

# Junior officials are whistle-happy



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How much can an official effect a game?

Or, a better question would be, how much should an official be allowed to effect a game?

There have been isolated instances when the outcome of an important game has been directly attributed to an error in officiating . . . not many, mind you, but a few.

One that comes to mind in recent years was the 1979 Stanley Cup final series between New York Islanders and Philadelphia Flyers. On this particular occasion, Islanders scored the game-winning goal in the sixth game, of a seven-game series, on a very obvious offside play.

There was no point arguing for the Flyers because neither the linesman, nor referee, blew the whistle on the play and the goal stood. The television replays showed the Islander winger in question was indeed a good full stride off-side.

## WON CUP

The damage was done, though, and Islanders won their first of four Stanley Cup championships . . . a fact which, in itself, at least proves that the New York team deserved the original championship.

In the above mentioned case, the problem was quite obviously a lack of quality in the officiating on that night in New York.

Sometimes the problem doesn't concern quality however . . . just quantity.

How often have you tried to watch a game and been totally frustrated by the sheer volume of calls made? So much so, at times, that it seems the game will never end.

If you've been following Vernon lakers this season, you probably know what I mean. To date there's just been too damn much officiating and too little hockey at Lakers' games.

## 44 MINORS

For instance, last Friday night, when Lakers met Revelstoke Rangers, there were 44 minor penalties called, not to mention a half dozen major penalties to each of the teams, as well as game and match misconduct penalties.

It wasn't a particularly dirty, nor violent, game. In fact what it was was a pretty dull game which lasted until well after 11 p.m. . . . more than three hours to play one hour of hockey.

It's probably not necessary to expound on how boring that becomes for the guy whose spent four or five bucks to see a junior hockey game.

The following night, in Merritt, it seemed as though the game was over when the first period whistle finally blew. There had been 18 minor penalties called in that period alone.

There was a time, not so long ago, when 18 minor penalties in a game was termed a fairly heavily penalized affair . . . but 18 in one period? The worst part was, there might have been a half dozen that were even worthy of

calling. The rest, it seems, were the result of this particular referee's passion for hearing his own whistle go off.

As in the game against Revelstoke, the previous night, you could actually count on the fingers of one hand just how many times the teams were playing each other at full strength.

Only Lakers' first home game, against Shuswap, the previous week, had there been anywhere near a reasonable number of calls made . . . there were 26 in that game, along with majors.

## PLAY STOPPAGES

And as if there aren't already enough stoppages in play, there are linesmen who waste additional time with their silly reluctance to drop the puck at the appropriate time.

More often than not they wave the centres out of the face-off circle and sometimes wave the second set out and sometimes even the third and fourth set etc. etc. etc.

Why did they ever give a linesman that kind of power? What useful purpose does it serve? If they are, like they insist, afraid of having their fingers whacked by over-anxious centres, why not drop the puck like they should and get out of the way like they are supposed to?

Nobody paid their money to see a lineman drop a puck, and absolutely nobody paid their money to see a marathon penalty-calling session.

Let's get serious BCJHL officials. Let's play hockey.

# Caldow leaves Cougars

Veteran Dave Caldow announced Tuesday he will not be playing for Vernon Cougars during the 1983-84 season.

The rugged left winger won three North Okanagan Hockey League scoring titles during his six seasons with the Cougars.

"There are several reasons I've decided not to return to Cougars," Caldow said, "but one of the main things is travel. I don't want to make the long road trips."

Caldow, who plans to play in the non-contact Pleasant Valley Hockey League, is among at least nine veterans who will not be back with Cougars. Others include goalie Ed Forslund, defenceman Murray Batty, and forwards George Fargher, Mike Burns, Marty Stein, Jeff Vest, Ernie Gare, and Wayne Dye.

Two others, Randy Merritt and Bernie Reed, will not be available until November due to work commitments.

## FROM OLIVER

Five of the holes on the roster will be filled by players from the now-defunct Oliver Bighorns. Forwards Doug Bennest, Randy Conley, and Brent Feist; defenceman Blair Chapman; and goalie Pat Murphy have joined the Cougars.

"If we hadn't got the five guys from Oliver, we probably wouldn't have a team," said Cougars' General Manager Gary Swanson. "We lost a lot of talent, but the Oliver guys will help."

Another newcomer at Cougars' practice, Tuesday night, was defenceman Glen Fester. Fester played minor hockey in Vernon before spending one season with Merritt Centennials and then attending the University of North Dakota on a hockey scholarship.

## WANTS DANCHUK

Swanson also hopes to get forward Rod Danchuk, of Kelowna. Danchuk starred with Kelowna Buckaroos, in the B.C. Junior Hockey League, before playing intermediate.

"I hope to know about Danchuk this week," Swanson said. "He sure wouldn't hurt our hockey club."

Lakers' training camp resumes tonight, at 8:30 p.m., in the Civic Arena.

Cougars will play a series of exhibition games and tournaments this season to qualify for Coy Cup provincial playdowns.

Vernon's first games will be Oct. 8 and 9, in Oliver, against Powell River Regals. The following weekend, Oct. 15 and 16, Cougars host Quesnel Kangaroos.