to us," he said, "both in the standings and because Royals beat us so badly on the coast."

New Westminster handed Lakers a 13-4 drubbing, in December.

SKATING TEAM

Lawrence said, "Royals have an excellent skating team. The key thing for us will be forechecking . . . we've got to pin them in their own end of the rink."

Vernon will still go with four forward lines and four defencemen despite the absence of Nick Kapicki and Ken Fenton. Kapicki is sidelined for about two more weeks with a broken foot and Fenton is in Burnaby General Hospital after suffering a broken leg on a Coast trip last weekend.

Lawrence said, "I'm going to make a couple changes to get a little more aggressiveness on the forward lines. We need more size up front."

He plans to unite centre Ron Berezowski, with wingers Bob Wensley and Todd Ewen. "I think they'll turn into a good physical line, capable of scoring goals," Lawrence said.

Big defenceman Rudy Poeschek and Kelly Kozak are also expected to see some duty on the wings.

GAME CALLED

The BCJHL game between Revelstoke Rockets and Shuswap Totems was called in the third period Thursday after penalties and injuries left Shuswap with only five players.

Revelstoke took the fight-filled contest 5-2. In the only other game, Kelowna Buckaroos downed Merritt Centennials 8-1.

Wade Waters led the Rockets with two goals, while Dean Dietrich, Bruce Baker and Richard Mathews added singles.

Kevin Taillefer scored both goals for the visiting Totems, who trailed 4-0 and 5-1 by periods.

Roy Drohobycki made 28 stops for Revelstoke, while Ray Filvey stopped 32 for the Totems.

Shuswap started the game with 16 players to Revelstoke's 17, but fights and injuries reduced the ranks until the game was called at 8:40 of the third period.

The Totems were assessed three game misconducts and the Rockets had one.

In Merritt, Rod Schluter and Don Barber each scored twice to lead the Buckaroos.

Shawn Pettyjohn, Shawn Swail, Simon Wheeldon and Dale Reimer also scored for the winners who broke the game open with five goals in the third period.

Merritt's Tim O'Toole opened the scoring in the fourth minute of the first period, but the Centennials failed to capitalize on several power-play opportunities.