

Lakers open training camp

Between 50 and 70 players are expected to be on the ice tonight when Vernon Lakers, of the B.C. Junior Hockey League, open their training camp at the Priest Valley Arena.

One player who won't be at the Lakers' camp is centre Bruce Major. Major has been given permission, by Vernon Coach Mike Enemark, to train with Penticton Knights.

"Bruce told us he wants to play with Penticton this year and we don't want to hold him back," said Enemark. "If Knights decide they want to keep him, then we'll work out a deal with Penticton after training camp. We won't give him up for a rookie ... we want a proven player."

Major, a graduate of the Vernon Minor Hockey Association, scored 24 goals for Lakers during the 1983-84 season. The rangy forward hopes to



BRUCE MAJOR
... in Penticton

obtain a college scholarship after the 1984-85 campaign.

Meanwhile, Enemark is optimistic about the prospects who will be attending camp.

"We've got a lot of talented hockey players," he said. "We should have a good team."

Only five players from last year's club are expected to return after Alan Young, Shannon Pohl, and Kevin Kobelka were traded within the last week. However, there will be more than a dozen players with junior experience in camp, including several from the Peace Cariboo League.

Lakers will have two-a-day workouts starting tonight at 6 p.m. and ending Sunday morning with an intra-squad game. Enemark hopes to have his roster reduced to less than 30 by next Monday.

Vernon's first exhibition game will be Sept. 8, in Salmon Arm, against the Totems.

Attitude makes difference

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Following a summer of quiet controversy, mostly taking place amongst team members, Vernon Lakers' junior hockey camp opens today and in spite of the presence of some dissention, the club will ice a team for the upcoming BCJHL season.

The fact that the team will take to the ice solidifies the age-old response that life carries on, no matter what. In this case, whether Lakers will field a team that will equal, exceed, or barely compare with the one they iced last year depends on quite a number of factors.

ATTITUDE

Not the least of these factors, of course, is the attitude of the players who will don the jerseys of the Vernon club this season.

In the past two seasons, both teams were dismissed for the summer with a shadow of controversy hanging over the club. In 1983, it was the questionable firing of coach Murray Lawrence while last spring the club temporarily disbanded amidst player-executive hard-feelings. Most of these, to my knowledge, revolved around the question of whether Mike Enemark was a suitable coach for the club.

Enemark, just one year after completing his own junior hockey career, took over the reigns of head coach when general manager and father, Carl Enemark, gave the axe to former mentor Chuck Tapp ... another incident which sparked controversy but wherein lies a can of worms we'll leave unopened at this point.

Admittedly, the move to make Mike Enemark

head coach of the local club was questionable, but in the long run it really doesn't matter that much. For one thing, Enemark managed to post a better than .500 record during the regular season and if you disregard Lakers' hasty exit in the opening round of the Interior Division playoffs, you can chalk up his first year as coach as a reasonably successful one.

SURVIVED

Although few, if any, junior hockey coaches have forged their career by stepping into the role of head coach, suffice it to say Enemark survived his inaugural season.

Suffice it to say also, that since Carl Enemark is co-owner of the club he could assign his wife the task of coaching if he so desires, and there is little, if anything, that anyone could say to change his decision. Like they so often say, if you're paying the fiddler you get to call the tune.

So, it's up to the returning players at this time to decide whether they will give their all under Enemark's judgement or whether they want to spend another season dissenting about the shortcomings of Mike's coaching decisions.

In one sense, how bad can his coaching be? ... things could be worse, of course.

The grass always looks greener on the other side of the fence, but so often it's just more of the same once the jump over the fence is made.

TRIO TRADED

In keeping with the traditions of the Lakers' management, it seems most of the squeaky wheels have been removed. With the trading of Alan



Young, Shannon Pohl and Kevin Kobelka, who had indicated that they wouldn't be back with Lakers this year anyway, Enemark managed to clear some of the deadwood off the track and may even get a few players in return.

The trades have been made, but there has been no indication that any of the Vernon players involved will be reporting to their respective new employers. Unlike professional hockey, junior players have to be motivated by an entirely different set of standards. Liking the city where they play is definitely one of them.

The bottom line here, however, is that the players in question are no longer the care, nor responsibility, of Enemark's junior club.

In conclusion, whether Mike Enemark knows more about coaching junior hockey this season, isn't going to alter the destiny of the Vernon Lakers that much.

Finding the talent and having those individuals perform up to their capabilities definitely will make the difference though, and as much as that may be one of the coaches' jobs, it depends more on the attitudes of the players themselves.

BILLETS

Incidentally, Lakers are in need of billets for the upcoming season, particularly during training camp. Anyone who can take a billet, or would like further information on the subject, can contact Ann Rogers at 545-8037, Carl Enemark at 549-1946, or Bud Russell at 545-8410.