

SERIES RESUMES TONIGHT

Lakers keep slim hopes alive



TRAFFIC WAS CONGESTED around Summerland Buckaroos' goaltender Mark Taylor during game four of the best-of-seven quarter final series bet-

ween Bucks and Vernon lakers, Tuesday night. Lakers buzzed around the Summerland net continually during the game and posted a 4-2 decision over the

hometown Bucks to keep their playoff hopes alive. Bucks lead the series three games to one with game five scheduled for tonight, at 8 p.m., at the Civic Arena. (Daily News Photo)

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers staved off elimination Tuesday night by etching out a 4-2 victory over the hometown Summerland Buckaroos.

The win leaves Lakers trailing Bucks three games to one in their best-of-seven B.C. Junior Hockey League quarter-final series. Game five takes place tonight, at the Vernon Civic Arena, at 8 p.m.

The game was a goaltenders' duel. Buckaroos' Mark Taylor was the only person preventing a complete blowout by Lakers. At the other end of the rink, Vernon's Peter Martin turned in his best performance of the season, robbing Bucks of 24 scoring opportunities, many at close range.

Lakers, meantime, peppered Taylor with 46 drives, four of which finally found their mark. At least a dozen others were labelled goal, but Bucks' stalwart netminder plucked them virtually out of nowhere to keep the game close.

Neither team managed to get on the board in the opening 20 minutes with Lakers going 0-for-two on power-play opportunities and Martin stoning both Albert Anthony and speedy Ward Carlson on breakaway attempts.

Bucks opened the scoring with a bit of good fortune just a minute and 30 seconds into the second frame. Winger Shawn Harrison, who continues to be a thorn in the side of Lakers throughout this series, had his harmless centering pass deflect off the skate of a Vernon defenceman into the net.

Lakers roared back with four consecutive goals, two in the second period and two more in the third before Bucks closed the scoring with Carlson's goal.

Dave Wensely notched his first goal of the series to even the score at 1-1 at 8:03 of the second frame. A pass across the goalmouth from defenceman Glen Kirk gave Wensely an open net to shoot at and the lakers' top scorer made no mistake.

Greg Kowal, with his first of two for the night, put Vernon in front for good at 13:07. A drop pass into the slot set Kowal up for a hard wrist-shot that found the top corner.

The two teams retired to the dressing rooms after 40 minutes with Lakers leading 2-1.

Gavin Shuya gave Lakers a 3-1 lead two minutes into the third stanza when he found himself alone in the slot, the puck on his stick, and Taylor sprawled helplessly on the ice.

A timely power-play goal by Kowal, at 5:57, gave Vernon their insurance marker. Standing all alone at the side of the net, Kowal tapped in a rebound off Shuya's drive from the point.

Carlson tallied at 8:34 when Lakers failed to clear the front of the net, leaving him with a clear view of the net from the slot area.

Lakers' Coach Mike Enemark was relieved, to say the least.

"The intensity was there and that's what counts," said Enemark. "We came with the right attitude and that's what did it."

Summerland Coach Wayne Naka reflected his disappointment in his players.

"We weren't checking the way we should be," Naka said. "They (Lakers) played well... we have to shake it off and get ready for tomorrow."

"She'll be a long one from here on in."

Meanwhile, on other playoff fronts Tuesday night, Penticton Knights took a commanding three games to one lead in their quarter final series as they trimmed the hometown Revelstoke Rangers 7-5.

Rod Schluter scored five times while linemate Brett Hull had four assists for Knights. Despite Knights' healthy series lead Rangers' coach Murray Lawrence isn't about to say die.

"We have our backs up against the wall but the spirit on this team is still excellent," offered Lawrence. "Our guys don't quit and I think if we can play a better disciplined game, we can beat them. I'll say that there will be a sixth game back here."

On the Coast, Richmond Sockeyes trimmed Nanaimo Clippers 8-1 while Langley Eagles doubled Abbotsford Flyers 6-3.

JUDD'S JOURNAL

Celebration shelved

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

There's an old saying about counting your chickens before they hatch! I'm damn sure Wayne Naka and his Summerland Buckaroos know how that saying goes.

Traversing between dressing rooms in the current BCJHL playoff series between the Bucks and Vernon lakers has been anything but a joy up until Tuesday night's victory for Vernon, in Summerland.

The usual scenario has been joyous celebration inside the Summerland dressing room while at the other end of the hall, Lakers' change room resembled the reading room at a public library.

ON OTHER FOOT

However, the shoe was on the other foot Tuesday with the noise emitted from Lakers' dressing room carrying down the hall and ringing off the walls of a silent Summerland changeroom. The best part of it all was the intended celebration that got shelved before it had a chance to get going thanks to a concentrated effort by Lakers.

The bottles of champagne, yet uncorked, disappeared without ever being disturbed while a pair of Summerland management-types quickly

whisked an enormous horseshoe-shaped cake out of the Bucks' den... candles unlit.

Meanwhile, Lakers were the most jubilant band of hockey players imaginable. So much so, in fact, that one would guess they'd just won the series instead of just their first game. However, the feelings they expressed were concurrent with winning the series.

While a team feels it's always nice to wrap a series up on home ice, the worst feeling is to die on the road. Lakers weren't about to give the Buckaroos the satisfaction of enjoying the elaborate celebration concocted prior to the game.

Although I'd like to think it was the dogged determination of the Vernon team that spoiled the Bucks' party, and it was for the most part, most of the media members in the Summerland press box noticed a subtle change in the attitude of the series leaders Tuesday.

OVERCONFIDENT

The impression was that the Bucks looked slightly overconfident. After surprising the sleeping Lakers with a lot of hard-hitting, close-checking tactics that earned Summerland three victories, suddenly it was them who were content to rest on their laurels.

Bucks obviously expected game four to end in a similar fashion. What they didn't expect was the breath of a second life breathed into the Lakers' souls.

Only the most die-hard of Summerland fans expected the Bucks to put Lakers to rest without a struggle of some sort. Hopefully the game Vernon played Tuesday is an indication of the style of hockey they are going to play from here on in.

It wasn't so long ago Lakers dropped three straight games, in the regular season, the third to Summerland in a close-fought battle. The very next game, on Vernon ice, Lakers hammered the visiting Bucks 15-0 in what was probably Vernon's finest hour.

With their first series win under their belts, Lakers now have a chance, albeit a slim chance, to take this series and get on to bigger and better things. A win tonight will definitely shift the momentum into Vernon's favor.

STALE CAKE

Hopefully, that cake concocted for the Buckaroos will get stale, hard, and finally get thrown out altogether.

Just like the Buckaroos.

And, hopefully the Lakers will be able to swing a deal with Summerland for some champagne. It may be slightly used, but it would never taste better.



B.C. Junior

Langley 6 Abbotsford 3 (Langley leads best-of-seven quarter-final 3-1)

Richmond 8 Nanaimo 1 (Richmond leads best-of-seven quarter-final 3-2)

Penticton 7 Revelstoke 5 (Penticton leads best-of-seven quarter-final 3-1)

Vernon 4 Summerland 2
(Summerland leads best-of-seven quarter-final 3-1)