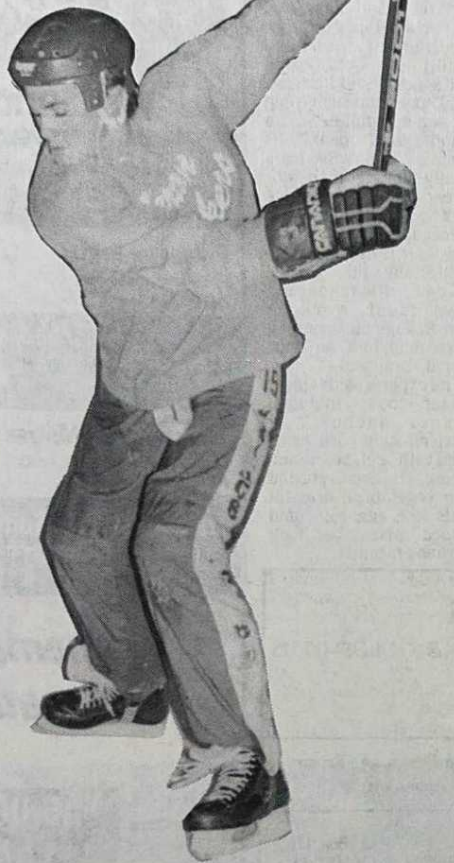


WES GENTLES, the 19-year-old sophomore centreman out of Quesnel, spearheads the newest "Cariboo Connection" line in Vernon Lakers' camp. Gentles' linemates include wingers Mike Van Sickle, of Prince George, and Greg Guest, also of Quesnel.

(Daily News Photo)



Moores cautious about cutting players

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

While most junior hockey coaches at this time of the season would be busy trimming excess players from their camps, Vernon Lakers' Head Coach Don Moores moves cautiously in that direction lest he cut someone who could make a difference to his team some time down the road.

His job of making player cuts is being made difficult due to the intensity his players are exhibiting.

"There are so many guys working hard and the intensity is so high that we want to be sure we're making the right decisions," explained the Lakers' mentor.

Moores has already put together some line combinations that are showing mid-season form and good scoring abilities.

"We've already got some fairly good line combinations," he suggested. "They're working out really well... we have potential for a lot of guys who can put points on the board and I think we'll have a high-scoring team."

Among the latest trios impressing Moores are the

"Cariboo Connection", a group so named because they herald from the Cariboo region of the province. Centre Wes Gentles and winger Greg Guest, both of whom played with the team last season, are from Quesnel while the third member of the line, Mike Van Sickle, is from Prince George.

There are still a player or two that Lakers can expect back in their line-up in the event that they don't make it at major junior camps. Among those is centre Jason Phillips, who toiled for the club last year.

"He (Phillips) is committed to us if he doesn't make it with Brandon," Moores said of his star forward. "He shoots the puck as well as anyone in this league."

Another player Moores hopes to have back is rugged defenceman Darryl Weinberger, who is presently working out with Calgary Wranglers, of the Western Hockey League.

Although Lakers camp is full of rugged players and Moores feels his club won't be intimidated by bigger teams this season, he's also heading into the new campaign with more

confidence due to rule changes in the BCJHL, particularly in the area of sticks.

"The rule changes in the BCJHL will help our style of game 100 per cent," he offered. "It will make for a lot of penalties at the start of the year for some clubs but it will help to reduce injuries."

Under the new rulings, any stick infraction, be it high sticking, slashing, hooking, cross-checking or even the intent of such an infraction will result in a penalty.

However, speculation is one thing and playing the game is another. With the exhibition schedule Lakers have lined up the games could go a long way toward exposing the weaknesses of the local club... something for which Moores is grateful.

"We play Penticton twice and they are the cream of the crop... we'll get a good idea right from the start of how we stack up," Moores said. "We also play Merritt and they're always tough so we'll be able to test our toughness right off the bat also."

In the meantime, Lakers play a second exhibition encounter against Salmon Arm Blazers, Wednesday night, in Enderby.

Baseball drug trial turns up more names

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Dale Berra said he shared cocaine with at least four teammates while playing for baseball's Pittsburgh Pirates and once was warned by manager Chuck Tanner not to talk to a man now accused of selling the drug to major league players.

Berra, a New York Yankees infielder and son

of the fourth major leaguer to testify in the Strong trial.

Berra, 27, said he snorted cocaine only occasionally until increasing his use in 1984 after an elbow injury forced him to go on the 21-day disabled list.

"I had a lot of time on my hands in the summertime for the first time in

at the time. Later, he called me in (his hotel room) and said, 'Does this answer you?' He had cocaine in a folder. We used it."

BUYS GRAM

The first time he met Strong was in a Philadelphia hotel suite in 1982 when Berra said he, Parker, Milner and Lacy joined former Pirates

Parker and Lacy later joined him in an adjoining room, where he bought a gram of cocaine from Strong for \$100. Berra did not suggest Stargell or any of the Pirates coaches had knowledge of the alleged transaction.

The next time Berra said he spotted Strong was in the Pirates locker room at Three Rivers