

COACH'S DEBUT IMPRESSIVE

Lakers return to form as they humble Merritt

By JIM JUDD

Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers made an impressive debut under acting head coach Mike Enemark Friday night at Civic Arena.

Lakers took a 4-2 lead after 20 minutes of play and added six unanswered goals in the second period enroute to an 11-4 victory over visiting Merritt Centennials.

Under Enemark, Lakers resembled their hockey club of one season ago with close checking, speed and a concentration push toward the opposition's goal which netted the local team 63 shots on net for the evening.

However, the biggest contributing factor was the absence of bad penalties as far as Enemark was concerned.

"I don't think we took a retaliatory penalty and that really made a difference," said Enemark. "I thought it was a well-refereed game."

Lakers split 18 minor penalties with Centennials with the two teams skating through the entire third stanza without an infraction called.

Enemark also singled out a better positional game as a major contributing factor to his charges' success.

"The guys really want to play hockey," said Enemark. "They were



BRUCE MAJOR
... four points

playing their positions and taking their time."

Lakers got two-goal performances from Rob Kossan, Glen Kirk and Tom Kurucz but once again, 16-year-old rookie sensation Bruce Major earned the lion's share of the spotlight.

Major opened the scoring on a give-and-go play with Kossan at 1:03 of the first period, hitting the long-side of the net with a low slapshot from the top of the circle. Major also contributed assists on all goals by Kossan and Kirk during a free-wheeling second period.

Kossan, Ron Sparks,

and Clay Cotie also tallied for Lakers before the first period ended while John Patko and Brent Demarais, with his first of three for the night, kept Centennials in the game.

Kurucz opened the scoring spree in the second period when he redirected a centering pass from Kevin Thorlakson at 2:43.

Less than a minute later newcomer Randy Padalec notched his first goal in a Lakers' jersey. That goal came off assists by brothers Bob and David Wensley.

Kirk scored his first for the night at 11:48 while Kossan made the score 8-2 at the 13-minute mark ... both set up by perfect passes from Major.

Centennials replaced starting netminder Norm Schwing, of Vernon, with regular starter Geoff Wiltshire after Lakers' eighth goal. However, Kirk, with his second, and Kurucz both beat Wiltshire before the period ended for a healthy 10-2 lead after 40 minutes.

Demarais beat Lakers' Kelly Muir with a pair of quick goals early in the third period, one on a power-play just 37 seconds into the period and the other just one minute later.

Muir came in to replace starting netminder Shawn Oswald who performed between the pipes for the first two periods.

"We were up by eight goals so I wanted Kelly to get a little action so he'd get some confidence," said Enemark when asked for his reasons for replacing Oswald. "There was no pressure on him (Muir) to perform at that point."

Lakers' captain Bob Wensley closed out the game's scoring at the 17:53 mark with a picture perfect goal from the slot set up by his younger brother from behind the net.

The win improves Lakers' season record to three wins and one loss and leaves the local club undefeated at home so far this season.

Lakers, under Enemark, will have an opportunity to pick up their first win on the road Sunday night when they pay a visit on Shuswap Totems. Totems are still looking for their first win of the season.

In other BCJHL action Friday night, Penticton Knights doubled Summerland 6-3, Langley Eagles downed Richmond Sockeyes 7-3, and Abbotsford earned their first point this season as they skated to a 4-4 tie with Cowichan Valley Capitals.

In League action tonight, Merritt visits Shuswap, Summerland plays host to Murray Lawrence's Revelstoke Rangers and Abbotsford is in Nanaimo.