

Rookie looks forward to playing with Lakers

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Dreams of playing professional hockey run through the minds of nearly every young player at some time, but in order to achieve that goal they must progress through proper channels.

For 17-year old Chris Saunders, one of a dozen local hockey players currently battling for a position with Vernon Lakers, it means first making the step into junior hockey.

Saunders, just one year out of midget hockey, played a handful of exhibition and playoff games with Lakers last season and with the memories still fresh in his mind, hopes to become a full-time member of the local junior hockey club.

"I feel it's an honor to play for the Lakers and it would be one of the highlights of my life," said Saunders.

At six feet, and a solid 180 pounds, Saunders seems well suited to a role as defenceman with Lakers though it is a position currently being contested by at least 13 other players.

"I think the experience I got last year will help me make the club," said Saunders. "I've got fair size but I'd like to have

maybe a few more pounds ... but I don't consider myself slow at all.

"I'll just have to work hard and hit all the guys. Mike (Enemark) has been helping me out—giving me a few tips and Gavin (Shuya) has been helping me out too ... he's got a lot of experience."

Unlike Shuya, however, Saunders considers himself to be more of a defensive style defenceman whereas the former led the team in scoring last season from the blueline.

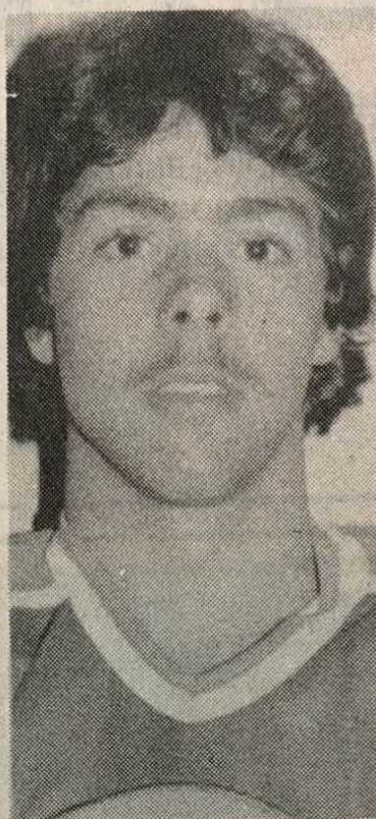
"I consider myself more of a defensive defenceman than at offensive one ... I've been that way all my life," said Saunders.

Then, of course, everything depends on whether Lakers' coach Chuck Tapp feels Saunders is the type of player who can help his club, or fit into his mold.

"He (Tapp) sounds like a really good coach with lots of discipline," he said. "I really would enjoy playing for him (Tapp) if I got the opportunity."

Keeping his future in mind, whether he makes the Lakers or not, Saunders has enrolled in Okanagan College with a partial timetable that would allow him to participate in junior hockey if he has the chance.

"Basically I worked my courses around practice times and game times so it



CHRIS SAUNDERS
... an honor

will work out well. Actually the courses I picked don't require too much work ... a bit of course," said Saunders.

However, regardless of whether he becomes a hockey player, the local youngster intends to complete an education for the years ahead.

"I'm looking for a college scholarship," he said. "I'd like to have a degree so I have something to fall back on."

Although Saunders doesn't feel he, or any other player, should make the team simply because they are local, he does feel that local input can aid the team in more ways than just on the ice.

"It helps the team out to have local kids on the roster because fans will come out just to see how they're doing," said Saunders.

Tapp will have his squad trimmed down to a workable size this week in readiness for the regular season which opens Sept. 20, at home, when Lakers entertain Shuswap Totems.

Vernon club ladies' draw

Monthly Medal and Pin Round.
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9 a.m.: Karen Hassard, Flo Whiting, Peggy Taylor, and Betty Pierce.

9:07 a.m.: Moe Turner, Celia Merritt, Nancy Mann, and Phyl Campbell.

9:14 a.m.: Trudy Willis, Anne Robertson, Karen Kindrachuk, and Betty Clarke.

9:21 a.m.: Dot Gower, Taffy Kirk, Irene Baker, and Mae Correale.

9:28 a.m.: Jean Wetherill, Jimmy

Wills, Irene Bilinski, and Jean Stowell.

9:35 a.m.: Edith Bawtree, Gladys Holland, Mary Towers, and Marilyn Wood.

9:42 a.m.: Jean Harris, Pat Bossoms, Mary Loughhead, and Joy Curwen.

9:49 a.m.: Min Baker, Anne Dickinson, and Marie Millidge.

9:56 a.m.: Betty Warrington, Noreen McCaron, and Jill Keckalo.

10:03 a.m.: Gloria Irwin, Pat Brkich, and Mavis Struthers.