

CRUCIAL GAME TONIGHT

Lakers blast hapless Cents

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports
Vernon Lakers opened up a four-point spread between themselves and Penticton Knights, Monday, with a 12-4 yawner over the hapless Merritt Centennials, in the Civic Arena.

While the game was somewhat lacklustre, the off-ice antics added a bit of spice to the evening.

Merritt Coach Chuck Tapp, formerly coach of Lakers, became involved in an altercation with a spectator at the end of the second period and didn't

return to the Centennials' bench for the third stanza.

"Tapp committed a cardinal sin," said Lakers' coach Mike Enemark. "He let the fans get to him and you just can't do that ... you always have to grin and bear it."

Meanwhile on the ice,

there were a few bright spots as work-horse centre Nick Kapicki scored three goals and added a pair of helpers for a five point outing. Kevin Kobelka notched three, third period markers giving each player their first hat tricks in junior hockey.

Lakers also received goals from Rob Kossan, Dave and Bob Wensley, Allan Young, Clay Cotie, and Greg Kowal. Dave Wensley, Kossan, Kowal and Young also contributed two assists apiece.

A pair of juvenile for-

wards, Mark Holland and Duane Jackson, each got a first hand glimpse of life in junior hockey and turned in excellent performances.

Lakers led 2-1 and 8-2 by period scores.

Brent Desmarais scored twice for Merritt with Conn Raesler and former Laker Rob Revell adding singles. Centennials stung the Vernon specialty team for three power-play goals though they were justifiable in Enemark's eyes.

"It's awfully tough to play hockey when you're up against a club like that," said Enemark.

"Actually I feel sorry for them because I played for a team like that."

NEW GOALIE

Vernon also received an excellent goaltending performance from newcomer Peter Martin who made several dazzling saves while facing 29 shots on the evening.

Gerald Forbes had a typically busy night in the Merritt nets facing 69 shots poured on by Lakers' shooters.

The win was the ninth in a row for Vernon, which has an opportunity to strengthen its hold on first

place if it can earn its 10th consecutive victory in Penticton, tonight.

"This will mean first place by Christmas, or else another month before we can take control," said Enemark.

Lakers have yet to earn a victory inside Penticton's arena this season and both Enemark and his charges would like to break that jinx immediately.

"We're going to try to get back to our game plan," Enemark said.

"We're not going to let them get a chance to get started."

MAY PLAY

Lakers' forward Scott Young is a possible starter for tonight's encounter. Young, sidelined for the past three games with a minor shoulder injury, feels strong enough to return and he may see limited action.

Another familiar face in tonight's lineup will be that of Ron Berezowski, who becomes eligible to play again after a three-game suspension. Berezowski picked up the suspension last Thursday night in Salmon Arm when he was fingered for high-sticking.



VERNON LAKERS' sophomore forward Greg Kowal, 19, gets the standard rough treatment in front of Merritt goalkeeper Gerald Forbes during an easy

12-4 Lakers' victory, Monday, at Civic Arena. Kowal scored once and set up a pair of goals but the night's star was linemate Nick Kapicki who scored his

first hat trick in junior hockey and added two assists. Lakers face Penticton Knights, tonight, in Penticton.

KENDALL'S KORNER

Tough decision

