

GAME MARRED BY BRAWL**FINAL GAME TONIGHT**

Centennials tie series

**MIXED DOUBLES WINNERS**

Vernon Indoor Tennis Centre wrapped up its Mixed Doubles Competition Wednesday with Frank and

Edna Nadj of Winfield, left, and second from left, defeating Barbara and Nicholas Reti of Vernon. The

score in the single super set was 8-2.

(Susan Collinson photo)

LOSE OPENING GAME

Panthers follow suit

In following a long-standing tradition at the Provincial Boys High School, "AA" Basketball

deficit heading into the final 10 minutes of the game. However, it was only a misfortunate turn of

coach. "We have to get the 'kicked-in-the-stomach feeling out of our systems."

Merritt Centennials scored six times in a span of 10 minutes and 17 seconds in the second period to erase a 2-0 deficit and defeat visiting Vernon Lakers 6-2 Wednesday night in a game which was marred by a bench-clearing brawl in the second period and more than 180 minutes in penalties handed out.

The victory evens the BCJHL quarter-final series at 3-3 with the seventh and deciding game tonight at 8 p.m. in Vernon Civic arena.

Despite the costly rough play to date in the series and the various intimidation antics against his club, Vernon coach Don Moores is confident his club will win tonight. He's also satisfied with the quality of officiating in the game in Merritt. However, there have been occasions in which Moores felt the punishment meted out was insufficient.

"(Pat) Antongiovanni (Merritt defenceman) has come off the bench twice in two consecutive games and all he's gotten is two minutes each time plus his fighting penalties," said Moores. "It (brawl) was a situation that just came to a boiling point... we knew something was going to happen."

Lakers controlled the game throughout the first and third periods but fell victim to a circumstance beyond their control in the second frame when Merritt forward Eric Catchpole ran Vernon goaltender Frank Romeo.

"We had control of the game until Romeo got hit, then (Murray) Baron went after Catchpole and we ended up with an extra two minutes instead of having a five minute power-play," explained Lakers' General Manager Vern Dye.

"I'm certainly disgusted with the style of play by Merritt," he added.

"They're trying to goon us... the refereeing was good though, they kept control and it's tough when there are a lot of players involved on the ice."

As Merritt coach Chuck Tapp later explained, "the check on Romeo got us going."

Lakers led 2-0 after one period but trailed 6-2 at the end of the second period and the teams played through a scoreless third stanza.

"We played very well but they got six goals really quickly," explained Moores. "We got into some trouble and we panicked."

Kevin Cheveldave, captain of Centennials, scored twice to pace the winners with single goals from Randy McFarlane, Todd Torrens, Brad Smiley, and mark Bogoslawski.

Scott Young and Wes Gentles accounted for the Lakers' goals.

Romeo and later Jim Young combined to block 49 shots in the Vernon nets while Bob Romano made 38 saves for Merritt.

The series comes down to a single game tonight. Winner advances to the BCJHL Interior Division final against Penticton Knights. Moores is anticipating a thrilling finale tonight.

"I think tonight's game is going to be a barn-burner," suggested Moores.

Meanwhile, in other BCJHL playoff action Wednesday night, Richmond Sockeyes blanked Abbotsford Flyers 5-0 to even their best-of-seven quarter-final series at 3-3 also with the seventh and deciding game tonight in Richmond. Rich Dietrich scored two goals for Sockeyes with singles from Mike Scardina, David Holmes and Keith Street.

Scott King made 41 saves for Richmond to record the shutout while Al Loring and Rob Bruni combined to stop 36 shots at the Abbotsford net.

Beer incentive began series



By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers may never know how close they came in regular season play to avoiding this confrontation with Merritt Centennials. Just for the record, rumor has it that it was 22 cases of beer that made the difference.

How can 22 cases of beer make the difference you ask?

A former member of Centennials explained recently that Merritt offered the 22 cases of suds as a bonus incentive for Salmon Arm Totems to defeat Summerland Buckaroos in their final regular season match-up. If it is true, it obviously worked!

Strange stuff that incentive motivation.

Now there is some discrepancy here in this claim, one such being that Merritt Centennials can't afford gas for their team bus or a snack at MacDonalds after the game let alone an incentive bribe for another team. However, this individual assured me that each member of the Merritt team had agreed to dig into his own pocket to come good with the beer if the Totems managed to upend the Buckaroos.

MOTIVATION

Considering the Totems had nothing to shoot for since before the all-star break it's somewhat conceivable that something had to provide the motivation to end the season on a winning note.

While Salmon Arm had nothing to gain, by beating Summerland, Merritt certainly did.

As things worked out, it was Summerland, not Merritt that had to face Penticton Knights in the BCJHL quarter final. In case you hadn't heard, the results of that matchup were swift and decisive in Penticton's favor.

Now we're not assuming for a minute that our own Lakers were reluctant to meet Centennials in the opening playoff round, but they certainly knew the style of play that would take place in such a series. Anyone who's bothered to take in any of the action can tell you it hasn't exactly been good clean fun to this point.

It seems there always has to be some sort of added incentive for a team to perform to the best of their capabilities and perhaps our local club should look into some sort of incentive to get the most out of what they've got.

Some time ago a story told of an Italian soccer team that hired a magi-

cian to conjure up a little motivation for their team to do well.

Penticton Knights were working on a personal incentive system of their own during the season which appears to have worked out just fine as well.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Knights recently announced that six of their active players had signed full scholarships with various American colleges and universities while four others are presently negotiating with others for scholarship programs.

Among the six are centre Joe Murphy who has signed with Michigan State captain and defenceman Ian Kidd who has selected North Dakota, left winger Ed Cristofoli who chose Denver, goaltender Derek Pizzey, Colorado College, centre Tim Comeau who opted for Forest Lane College, and centre Todd Brost decided on Michigan.

EDUCATION GOALS

As the story goes, and has been documented from time to time in the pages of this newspaper as well, Coach and General manager Rick Kozuback indicated that Knights like to deal specifically with players who harbor educational goals in their hockey careers. As a result Kozuback and company have been able to garner a good number of quality players who hope to continue their education while playing hockey.

At the same time it means Knights are under the close scrutiny of a lot of US College scouts at just about any time they play. When playoff time rolls around you can bet there is an extra few that flock to the South Okanagan centre to take in the games.

And, herein lies some added incentive for a team such as Vernon to dig deep and make it into the division final with Knights. All those scouts, knowing that most of the Penticton players have already been sorted through and signed by other colleges, will certainly be willing to direct their scrutiny to other players. If the other players happen to be members of the Vernon Lakers it could prove to be a major boost for some individual hockey careers not to mention the educational aspect.

There's just one problem here too, however. In view the present battle going on, which is more like a war of attrition, neither team is going to be in any kind of shape to provide a decent series with Knights when they do emerge.