

INTERIOR DIVISION RACE

Buckaroos foil Lakers by winning first place

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Kelowna Buckaroos finished on top of the BCJHL Interior division on the strength of an 8-3 victory over the hometown Vernon Lakers Sunday night at the Civic arena but give the Lakers their due... they never gave up.

"I think we learned some valuable lessons tonight," said a dejected Lakers coach Murray Lawrence following the disappointing loss. "For one thing you have to hit the net with your shots and hit your man with the passes."

The words pretty well summed up the Lakers' troubles in the seemingly lopsided contest, which actually wasn't.

Lakers held all the trump cards in the opening twenty minutes... consecutive power-play opportunities for more than eight minutes of playing time. Unfortunately Lakers' power-play, usually in the awesome category, failed to come through, mostly due to sloppy pass work in the offensive zone. Each time there was a turnover, the Buckaroos were quick to sting Vernon with a goal.

The story was virtually completed after the first period with Kelowna out front 4-0 despite being outplayed and outshot.

Kelowna coach Wayne Naka was pleased with the performance of his penalty-killing unit.

"Our penalty-killing made all the difference... they (Lakers) had all

kinds of chances and couldn't put anything in the net."

On the other hand, Naka was surprised his Buckaroos did as well as they did.

"Tonight was the first time we've been able to hit these guys and skate with them."

Lawrence's comments reflected the constant bad breaks suffered by the usually tight-passing Lakers.

"They (Kelowna) got the breaks and we didn't... sure, we made mistakes but the puck didn't bounce right at all."

Bucks opened the scoring at 9:15 of the first period when Shawn Harrison, with his first of two for the night, capitalized on Lakers' careless passing in the Kelowna zone on a man-advantage situation.

Bucks second goal was a repeat of the first... careless passing by the Lakers.

Shawn Pettitjohn and Enzo Caccavo completed the scoring for Kelowna in the opening stanza.

Kelowna added two more tallies in the first five minutes of the second period to put the game out of reach for the fumbling Lakers.

CHANGED GOALIES

In a desperate attempt to rejuvenate his failing troops, Lawrence replaced starting goaltender Rex Grant with Matt Sekela. Sekela started off with a stylish and flashy glove save that gave the Vernon squad a momentary lift.

Gord Simpson finally broke the Lakers' scoring at 8:04 with a power-play tally. Simpson, cruising around in front of Kelowna's Randy Kirby, knocked Gavin Shuya's shot out of the air past Kirby.

A second goal, while on the man-advantage, gave the capacity crowd at Civic arena some hope.

Mike Enemark threaded the needle from the slot with a wrist shot after taking a pass from Shuya.

Any hopes of a rally were quashed when Kelowna's Fred Bower scored Buckaroos' seventh goal at 15:57.

Lakers scored a third power-play goal at 11:14 of the third period with Shuya blasting a hard slap-shot from the top of the face-off circle.

Buckaroos closed the scoring at 18:53 with Harrison collecting his second short-handed goal of the evening.

Lakers outshot the Buckaroos 48-41, taking only seven of 24 minor penalties while Kelowna had a five-minute major and a 10-minute misconduct penalty as well.

In other BCJHL action Sunday night, Penticton Knights downed Merritt Centennials 8-1 in a fight-filled game, Langley Eagles defeated nanaimo Islanders 4-1 and New Westminster Royals edged Shuswap Totems 9-8.

On Saturday, Kelowna downed Penticton 9-4, Abbotsford Flyers defeated Richmond Sockeyes 10-6, New Westminster defeated Revelstoke Rockets 8-3 and Langley edged Cowichan Capitals 7-6 in overtime.

PLAYOFFS

BCJHL Playoffs begin Tuesday night with a pair of games in the Interior division. Buckaroos will square off with Shuswap Totems in Kelowna while Vernon will play host to Penticton Knights... both are best-of-seven series.

Coach Lawrence will lead his team into the playoffs on an optimistic note for Vernon fans.

"We'll be right on top of our game, hitting, forechecking and pressing... we'll take them... and then we'll get Kelowna in the final."



LAKERS' Bob Wensley (20) shoots one wide of the net as Kelowna goaltender Randy Kirby moves to cover his open side

and Buckaroos' defenceman Tony Savarin moves in to cover his goalie. Despite outplaying the Buckaroos, Lakers

settled on the disappointing end of an 8-3 score to finish in second place in the BCJHL Interior division behind the Buckaroos. (Daily News Photo)

CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL

Panthers top valley

Vernon Panthers scored an impressive 7-2 victory over Westsyde Whundas Saturday night in Salmon Arm,

would have beat us last night," he said.

Lane Kamke led the defence in scoring with a 10 point

Vernon
Daily
News

sports

Editor—DON KENDALL