UNEVENTFUL FIRST DAY

Lakers open training camp

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

There were no surprises for coach Ernie Gare and no cuts made during the opening night of Vernon Lakers' training camp Sunday evening at Priest Valley arena.

There was, however, one no-show, one other player who is expected sometime this week and the fate of three others lies in the waiting.

Dean Jackson, of Cranbrook, was scratched from the training camp roster while goaltender Ryan Dennis is expected back from Kamloops camp after this evening if he's going to be back at all.

"We'll know tonight whether or not he'll be cut from Kamloops tonight," suggested Gare.

Meanwhile Vernon native Doug MacIntyre, along with Mark Greyeyes and Vernon's Keith Chase, are awaiting release from their previous clubs so they can get on the ice with Lakers. MacIntyre toiled for Weyburn Red Wings of the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League last season while Greyeyes and Chase were both with Merritt Warriors.

The bunch were hardly missed, however, with more than 30 other players on the ice Sunday, some for the first time this season. The lack of ice-time showed up in nearly everyone according to Gare.

"It was kind of what I expected for first night," said Gare. "Guys were sluggish but I expect things will pick up."



CRAIG BEDARD, right, and CAMPBELL BLAIR, left, will both add experience and puck-moving ability to Lakers this season. Both played for Summerland Buckaroos last season though Blair came to lakers midway through the year. (Daily News Photo)

Although there are a good number of veteran players returning, there are a few surprises already evident. Among these are Bryan Wurzer of Cranbrook, and Travis Green of Castlegar, both of whom are left wingers and both of whom suggest Lakers will have a menacing bunch up the left side this season. Already having secure spots on the left wing are third-year veteran Stacey Hartnell and Craig Bedard who jumped the fence from Summerland Buckaroos this year.

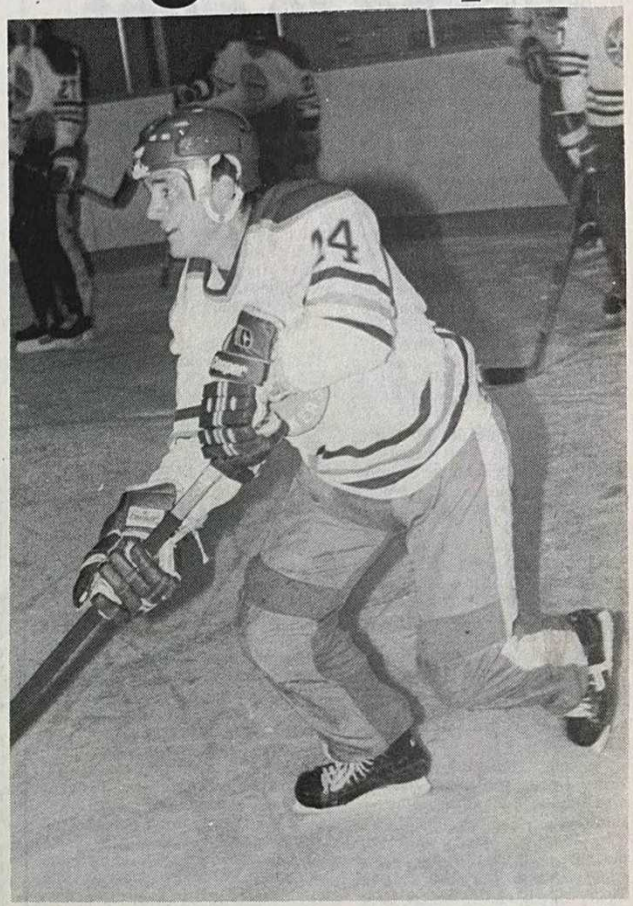
On right side the club looks solid as well though not quite as big. Veterans Al Young and Wes Gentles are joined by newcomer Ed Tuckwood who also played for Summerland last season. Vernon Minor Hockey product Derek Webb is also looking for a spot on the right side along with Al Hayter who saw some action with the local club last season but finished the year with Abbotsford Falcons of the Coastal Division.

Up the middle, Doug Spooner is the only veteran. However, rookie Sandy Moger, a 6'2" youngster, looks like he'll probably nail down a spot while Terry Pohl, the third triplet of the infamous Pohl brothers, is also a likely candidate. MacIntyre also plays centre while Steve Humphrey, who played with the club last season, and newcomer Jeff Kentel, formerly of Salmon Arm, are also looking for a chance to play at centre ice with Lakers.

A good number of players have two and three years experience either with Lakers or in the BCJHL, but at least one, Al Young, is suiting up for his fourth season with the local club. Young hasn't set any lofty goals for himself in his last junior season but he wants something to remember.

"I just want a good year and for the team to go as far as possible," he said. "I'd like to get a Centennial Cup ring but I'll settle for small victories first . . . like winning in Penticton and going farther than the first round of the playoffs."

Lakers open the regular season Sept. 19.



AL YOUNG is suiting up for his fourth season with Vernon Lakers this year. The stocky 20-year old is just one of a number of veteran players returning to camp this season and is expected to help lead the club this year. (Daily News Photo)