

Lakers' victory evens series



SNOOKER CHAMPION

Bob Ireland, left, of National Billiard and Bowling Association, presents Jim Bob, of Enderby, with the Okanagan Snooker Championship trophy following Bob's victory over Ron Ellis in the championship match Sunday at the Sandman Inn. (Daily News photo)

The combination of good offense and tight, stingy defence proved an invincible weapon once again for Vernon Lakers as they trimmed hometown Merritt Centennials 3-1 Sunday night to even their best-of-seven BCJHL quarter-final series 2-2.

Game four of the series takes place Tuesday night at Vernon Civic arena.

"We played nearly perfect offence and defence," explained Vernon coach Don Moores who guided his squad through yet another fight and penalty-filled affair with Centennials Sunday. "It was a tremendous victory, especially in that building."

Lakers held the upper hand with the help of a bit of line matching Sunday. Moores opted to use Frank Dutoff, Greg Guest and Stacey Hartnell to shadow the high-scoring threesome of Pat Ryan, Mark Bogoslawski, and Kevin Cheveldave. The strategy paid off with the Merritt line failing to collect a single point ... a victory in itself after the 20 points they collected in



SHANNON POHL
... winning goal



FRANK DUTOFF
... shadowed Ryan

Friday's game in Vernon. With their big line shut down, Centennials had little in the way of offence with Brad Smiley accounting for their only goal, that coming in the first period.

Defenceman Shawn Lofroth, Shannon Pohl and Jason Phillips accounted for the Vernon goals although the local club also had two

disallowed. In spite of the disallowed goals and the rough play Moores felt the officiating was the best to date in the series.

"We definitely had good refereeing," Moores said. Lakers went ahead 2-1 in the first period and led 3-1 after 40 minutes before battling through a scoreless third frame.

"It was a good moral victory for us, but it was

only one win," offered Moores. "They (Merritt) have proven they can win in our building, it's still anybody's series ... it'll be an excellent game Tuesday, that's for sure."

A victory in Tuesday's game would give Lakers the hammer once again in the series as they hold the home-game advantage in the seven-game series.

Lakers also received outstanding goaltending from Frank Romeo who made 32 saves while Bob Romano blocked 27 shots for Centennials.

In other BCJHL playoff action Sunday night Burnaby Bluehawks bombed Langley Eagles 12-5 to win their quarter-final series in four straight games.

Saturday night, Penticton Knights doubled Summerland Buckaroos 10-5 to win their series in four straight games as well.

Winner of the Vernon-Merritt Series will play Penticton in the BCJHL Interior Division final series while Burnaby will await the winner of the Richmond-Abbotsford series. Abbotsford leads 2-1 in that series.

DEFENCE EXPLOITED

Vancouver cashes in