

CRUCIAL GAME FRIDAY

Lakers blast Buckaroos

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers moved to within two points of first place Penticton Knights in the BCJHL Interior Division, Tuesday night, with an 8-2 victory over Summerland Buckaroos, at Vernon Civic Arena.

It doesn't take a keen sports mind to have seen Lakers were simply too much team for the failing Buckaroos. After falling behind 1-0 on a power-play tally early in the first period, Lakers roared back with seven straight goals before Bucks had a chance to get another tally on the scoreboard.

Lakers' Coach Mike Enemark was ecstatic with the outcome.

"We'll be in first place on Friday night," said Enemark referring to the local club's shot at the top when they take on the hometown Penticton Knights, Friday. "Mind you they still have two games in hand on us."

Meanwhile, Lakers' decisive win over Buckaroos resembled grown men playing with boys and despite the fact that Summerland appears to be regressing as the season goes by, Enemark sees it in a different light.

"I don't think they (Summerland) are going downhill but they're having it tough right now," Enemark said. "They've got a lot of young players and it's starting to show now. Our older players are starting to shine now and we've reached the turning point."

Half the 10 goals scored during the course of the evening came on power-play situations with Buckaroos hitting the scoreboard first at 5:25 while Lakers' Nick Kapicki was off for a slashing infraction.

The Bucks' goal came off the stick of Kelly Evin who also scored Summerland's second goal, also on a man-advantage situation, late in the second stanza.

Bob Wensley drew Lakers even at 8:56 while Bucks were a man short. After taking a pass from brother Dave, Bob broke around the outside of Bucks' defence and put a hard wrist-shot over the glove hand of Summerland goaltender Mark Taylor.

Taylor, incidentally, was the only reason Lakers didn't enjoy an even wider margin of victory as the net-minder kicked out 51 shots besides the eight that found their mark.

Dave Wensley sent Lakers ahead 2-1 when his harmless looking wrist-shot fooled Taylor.

Both Wensleys picked up two goals for the night while each also were credited with two assists.

Nick Kapicki and Kevin Kalbelka, the latter with his first of two for the night, completed the first period scoring. Kapicki's marker was another power-play tally with the sophomore centre banging in Greg Kowal's rebound.

Kalbelka's goal was the result of a picture-perfect play from Bruce Major with Kalbelka sweeping the puck into the net in one motion off the pass.

The teams completed all the scoring in the second period with both Wensleys getting their second goals, Kalbelka his second, and Rob Kossan completing the scoring at 19:34 with Lakers' third man-advantage marker of the night.

Lakers enjoyed a considerable margin in power-play situations during the third period but never capitalized.

"We lost our concentration a bit toward the end," said Enemark. "I guess you have to expect that in an 8-2 game though."

One player who never lost any of his concentration during the entire course of the game was Lakers' goaltender Jim Young. Though he was called on to make just 26 saves, Young looked particularly sharp on several occasions.

One of these shots was a clean breakaway by Buckaroos' Shawn Harrison in which Young stopped the speedy forward at point-blank range with a kick save.

Lakers picked up 12 minors and one misconduct penalty during the match while Summerland was handed 15 minors, one major and a pair of misconducts.

In other BCJHL action Tuesday night, Richmond Sockeyes edged Abbotsford Flyers 3-2 and Langley Eagles downed Cowichan Capitals 6-2.

Eric Catchpole, Mike Scardina and Richard Novak scored for Richmond which led 2-1 after the middle frame following a scoreless opening period. Abbotsford got goals from Randy Douville and Doug McFaul.

Meanwhile, the Coastal Division leading Eagles got three goals from Pat Barnes.



SUMMERLAND'S Jeff Finley, thrashing at the hands of Wensley checks Vernon's high-flying Bob and the Lakers. Finley will be in a uniform for Portland Winter Hawks, tonight, in the Western Hockey League as he and two team-mates join Summerland's major junior affiliate for a game.

(Daily News Photo)

JUDD'S JOURNAL

Lakers benefit from independence

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

There are presently teams in the B.C. Junior Hockey League who are finding that you can't have your cake and eat it too where their affiliation with major junior hockey clubs is concerned.

One of the few exceptions is Vernon Lakers thanks to the insight of owner/general manager Carl Enemark.

By refusing to affiliate with any tier one club as a feeder team, Enemark drew sharp criticism early in the season. In fact, Lakers once bore the brunt of heavy criticism in a number of areas. There was even some speculation, mostly by misinformed individuals, that the Vernon club would never stand on its own feet for the duration of the season.

LAST LAUGH

At this point, it is Enemark and his team that are getting the last laugh while teams such as Summerland Buckaroos are crying the blues and will be for some time to come.

It's not because the Bucks are deteriorating into a mediocre club that has touched off their problems, it's because they had the misfortune to align themselves with Portland Winter Hawks, of the Western Hockey League.

At one time, farming your team out to a major junior club could pay big dividends in the junior A circuit but it's a different story these days.

Whereas the average age in major junior was formerly 19 years old, that has been replaced by an average age of 17 or 18. Most teams have a big stock of 16 year olds, and even the occasional 15 year old on their roster. What they don't have in uniform they probably have playing with their junior A affiliate team.

Hence Summerland's problem... a healthy dose of youthful hockey players. But it's not their biggest problem right now.

With Portland Winter Hawks presently hurting from a rash of injuries (youngsters don't hold up as well as the old 20-year olds do in major junior)

they've had to plunder the ranks of their affiliate team to fill the void.

Summerland will pack off three youngsters, and I mean youngsters, to Portland today so they can dress for a game tonight. One of these is 16-year old Jeff Finley, who epitomizes the youth movement in major junior hockey today. Finley is barely out of midget hockey, in fact, he's not even out of midget hockey but the current shift has made the 16-year old a necessary piece of merchandise in the big league.

Meanwhile Summerland coach Wayne Naka runs the risk of losing his players to injuries they could receive while playing in the Western Hockey League. If they aren't injured, there is a chance they will be recalled, to stay, at a late-date.

It all leaves Enemark sitting pretty with his non-affiliated bunch who are presently making their move for supremacy in the BCJHL without the fear of having their ranks depleted by some desperate major junior club.

The only dealing with a major junior club Lakers have had this season was a one-way deal that saw Scott Young come to Vernon, rather than co-operate with a trade between Winnipeg Warriors and Kelowna Wings.

A VICTIM

Young, if you may recall, was a victim of junior hockey senility at 19 and in his sophomore year with Kelowna. Wings were looking to trade away their pensioners for some more youthful players at the time.

Presently the only interference Enemark is experiencing with a major junior club is Lethbridge Broncos' bid to secure Lakers' goaltender Shawn Oswald.

Enemark is not opposed to letting Oswald go, if he wants, but Broncos will have to deal some equal talent in his direction in order to complete any such deal.

And anything that comes this way via Lethbridge would have to be the outright property of Vernon.



ONE GAME TRIAL

Winter Hawks call up Finley

By DON KENDALL
Daily News Sports Editor

Jeff Finley has gone a long way in one year!

Finley, 16, spent the 1982-83 season with Vernon Midget Reps. The rangy defenceman is now playing with Summerland Buckaroos, of the B.C. Junior Hockey League, and has been called up by Portland Winter Hawks for tonight's Western Hockey League game, in Portland, against Calgary Wranglers.

"I'm pretty excited about playing my first game in the WHL," Finley said.

Finley will be a pretty tired hockey player by next weekend. He was with the Buckaroos in Vernon, Tuesday night, when they were crushed 8-2 by the Lakers. He flew to Portland earlier today, will play with the Winter Hawks tonight, and be back in Summerland for Thursday's game against Shuswap Totems. On Saturday, Bucks meet the Totems in Salmon Arm.

"I'm getting lots of ice time and gaining confidence," he said. "The biggest difference between midget and

junior is the speed... it is so much faster in the BCJHL."

Finley has 11 assists in 18 games with the Buckaroos. "But, I haven't been able to pop a goal yet," he said.

Summerland General Manager Gib Cyr is pleased with the progress Finley is making.

Cyr said, "Jeff is young and is still developing, but we're happy with the way he is progressing. I know Portland is very high on him. They (Winter Hawks) have three guys injured and one of the players they're calling up for a look is Jeff."

Portland, who chose Finley in the minor hockey draft last year, sent him to Summerland after he was cut by the Lakers. Vernon has four defencemen with junior experience and Chuck Tapp, who was coaching Lakers at that time, didn't feel Finley could crack the line-up.

Although he would have liked to play in his hometown, Finley is happy in Summerland. "They're treating me very well," he said. "We're not playing with much intensity right now, so we're having our problems. But, I'm sure we'll get things turned around."