

THREE GAMES IN THREE DAYS

Busy weekend for Lakers

The Christmas rush takes on a whole new meaning for Vernon Lakers as they make a concentrated stab at securing first place in the BCJHL Interior Division before the holiday break.

The task will be made doubly difficult by a heavy schedule which will see the local club play three games in three nights this weekend . . . two of those on the road.

Tonight Lakers travel to Salmon Arm to take on the Shuswap Totems for the first time since mid-October. Friday night the Vernon club hosts Merritt Centennials, while Satur-

day evening, the junior squad visits Revelstoke to square off with the Rangers.

Naturally, Lakers will take it one game at a time since each victory is important to the club's status in the Interior Division standings.

"We've got to win to stay with Penticton," said Lakers' coach Mike Enemark. "We can't afford to drop any games . . . you have to realize that every game is two points and last year two points cost us first place."

Despite the lengthy absence since the two teams last met, Enemark

didn't get any preliminary scouting report on the Totems.

"I was asked why I didn't bother to scout them (Totems) before this game and I said it was up to them to worry about us," Enemark offered. "Sure they're a team that can hurt us, but if we're on our game, we've got nothing to worry about."

Totems are currently tied with Revelstoke for the fourth and last playoff spot. Indications are that this is going to be the most hotly contested spot in the league.

Both Totems and Rangers trail third place

Summerland by two points so every point for those clubs is also vital.

Meanwhile, Penticton Knights travel to Merritt tonight and unless the hapless Centennials can pull a bit of magic out of the bag, two more points for the Knights is somewhat of a foregone conclusion.

Totems, one of the biggest clubs in the league, will probably go with a physical game according to Enemark.

"I think they'll probably come at us physically," said the Lakers' coach. "If we stick to our game plan though they won't have a chance."

"They've got some good scorers and you have to be careful of them but we'll let them worry about us instead . . . they have only one scoring line whereas we have three lines that can put the puck in the net."

Lakers will have one new face in their lineup tonight as newly acquired forward Shannon Pohl will see his first action.

Pohl, 18, came to Lakers via Fort McMurray Oil Barons in a trade that saw defenceman Dan Baker head for the Alberta Junior Hockey League club.

Pohl has practiced with Vernon since last week, but only recently received his official release which will allow him to don a Lakers' jersey.

With Penticton, the Knights have a heavy schedule coming up beginning early next week when they will play 10 games in 13 nights. Along the way



SHANNON POHL
... newest Laker

Knights will meet Shuswap for a home-and-home series. Totems have defeated Knights three times already this season.

Enemark sees the heavy schedule as a turnaround point for both his club and the Knights.

"We want to keep the pressure on them now because I think if they start to lose they'll panic."

LOOK BACK FIVE YEARS

DECEMBER, 1978

Vernon Panthers lost on Friday night, but still managed to reach today's semi-finals of the Belmont Invitational Basketball Tournament in Victoria. The host team, Belmont, overcame a nine-point deficit to dump Panthers 71-65.

Panthers in Victoria for hoop tournament

Vernon Panthers were scheduled to meet Parkland, of Victoria, today in opening round play at the Victoria Police Senior Boys' Basketball Tournament.

Sixteen teams, including eight from Vancouver Island, are competing in the three-day event.

Panthers' Coach Jack Yamaoka said he is looking forward to the tourney to give him an indication how strong his club is.

"We'll meet some good teams in Victoria," Yamaoka said Wednesday before embarking on their long journey. "We're looking forward to the competition."

Parkland was one of the top 'A' teams in the province last season before mov-

ing up to the 'AA' level. Vernon's second opponent will be either Mt. Douglas, of Victoria, which is ranked seventh in B.C., or Burnaby Central, which received honorable mention in the first provincial top 10 poll of the year.

Panthers go into the tourney with two of their key players listed as doubtful starters. Guard-forward Rick Kaufmann has been sick all week and may not see any action while 6'6" centre Brian Kruger is hobbled by tendonitis in his foot.

"We want to take a look at Brian (Kruger) this weekend to see what he can do under the boards," Yamaoka said. "But, we're not sure how much he'll be able to play."

