

Vernon players drafted



By DON KENDALL
Daily News Sports Editor
Four Vernon minor hockey graduates were selected in the National Hockey League amateur draft, Saturday, in Toronto.

Jeff Finley was picked 55th by New York Islanders, Brent Gilchrist went 79th to Montreal Canadiens, Bruce Major was drafted 99th by Quebec Nordiques, and Rudy Poeschek was chosen 238th overall by New York Rangers.

Gilchrist had been ranked as high as 16th, by NHL Central Scouting, during the 1984-85 season. In the most recent Central scouting report, he was listed 31st.

On the other hand, Finley and Major were picked higher than they were ranked by most scouting reports.

Finley, who had been rated in the fourth round, collected 50 points with Portland Winter Hawks, of the Western Hockey League. The rangy 6'3" defenceman said he is really excited about being selected by the Islanders.

"I had no idea they were interested in me," Finley said. "They talked with our general manager (Portland's Brian Shaw) once during the winter, but that was the only time they asked about me."

After being drafted, Finley received encouraging words from Islanders' General Manager Bill Torrey, Coach Al Arbour, and other members of the club's executive.

Finley said, "They told me they aren't happy with where they finished



JEFF FINLEY
... surprised

last season and although they hate to admit it, it is time they got rid of some of the older players. They said I'm coming to their organization at the right time."

Although he is expected to spend another season in Portland, Finley will attend Islanders' training camp in September.

Gilchrist, who spent the last two seasons with Kelowna Wings of the WHL, admits he was a little surprised that he wasn't chosen earlier in the draft. "But there is nothing I can do about it now," he said. "I just have to work hard."

Gilchrist had hoped to go to Montreal and Canadiens' officials were reportedly prepared to select him in the second round. However, a knee injury that sidelined him for more than a month and a lack of size (170 pounds), persuaded Montreal to wait a little longer before selecting him.



BRUCE MAJOR
... to Quebec

"Montreal's western scouts told me they wanted me in the first round," Gilchrist said. "But the executive wanted some French Canadians and (General Manager Serge) Savard was worried about my size."

"I met with Savard and everyone else from their organization and they told me they are pleased to get me and that I'm in their future plans."

The 18-year-old centre will fly to Montreal in about two weeks for an orientation.

"I'll be going to Montreal's training camp, but I'll be spending another season in junior," Gilchrist said. "Canadiens probably won't offer me a contract until next year, but I won't know for sure until training camp. If I have a good camp ... you never know."

Major, who spent the 1984-85 season with Rich-

mond Sockeyes of the B.C. Junior Hockey League, was surprised he was picked in the top 100. He was ranked 115th by Central Scouting.

Major has accepted a four-year hockey scholarship at the University of Maine, so won't be eligible to attend Quebec's training camp.

"I haven't talked to anyone from Quebec yet," Major said. "They phoned Saturday and I wasn't home, but I'm sure they know I'm going to university."

The 6'4" centre suffered a broken wrist in March. The injury, coupled with the university commitment, was expected to discourage teams from choosing Major.

"I really didn't expect to go that high," he said. "I'm pretty excited."

However, there is one drawback for Major. "If I ever play for Quebec, I guess I'll have to learn a new language. I only took French for a couple years in high school."

Finley, Major, and Gilchrist were members of the Vernon Pee Wee Rep Team, which captured the provincial championship in 1980.

Poeschek was captain of the Vernon Pee Wee Rep Team in 1979. The burly defenceman started his career with Revelstoke Rangers and spent the last two seasons with Kamloops Blazers, of the WHL.

A total of 252 players were selected during the seven hour draft, which was televised live on CBC Television.