

Kowal hits milestone mark

Greg Kowal and Nick Kapicki owe nothing to junior hockey in the city of Vernon. Over the past three seasons the pair of diminutive hockey spark

plugs gave more than 100 percent to Vernon Lakers both on and off the ice. It was only fitting, then, that the two long-time friends and team-mates

should cop half the team's awards Wednesday night at Lakers' team banquet and awards night held at Coldstream Hotel. Though the presenta-

tion of trophies to the two presented no surprise, Vernon coach Don Moores did have one giant surprise in store for the unsuspecting Kowal.

Moores, in presenting the Lakers' red-haired captain with awards as both most valuable and most inspirational player, also announced that when

the final tally of game sheets had been completed, it showed that Kowal had scored 50 goals for the season. It marked the first time in which a member of Vernon Lakers has scored 50 goals in a season. It was previously thought that Kowal's goal total was halted at 49.

Unfortunately, even with the 50-goal outburst this season, the team scoring title went to Kowal's good friend and line-mate Kapicki who checked in with 92 points. The total only slightly shaded Kowals 90.

All members of Lakers' coaching staff and team management expressed their disappointment in having to bid a farewell to the pair of local players. Kowal and Kapicki, both 20 years of age, have now graduated from the ranks of junior hockey. Each one has spent three full seasons with the Vernon club.

Meanwhile, graduating defenceman Tony Christie received the team award as the most sportsmanlike player on the squad while Quesnel native Wes Gentles was

chosen rookie of the year. Best defenceman award was presented to speedster Shawn Lofroth to complete the awards presentations for the evening.

Co-owner of the Vernon team Carl Enemark dispelled current rumors of his selling the local club when he indicated his eager anticipation of next season when the club will welcome 14 returning players to the lineup.

Included among these are 18-year old goaltender Frank Romeo who has already played three full seasons of junior A hockey across Western Canada. In addition to Romeo are defencemen Shawn Hartnell, Chris Saunders, Jim Scott, and Lofroth along with forwards Gentles, Frank Dutoff, Murray Baron, Darryl Weinberger, Greg Guest, Jason Phillips, Stacy Hartnell, Troy Mick, and Alan Young.

Lakers bid farewell to seven graduating members of the club including Kapicki, Kowal, and Christie as well as Scott Young, Brian Burlingame, Jim Young, and Gord Simpson.



Lakers' captain Greg Kowal, centre, received team awards as both most inspirational player and most valuable player during team awards ceremonies Tuesday night. It was also learned the

fiesty winger became the first Laker to score 50 goals in a single season. Also receiving awards were, from left, Tony Christie, most sportsmanlike player, Nick Kapicki, team high scorer, Kowal,

most valuable, most inspirational, Shawn Lofroth, best defenceman, and Wes Gentles, rookie of the year award. Lakers look forward to having 14 players return to the lineup next season. (Daily News Photo)

Teams close to series sweep

The Canadian Press

Penticton Knights and Burnaby Bluehaws each are within one game of sweeping their best-of-seven B.C. Junior Hockey League semifinals in four games.

Penticton downed Merritt Centennials 8-4 Tuesday night, while Burnaby scored eight goals in the second period and beat Abbotsford Flyers 12-2.

At Penticton, Joe Murphy scored three for the Knights, and singles came from Derek Mayer, Ian Kidd, Murray Winnicki, Rod Ware and Cal Brown.

Pat Ryan had a pair for the Centennials, who trailed 2-0 after the first period and were behind 4-2 after two. Keith Chase and Kevin Cheveldave added singles.

With their own goaltenders out with injuries, the Centennials were forced to call on Dean Garnett of Summerland Buckaroos. He stopped 44 shots, while Grant McPhail made 22 saves for Penticton.

Game four in the series will be played Thursday in Merritt.

At Abbotsford, the Bluehaws took a 1-0 edge in the first period, then blasted to a 9-1 lead in the next 20 minutes. The Bluehaws have outscored the Flyers 27-7 in three games, after sweeping Langley Eagles four straight in the opening playoff.

Derrick Ruppel scored three goals Tuesday for the Bluehaws, who had a 43-21 advantage in shots on goal. Ken Jorgenson, Paul Bifano and Royel Caswell each scored twice, and Pat Austin, Tim Ziola and Darrin Zinger added one apiece.

Doug McFaul and Sean Harder got the goals for the Flyers. The series continues tonight, again at Abbotsford.

Junior clubs losers in draft

By The Canadian Press

Major junior hockey operators have been the big losers since the National Hockey League began drafting raw-boned 18-year-olds six years ago and in many cases turning them professional immediately.

While competing for teenage talent with American college recruiters, the major juniors also have been losing star players to the professionals and gate receipts have dwindled.

One of the hardest-hit teams is Portland Winter Hawks of the Western

Hockey League, the 1983 Memorial Cup champions and one of only two major junior teams based in the United States.

The Winter Hawks lost much of their identity last season when several players — most notably Alfie Turcotte, Cam Neely and Richard Kromm — were taken up by NHL teams when they still had junior eligibility remaining.

Crowds dropped considerably at Memorial Coliseum and general manager Brian Shaw fumed while his championship team crumbled.

"You try and develop 17-year-olds so they can be your star attractions when they're 18 and 19," says Shaw. "Then you lose them to the pros and some NHL teams just sit them on the bench."

"It's not good for hockey. It's a chain reaction because we in turn are destroying midget hockey by playing 15 and 16-year-olds in junior. It's just not fair for everyone in hockey."

"The pros were pushed into this situation by giving in to some agents. It's devastated junior hockey and cost the owners

millions of dollars in the three major junior leagues."

Shaw is realistic enough to know that the NHL will continue to take 18-year-olds in the annual entry draft each June. Player agents threatening legal action have pushed NHL owners into a corner and the pros desperately want to stay out of the court system.

The Portland general manager claims junior hockey should not be criticized for not properly developing players because "in most cases we don't have the players long enough to do the proper job."

"We're always hearing about how the American colleges are doing a better job with developing players," Shaw says, "and the same people who are critical are the ones taking your players before you can possibly finish the job with them."

"There's a big difference between taking an 18 or even 19-year-old out of junior and putting him in the NHL alongside a four-year college player at the age of 22 or 23."

Shaw would like the NHL to stop signing

players until after the players have completed their junior eligibility, or reached the age of 20. He claims NHL teams often hinder young players more than helping them by signing them at the age of 18.

One player who couldn't handle the situation this season in Portland was Jeff Rohlicek, the Chicago-born forward drafted in the second round by Vancouver Canucks in 1984.

"Jeff went to the Vancouver training camp and scored four goals in four exhibition games before he came back to us," says Shaw.

Bultitude leads Longshots to win

Kathy Bultitude's 18-point performance helped power Longshots to a devastating 74-26 victory over Rebels in one of two games played Tuesday night in Vernon Major Women's Basketball League semi-finals at Seaton School Gym.

In the only other game played Tuesday Body Shoppers defeated Lumby 52-36.

Christine Hallman netted 14 points for Longshots while Laurie Amiel added 10 points and every other member of the team hit the scoresheet.

Nobody hit double figures for Rebels but Mary Mielnichuk was tops with seven points. Longshots led 30-12 at halftime.

Ginger Davidson also turned in an 18-point performance in a winning cause for Body Shoppers. Team-mate Geordy Grazier added 16 for the winners.

Carol Campbell was top scorer for Lumby with 13 points. Body Shoppers led 34-10 at half time although Lumby outscored the winners 26-20 in the second half.

Ladies' curling champs



Winners of the Ladies' Curling Club Monday night A-square above, left to right: Kay Belanger, skip, Anna Brewer, third, Denise Forsberg, second, and Anita Rowland, lead. Below, winners of B-square, left to right: Lori White, skip, Diane Crommer, third, Jan Vaneck, second, and Sharon Christensen, lead. (Daily News Photos)



JUDD'S JOURNAL

Success can be tough to handle



By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

There's no clear-cut formula for success except for the talent and hard work needed to get you there. Even tougher than getting there however, is staying there.

It seems it takes a good deal more inner strength to remain a star than it takes to achieve such status.

A few examples of what a lack of such inner strength can lead to have come to readers' attention lately. One is a look-back 10 years which chronicles the phenomenal success of Don Murdoch. Murdoch was a former junior hockey player with Vernon Vikings of the BCJHL before becoming a star with Medicine Hat Tigers of the WHL and eventually attaining super-star status with New York Rangers of the NHL.

"Things couldn't be much rosier these days for Don Murdoch" read the Vernon News Flashback, in a classic case of irony.

PHENOMENON

Murdoch became one of those strange though not so uncommon sports phenomena who literally "threw it all away" because they couldn't deal with the sudden acquisition of star status and the territory that goes along with it.

The phenomenon isn't limited to hockey of course. Another story this week told of Denny McLain, former super-star pitcher of the Detroit Tigers of the American League.

In 1968 McLain had it made in the shade as they say. He was a two-time Cy Young Award winner, had won an unprecedented 31 games as a right-handed starter with the Tigers and was earning an incredible 150,000 dollars per season in the Major Leagues... equivalent to a million dollar contract by 1968 standards.

Last week McLain, now 41 and boasting a grotesque 300 pounds on his once athletic form, was ordered held without bond by a federal judge in Florida after he was convicted by a jury of racketeering, conspiracy, extortion and cocaine possession.

He faces a maximum sentence of 75 years on these charges and when he does go to prison he'll enter a penniless common thief... a far cry from the Denny McLain on the Topps bubble gum cards of the mid-60's.

Murdoch, in case you were wondering, was topped from a similarly lofty perch in the National Hockey League by a conviction of cocaine possession in the late 1970's.

IRONIC END

It's a pathetic and ironic end to befall such sporting personalities. You have to wonder with the athletes getting younger and younger and their contracts getting larger all the time, how many more will fall victim to such a trend in the future.

Another example is Derek Sanderson. "Turk" as he was affectionately known as in his younger days, was rookie of the year in 1967 with Boston Bruins. He then signed a million dollar contract and had the media eating out of his hand with his personality and charisma.

Today Sanderson walks with the aid of crutches, his hip joints deteriorated beyond help by drugs he injected himself with when he was playing hockey. The drugs, however, were only the tip of the iceberg during Sanderson's days of debauchery.

What's more, Sanderson is broke and living with his parents for support since he's unable to work for living. In terms of what he stood for in 1967, it could be viewed as a fate worse than death.

Fortunately, cases such as the ones chronicled above are the exception rather than the rule in the sporting world. Unfortunately, the list continues to grow as the years pass and there are still stars as yet uncovered who will suffer the same fate in the years to come.

BEAT THE ODDS

But for every Derek Sanderson there has been a Bobby Clark, for every Murdoch there is a Wayne Gretzky, and for every guy like Denny McLain there has been a player like Carl Yastrzemski. These are players who challenged the call to super-star status and beat the odds... they have and always will remain super-stars.

Perhaps it's because each of them had the strength of mind to see their way around these pitfalls. Clark, for example, when faced with a huge contract renegotiation with Philadelphia Flyers, showed his characteristic common sense in spreading the money over a 25-year period. This he did so that he would have a secure and safe future in case his health failed him, or his livelihood was suddenly taken away.

Ditto Gretzky who has spread his wealth, albeit as thickly as it might be spread, over a period of time right up until the year 2000.

More than just being able to cope with the material aspect of their status, however, these players never lost touch with the hard work, integrity and high moral fibre which put them where they were in the first place. For all his wealth and attention, Gretzky remains as unspoiled as he was as a kid growing up in Brantford, Ont., Clark remained a similarly shy, wholesome person in spite of his esteem. Yastrzemski lived out a career so long and illustrious it would take volumes of books to put it all into perspective.

Unlike the McLains, the Murdochs and the Sandersons, these athletes learned early in their careers that everything in life has a price and that everyone, without exception, has to pay.