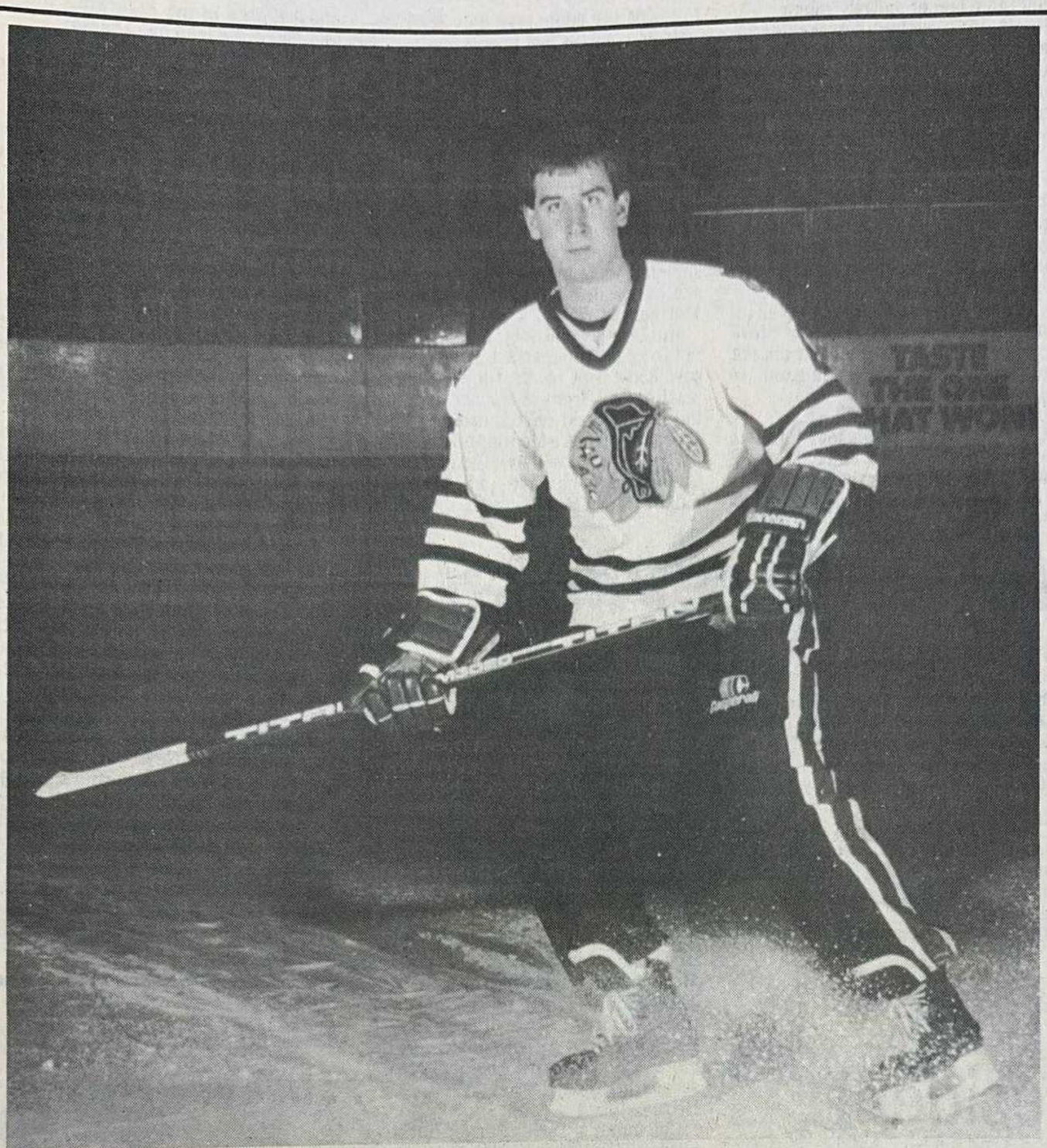


VERNON MINOR hockey graduate Jay Stark leads Portland Winter Hawks, of the WHL, against Vernon Lakers, of the BCJHL, in an exhibition game Sept. 20 at the Vernon Civic Arena. (Jim Kelly Photo)

Lakers host Hawks in pre-season game

Local hockey fans are already excited!

Vernon Lakers will host Portland Winter Hawks, of the Western Hockey league in an exhibition game Sept. 20 in the Civic Arena.

Portland hosted the Memorial Cup championships last spring and is expected to be among the top teams in the WHL during the 1986-87 season. And the Winter Hawks are of special interest to fans in the North Okanagan. Six players on the Portland roster formerly played hockey in Vernon.

Defencemen Jeff Finley and Jay Stark, along with forwards Troy Mick and Dennis Holland, played in the Vernon minor hockey system. Rugged wingers Troy and Trevor Pohl starred for Vernon Lakers during the 1985-86 season.

Wayne Meier, director of player personnel for Portland, confirmed today that five of the local players will be on the ice when Winter Hawks visit Vernon. "The only one who won't play is Finley," Meier said. "When we are in Vernon, Jeff will be at the New York Islanders' training camp."

Finley was selected in the third round of the 1985 NHL amateur draft. He recently signed a pro contract with New York.

Meanwhile, Lakers open their pre-season schedule Sept. 12, in Penticton, against the defending Canadian champion Knights. Vernon hosts the Knights, Sept. 13, then entertains Summerland Buckaroos, Sept. 16.

Lakers play their regular season opener at home, against Merritt Warriors on Sept. 19, before taking on the Winter Hawks.

About 35 players are expected to attend Vernon's main training camp, which gets under way Sunday.