

Milestones reached as Lakers dominate

Rob Kossan and Scott Young each scored three times to lead Vernon Lakers to an easy 14-4 victory over the hometown Merritt Centennials Thursday night.

Kossan becomes the third member of the local club to surpass the 40-goal plateau this season while Young is only several tallies away from that mark himself.

Meanwhile, captain Bob Wensley scored twice to give him 44 goals in the season and the overall lead with the local club. However, Wensley suffered a bad charliehorse and will sit on the sidelines for a couple of games while the badly bruised thigh heals itself.

The game was never in doubt for Lakers as they led by period scores of 4-0 and 9-1. The only thing General Manager Carl Enemark hoped to do was escape the contest free of injuries that might plague the club with the BCJHL playoffs coming up.

Greg Kowal also reached a milestone with his 20th goal of the season and he becomes the 11th Vernon player to score 20 or more goals this season.



BOB WENSLEY
... 44th goal

Only Ron Berezowski, with 17 goals, is short of the record now.

Other Vernon scorers included Bruce Major, closing in on the 30-goal plateau, Dave Wensley with his 43rd tally, Al Young, Shannon Pohl and Lamont Martel.

Mark Bogoslawski scored twice for Centennials while Mike Lapoint

and captain John Tent had singles.

Vernon outshot the Centennials by a healthy margin of 6x 74-34 and picked up just four of 12 minor penalties handed out.

In other BCJHL Interior Division action Thursday night, hometown Revelstoke Rangers surprised visiting Summerland Buckaroos 7-1. Ron Bonora and Mike Dickerman scored two goals each to pace Rangers while Ward Carlson scored the lone goal for Bucks.

Lakers play their last regular season home game at Vernon Civic arena tonight as they face the Salmon Arm Totems. With Totems already eliminated from playoff contention and no way the present Interior Division standings can be altered, Lakers again just want to escape without injuries in tonight's contest.

Tonight is another "Can night" for Lakers with any child under the age of 12 admitted free of charge if he or she brings a can of food that will be donated by the local club to food hampers for the needy.

Honeymoon's over let's get to it!



By JIM JUDD Daily News Sports

A good number of Vernon Lakers have already started to make plans for their futures with some heading off to various colleges on scholarship programs while several others harbour thoughts of making a career of the sport on European soil.

Hopefully the lot of them won't forget there's still a hockey season to maintain on the home-front this year and that what they endeavor to achieve this season may have a profound effect on the future of their hockey careers.

The effect we're talking about here means not only their actual future in the sport but the mental attitude they'll forge now and carry with them when they no longer wear the jersey of a Vernon Laker.

PERSONAL RECORDS

Although players such as Dave Wensley and Ken MacKenzie, to name a few, have a good deal on the line with their personal records while many other team members want to cash in on the prolific offensive power of the club, the team's chances of surviving past the month of March is in serious jeopardy unless there's a change of heart amongst them all in general.

There's little doubt that Lakers' fans would appreciate and remember longer, milestones achieved as a team rather than simply a collection of individual records.

The thing that a good number of people are worried about as of late is the inconsistency of the local club. For instance, after blowing Salmon Arm Totems completely out of their building last week, to the tune of 20-4, Lakers turned right around and lost an 8-5 decision to Revelstoke Rangers.

Bear in mind the Rangers, as improved as they may be this season under Murray Lawrence's coaching, are still only marginally better than are the Totems.

In the same light, Lakers treated their loyal following to one of the most intense displays of both offensive and defensive hockey one night not so long ago when they blanked the visiting Summerland Buckaroos 15-0. At the time the Bucks were boasting the accolade of being the most defensive club in the Interior Division. However, on this particular night Lakers made a complete mockery of Bucks' defensive efforts while skating rings around Summerland's not-so-shabby offense as well.

In the last pair of games against Summerland, Lakers have barely managed to win by two goals.

OFFENSIVE POWER

I don't even want to talk about their record against Penticton Knights. However, one of those Knights, whose name I'm not at liberty to disclose, mentioned, off the record to yours truly, that his club probably couldn't stand up to the Lakers in a seven game series because of the local club's great store of offensive power.

Mind you, all this hinges on the Vernon team's ability to put their best foot forward . . . at all times, not just when the spirit is willing.

Playoff time, as everyone knows, is the start of a new season. With this in mind, let's hope Lakers will cast off the shackles of their personal achievement and start performing like a true hockey team.

TEAM SPIRIT

In previous years, last year for instance, the team may have lacked somewhat in the talent department as compared to this year's edition, but what they lacked in that department they more than made up for with a heaping helping of guts, desire and team spirit.

Another aspect Lakers have to take into consideration going into the playoffs is that it's often the time when bigger teams become ripe for an upset. Overconfidence is probably the worst enemy of any sports team. The best teams are always the ones who incorporate a high level of personal discipline, regardless of how easy the opposition may appear to be.

A case in point were the Montreal Canadians who won four straight Stanley Cup Championships from 1976-79 inclusive. After putting two straight under their belts, the 1977-78 version of the team bettered themselves once again by losing just 10 games during the entire regular season en route to their third Stanley Cup. Now that's something the New York Islanders have yet to achieve.

Nobody can tell a young player how to play with desire and intensity, of course, because that's something a guy has to learn for himself over the course of his playing career — they call it experience or maturity or something like that.

I do know one thing though. When the season is over, nobody remembers the team who finished second.