

Merritt blanks Lakers to even junior series

Merritt Centennials received outstanding goaltending from Bob Romano as they banked Vernon Lakers 6-0 Thursday night in Merritt.

The victory by Centennials evens the best-of-seven BCJHL quarter final series at one game apiece with game three scheduled for tonight at Vernon Civic arena beginning at 8 p.m.

"Their goaltender played very well," said Lakers' coach Don Moore. "They also got a couple of quick goals early in the game . . . not good goals, just quick ones."

Centennials led 2-0 after 20 minutes and skated off after two periods with a 4-0 lead.

"I think Frank (Romeo) was a little bit off too," suggested Moores of his own goaltender. Romeo and Jim Young combined to make 22 saves in the Vernon nets while Romano stopped all 29 drivers by Lakers.

Contrary to the last two games between the clubs, Thursday's encounter was devoid of chippy play or fighting incidents.

Brad Smiley scored twice in the first three and a half minutes of the game for Merritt. Other goals came from Kevin Cheveldave, Neil Eisenhut, Alan Wall, and Mark Bogoslowski.

Moores was forced to exude the opinion that the series is rapidly developing into a homer series in which case he would be happy since Lakers have home-ice advantage in four of the seven games in the series with third place Merritt.

"I'll tell you tonight, after the game whether or not that's the case but really I think it's going to be a homer series," said Moores.

Meanwhile Lakers were once again without the services of several key players. Gord Simpson went out early in the second

frame with an injured knee while Scott Young was unable to dress for the game due to a knee injury he incurred Tuesday night in Vernon. Nick Kapicki, still suffering from a concussion he received as a result of a beating in Merritt last week, won't likely play until at least Monday.

In other BCJHL playoff action Thursday night, Derrick Ruppel and Paul Bifano scored two goals each to lead Burnaby Bluehawks to an 8-4 victory over Langley Eagles while Richmond Sockeyes defeated Abbotsford Flyers 4-2. Both those Coastal Division clubs lead in their respective series to games to none.

In Richmond, Rich Dietrich scored three goals for Sockeyes while Vernon native Bruce Major accounted for the other.

In other games tonight, Burnaby is in Langley, Richmond visits Abbotsford and Summerland is at Penticton.