

Knights continue mastery of Lakers

Penticton Knights maintained their hold on first place in the BCJHL Interior Division Tuesday night when they edged Vernon Lakers 6-4, on home ice.

The loss was Vernon's sixth in eight outings against the division leaders this season, but even that dismal statistic doesn't weigh too heavily on the club according to General manager Carl Enemark.

"The boys are still loose," said Enemark. "I think on any given night if we have to beat them in their rink we can do it . . . we just have to have our full club present and healthy . . . there's nothing to worry about."

Lakers lost the numbers game both on the ice and on the scoreboard. They finished the contest with just 13 skaters after beginning with 15.

"We ran out of legs because we only had 15 skaters and then lost two of them because of fights," Enemark said.

Lakers lost defenceman Glen Kirk and forward Shannon Pohl due to fighting infractions. The club is still without the services of captain Bob Wensley who is still sitting out a suspension. Defenceman Chris Saunders is on the injury list until a contusion on his head has had time to subside. A third defenceman, Gavin Shuya, missed the Tuesday night game due to stretched back muscles.

To worsen matters, Lakers received the bulk of the game's penalties including several situations that left them two men short.

"We were playing three against five for seven minutes in the first period and then we were short-handed five minutes in the second period," said Enemark. "We got behind them and never caught up."

"It seems we get the rough calls in their rink and we always have to catch up . . . and in Penticton that's a tough thing to do."



ROB KOSSAN

... scored twice

Rob Kossan scored twice for the local club, which was tied 2-2 at the end of the first period but trailed 5-4 after 40 minutes.

Scott Young and Bruce

major had the other goals for Vernon. Murray Winnicki, and Todd Drost scored twice each for Knights with singles from league scoring leader Brett Hull and Aaron Scott.

Knights stung Lakers for three goals during a five-minute power play at the end of the first period and the beginning of the second.

In other BCJHL action on the Coast Tuesday night, Nanaimo Clippers blanked Richmond Sockeyes 4-0 to take possession of second place in the Coastal Division, while Abbotsford Flyers, sparked by good goaltending, got by Burnaby Blue Hawks 5-3.

In the only game tonight, Revelstoke Rangers visit Summerland Buckaroos.

Lakers next action will be Thursday night, in Merritt. The club's next home game will be Friday night when it entertains Summerland, at the Civic Arena.

Dark cloud over team



By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Talk about dark clouds hanging over a team.

However, if its any consolation, I'm not talking about Vancouver Canucks . . . it is the Vernon Lakers I'm referring to. God knows I've got enough problems worrying about them without having to burden myself with the Canucks.

Just one of the advantages of being a Manitoba ex-patriot . . . not worrying about the Canucks I mean.

In the same light, I only wish Lakers had the room to be as inept as their professional counterparts on the coast. After all, Canucks don't have to bang their heads against any walls trying to maintain first place and the distinct advantage of an extra home-ice game come playoff time.

No, Canucks only have to worry about being one paltry point better than at least one other inept team in the Smythe Division. On that note, they get at least a token ticket into the playoffs.

Being in a division with Edmonton Oilers fairly dictates that your team will be in the distance somewhere, just where in the distance doesn't really matter.

HOME FRONT

On the home front, things are a bit different. Lakers already have their ticket into the playoff round, but unless there's a dramatic turnaround, their chances of success look no better than the Canucks' chances of success against Edmonton.

With the exception of Merritt Centennials, who have only won four games in 42 starts this season, Penticton Knights have beaten lakers more times than any other team in the Interior Division.

The Knights have a .500 record against Lakers in Vernon and are so far batting 1.000 against their closest rivals while playing on their home ice.

It boils down to six losses out of eight tries for the lakers against Penticton this season. If, as Lakers' management feels, Vernon is considered the team to beat this year, then Knights are certainly doing a good job of beating them.

Believe it or not, I actually blamed myself for the Vernon club's plight. Well, not seriously you understand, but

it did occur to me there was a possibility that I was jinxing the team when they played on the road. In the time I have been in this city, covering the Lakers, the team has never won on the road while I've travelled with them.

LOST ON ROAD

Let me strengthen the theory with a few reiterations.

Last season, I climbed aboard the Lakers' blue express for Revelstoke where the local club could put the finishing touches on first place at Christmas time. Being number one hinged on beating the somewhat inept Revelstoke Rockets.

They lost!

Finding that I had never visited the beautiful metropolis of Merritt I ventured forth with the club early this season to the location of the BCJHL's worst franchise.

They lost!

Get the picture? But I've officially cleared myself of any responsibility since lakers' 6-4 loss to the Knights, Tuesday night, in Penticton. I wasn't there!

Considering the Interior Division race for supremacy is nothing more than a two-team battle, and has been for some time, Lakers had better not wait any longer to get into the fight.

Statistically speaking, Lakers appear to have a more solid club. Out of nine losses this season, Penticton has dropped seven of those to other teams in the division. Meanwhile, Vernon, with 10 losses, has only lost four times to other clubs.

SIX LOSSES

The scary part is the six losses to Penticton. It looks now that even if Vernon manages to take first place, the home-ice advantage will still leave them underdogs in a best-of-seven series with the Knights.

Clearly the time for positive thinking has arrived. Now that my personal jinx has been lifted I can feel free to accompany the team on the road once again and I hope they can now feel free to win on the road regardless of my company.

These two teams will meet four more times in regular season play and Lakers have their work cut out for them. They have to win all four to even their record against Penticton.