

Opening night jitters settle on serious play

It may have been a bit of a shakey start what with a full compliment of rookies, but Vernon Lakers hockey camp officially got underway Thursday evening at Priest Valley arena.

This morning, Lakers' coach Chuck Tapp, along with co-coach Mike Enemark and a few veteran players were hard at it again putting the 60 young hopefuls through their paces.

NERVOUS

"It went well for the first night," said Tapp of Thursday's opening round of skating. the kids were nervous last night but they've settled down today. We have about 60 players including goaltenders. . . a nice workable figure."

Tapp will hold two practice sessions today and a third this evening and besides skating drills, he will commence scrimmages also. However, there's no thought of cuts until at least Saturday.

"I'll probably make my first cuts after our first scrimmage Saturday morning," said Tapp.

Meanwhile, Tapp is impressed with the players he has out and especially with the size and speed of his rookies.

"We've got really good-sized players," said Tapp. "This year's camp compared to last year is far bigger. . . and faster! I'm surprised because usually when you get size you give up speed but that hasn't been the case at all."

Rookie camp will continue throughout the weekend with the main camp to commence Sept. 6.

"I'm anxious to put them all together (vets and rookies) in the main camp and get started," added Tapp. "The pace really picks up when you get your veterans in camp."

IMPRESSED

Tapp, and Enemark have been particularly impressed with the local players in camp.

"The local talent is really good," said Tapp. "The minor system here is excellent. . . you can tell because most of the kids have been well coached."

Tapp is also quite impressed with the youngest members in camp, a pair of 15 year olds from this area.

Another person Tapp has been impressed with is his assistant Mike Enemark who has taken care of most of the on-ice drilling, etc. to this point.

EXCELLENT JOB

"Mike's been doing an excellent job. . . he's still got a few things to learn but he's working out just fine."

Enemark, meanwhile, voiced some of his own opinions on the progression of Lakers' camp thus far.

"It hasn't gone too bad. . . we're starting to get more organized now. We're pleased with what we've got in camp but it's hard to tell just what we do have until scrimmages start this morning."