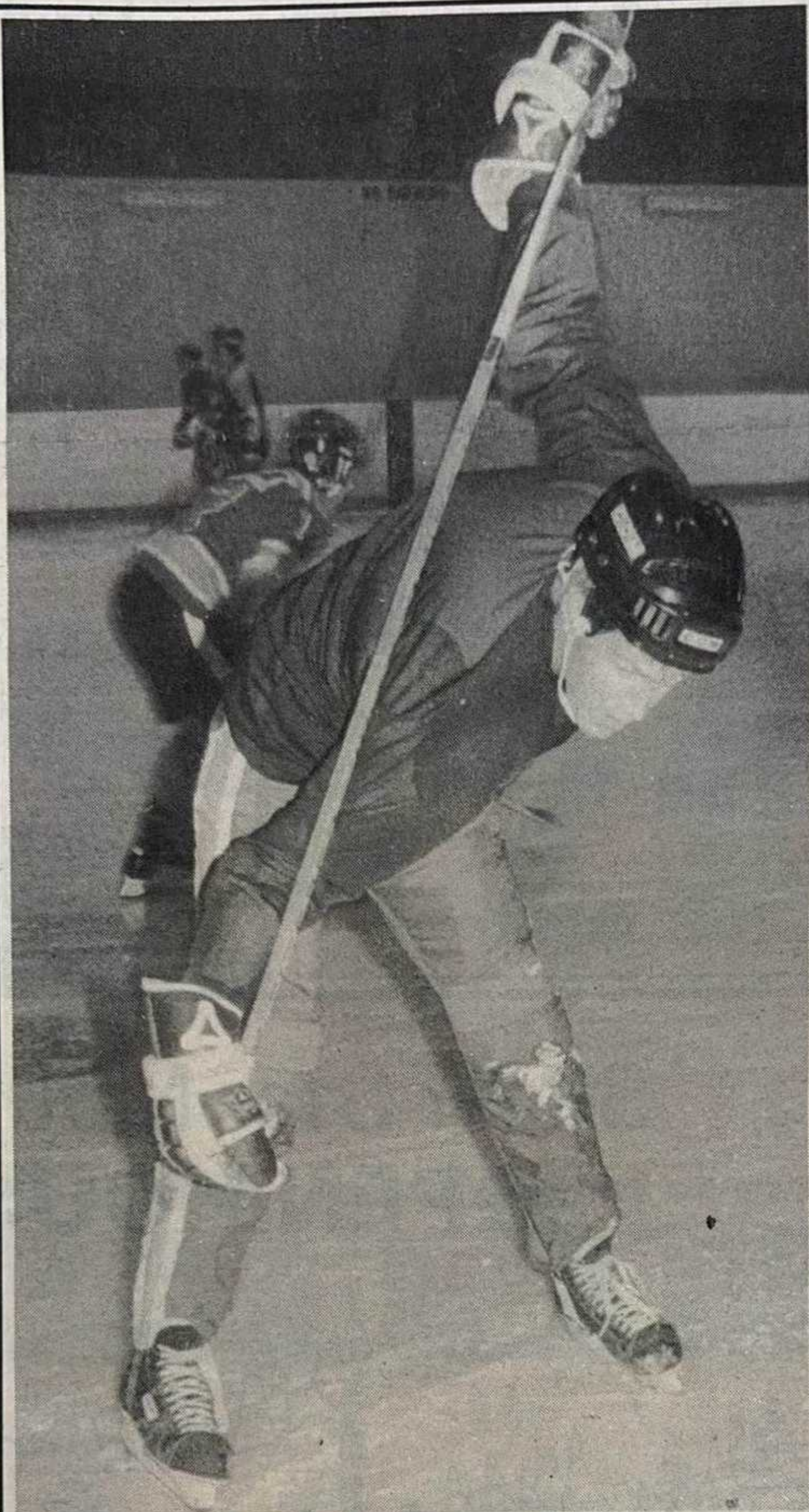




ROOKIE defenceman Daryl Weinberger goes through stretching exercises during the opening day of Vernon Lakers' training camp, Wednesday, in the Priest

Valley Arena. Weinberger, from Red Deer, was among about 50 hopefuls on the ice.

(Daily News Photo)

Optimism evident at training camp

By DON KENDALL
Daily News Sports Editor

There is no event which creates more optimism than the opening of a junior hockey training camp.

Players are hopeful of earning a spot on the team, coaches look forward to the prospect of a winning season, and executives boast boldly about the talent they have recruited.

The camp of Vernon Lakers, which opened Wednesday night in the Priest Valley Arena, is no different. About 50 players were on the ice for two sessions under the direction of Eddie Johnstone, of Detroit Red Wings. Today's workouts started at 8 a.m.

"We've got some good players here," said Lakers' Coach Mike Enemark. "I'm confident we'll put a good team on the ice."

Four members of last year's club including goalie Jim Young, Tony Christie, Greg Kowal, and Chris Saunders are in camp. Centre Nick Kapicki has work commitments and is expected to join the team in about two

weeks.

Enemark said, "A lot of guys are working and won't be available for up to three weeks. In the meantime, it will give me a good opportunity to look at the younger players."

Among those who won't join the club until mid-September is forward Gerald Gagnon, of Quesnel, who is expected to provide the Lakers with scoring punch.

One of the best prospects on the ice Wednesday is defenceman Daryl Weinberger, who played with Red Deer Midget Reps last season. The 16-year-old rearguard is 6'3" and 200 pounds.

Other out-of-town players Enemark rates highly include defenceman Kally Sidanni, of Trail; forwards Wes Gentles and Greg Guest, of Quesnel; and forward Brad Bolton, from Grand Forks.

Training camp will conclude Sunday with an intra-squad game. Vernon's first exhibition game is Sept. 8 against Salmon Arm Totems.