

Cents teach Lakers a lesson

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers' coach Don Moores has his fingers crossed hoping some good will come of his club's 9-6 loss at the hands of Merritt Centennials Saturday night at Civic arena.

The loss, the second straight for Vernon against Merritt, left the positions of the two clubs unchanged in the BCJHL Interior Division with Vernon in second place and Merritt holding down the fourth and final playoff berth.

"The reason we've been successful is that we've stuck to a system," explained a somewhat bewildered Moores following Saturday's contest which saw Centennials score six power-play goals en route to the victory. "We totally departed from that system right from the opening face-off.

"A lot of times being spanked by a team in your own building teaches you a lesson . . . at least I hope it does."

Though several players, including high-flying captain Greg Kowal, turned in passable performances, none of his players put forth a consistent effort throughout the full 60 minutes . . . least of all the Vernon defencemen.

"I was using forwards on defence," explained Moores. "I used anyone who looked like they might play the position."

Unfortunately Moores couldn't find any suitable combinations and watched in horror as Centennials erased a 2-1 first period Vernon lead with three unanswered goals in the second frame and went on to outscore his club 5-4 in a wide-open third period.

"I think we were due for it," offered

Moores in retrospect. "We didn't play well in Summerland last night (Friday) either."

"Last Saturday we should have won in Merritt. We had 12 guys and we came to play and we deserved to win. Tonight (Saturday) we had 19 players and only about 10 came to play."

Kowal scored twice for Lakers, giving the veteran forward 10 goals in his last four games. Defenceman Shawn Lofroth also had a pair of goals while Nick Kapicki and Stacy Hartnell added singles.

Brad Smiley, Pat Ryan and Neil Eisenhutt had two apiece for Merritt with singles from Mike Catchpole, Alan Wall, and Mark Bogoslawski.

Goaltender Frank Romeo wasn't particularly sharp in net for Lakers, making 34 saves on the night, but getting beat on several soft shots.

In other BCJHL action Saturday night, Penticton Knights doubled Revelstoke Rangers 8-4.

In league action Sunday, Revelstoke and Merritt duelled to a 4-4 overtime tie while Penticton downed Summerland Buckaroos 9-6 and Nanaimo Clippers flattened Sidney Capitals 20-5.

Lakers' next action will be Friday night when they host Burnaby Bluehawks in what should be one of the regular season highlights for local fans. Bluehawks lead the Coastal Division by a healthy margin and have an old score to settle with Lakers. The only home-ice game Burnaby has lost this season was to visiting Vernon, last October, when Lakers were on Coastal swing. Naturally Bluehawks, coached by colourful Muzz McPherson, would like to even the score with a victory Friday.



NICK KAPICKI (16) and Shannon Pohl (15) generated some excitement at times for Vernon Lakers, Saturday night, but the venings belonged to Merritt Centennials.

Cents scored six power-play goals, four of them in the third period, en route to a 9-6 win over the inept Lakers. Merritt is within striking distance of Summerland for

third place in the BCJHL Interior Division, which would mean a first-round playoff matchup between Vernon and Merritt.

(Daily News Photo)