

# All-star choices are somewhat suspect

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There are a number of things I could say concerning the choices made for the Interior Division Team for the BCJHL All-Star game Jan. 17. Suffice to say, Vernon Lakers were given the royal shaft but, at the same time, it's no real loss.

All-star games are nothing more than a display of any league's most popular and conspicuous players. They aren't a fair indication of what's going on in the league as the recent choices for the Interior Division line-up testify.

You won't get any argument from me on the number of Penticton Knights chosen. Any team that wins 25 of its first 30 games and has yet to lose to a team within its own division deserves all the attention they have mustered.

## TWO LAKERS

On the other hand, the four selections taken from Summerland Buckaroos, running a distant third in the Interior Division behind Penticton and Vernon is somewhat distressing. Particularly in view of their mediocre record, and in view of the fact that Lakers had two selected to the team.

Even more distressing is the fact that if anyone has taken the time to watch the Bucks this season, it's beyond comprehension why any of the team members were chosen as all-stars.

My one outrage, however, is that Jim Young, chief backstopper of the Vernon Lakers, wasn't given unanimous support as the goaltender for the first all-star squad. Young, in fact won't be playing in the All-

star contest at all.

Despite the fact that Young trails both Penticton goaltenders in the goal against average department, he leads all goaltenders in one very important area... percentage of shots stopped. Young's percentage in this area hovers around the 90 per cent mark. This is quite remarkable, in itself, but in view of the suspect defensive squad that patrols the Lakers' blueline, it's actually quite phenomenal.

There have been half a dozen occasions, in my mind, when post-game interviews with opposing coaches revealed their admiration for Young, regardless of whether Lakers won or lost.

Penticton goalie Derek Pizze, while deserving of recognition for his role in putting Penticton in its lofty position in the standings, hasn't measured up under pressure to date. A quick look at the Knights' scoring statistics would reveal that since they have a lot of goal-hungry players in the lineup, they also have the puck more than the opposing team. Pizze has rarely faced the kind of barrage that Young must face on an average night while most games the Penticton tandem only have to deal with a fraction of the number.

The addition of Vernon's Nick Kapicki and Greg Kowal to the Interior Division roster at least satisfies my own personal choices from the local team, although neither was selected to the first or second team rosters.

Last year Kapicki was selected to fill out the team roster and nobody was sorry the choice was made. Kapicki, by virtue of his

tenacious checking game, superb passing and expert work behind the net, provided some of the most outstanding plays of the game and gave him more points than any of the players who had been named to either of the first two all-star squads.

Two years ago, at the BCJHL all-star game in Kelowna, Vernon's Gord Simpson, also chosen to fill out the roster after the all-star choices had been made, was selected the most valuable player of the game. Simpson was competing against players which included Cliff Ronning, Dwight Mathiason, Ralph Vos, and Bill Shibicky... all of whom were miles ahead of the diminutive Vernon centre in individual league statistics.

I expect Kapicki to do more of the same at this year's all-star contest while linemate Kowal will no doubt inspire himself to great heights as well. I'm willing to bet between Kapicki and Kowal the crowd on hand will forget all about players like Joe Murphy, Todd Brost, Rod Ware, Murray Winnicki and most certainly Shawn Pettyjohn.

There are no two players in the entire BCJHL who deserve all-star billing more than Kapicki and Kowal.

Perhaps Lakers were slighted a bit in the number of players chosen, but in a way perhaps it's a good thing. I've always been under the contention that good teams play better without superstars.

The real glory comes for a chosen number of players in April or May, not January. If you've worked hard enough to be among that bunch, then you've really got something to crow about.

