HAS TO REBUILD DEFENCE

Coach wants more aggression

Day two of Vernon Lakers' training camp saw the tempo pick up a bit but Head Coach Ernie Gare is still waiting patiently for a more physical form of the game to take shape on the ice. In fact he would prefer it that way.



ERNIE GARE

"The pace picked up somewhat but I'd like to see a little more physical play and a little more aggressiveness," suggested Gare. "Some players' forte is their aggressive style so they'll have to show me that if they want to make the club."

Although Gare and Assistant Coach George Fargher are in no hurry with 10 days remaining until the regular season opens, they would like to get things in full gear as quick as possible. However, Gare doesn't plan to let the axe fall until the team has played at least one exhibition game.

"We won't make any cuts until after the first exhibition game," explained Gare. "I want to give everyone a chance to play at least one exhibition game."

One player chose to scratch himself from the training roster following Monday's ice session however. Goaltender Mark Gloekner chose to leave for Fort St. John where he is virtually guaranteed a spot with that Peace-Cariboo Junior Hockey League club.

Doug McIntyre made his first appearance with the club Monday having secured his release from Weyburn of the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League. But, the fate of defenceman Keith Chase remains up in the air at this point while Mark Greyeyes also made his way onto the ice Monday having secured his release as well.

Meanwhile, Gare is only slightly concerned that he's faced with rebuilding his defensive corps this season though he's satisfied the offensive portion of the club is basically secure.

"All our forward positions look pretty good," he said. "Defensively we've only got three vets so we'll have some new faces back there.

"I'm reasonably happy with what we have here though," he added. "We can mold a pretty competitive hockey club with what we've got."

Lakers practice at Enderby arena tonight beginning at 5:45 p.m.

Slowpitch awards presented



KENDALL'S KORNER

Exhibition game should draw well



by
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Daily News
Sports Editor

It has been a long time since an exhibition junior hockey game has created much excitement in Vernon.

Local hockey fans are already talking about the pre-season game Sept. 20 between Vernon Lakers, of the B.C. Junior Hockey League, and Portland Winter Hawks, of the Western Hockey League.

You have to go back more than a decade, to 1975, to find the last time an exhibition game created this much interest. In that contest, Vernon (then known as the Vikings) hosted Medicine Hat Tigers, of the WHL.

There are a lot of similarities between the game played 11 years ago and the one coming up in less than two weeks.

In 1975, Vernon had an excellent team loaded with veterans. Vikings finished first in the BCJHL's Interior Division and set a handful of league records in the process. However, Penticton eliminated Vernon in the playoffs.

This year's Vernon club, like the -75 edition, will be loaded with veterans . . . and is expected to challenge Penticton for the Interior Division title.

The opposition in '75, Medicine Hat, was ranked as a strong challenger for the Memorial Cup. And this year's Portland club is rated among the top teams in tier one junior hockey.

The similarities don't end there. Winter Hawks, like the Tigers before them, have strong ties with Vernon.

Seven members of the '75 Medicine Hat team started their junior careers in the confines of the Vernon Civic Arena. In goal was Ken Holland. The defence corps included Cliff Lane, Tim Sanche, and Owen Lloyd. Up front, the familiar faces were Don Murdoch, Gary Gilchrist and Ron Areshenkoff.

Gilchrist and Holland played minor hockey in Vernon . . . the rest came here to play junior after their minor carreers ended.

This year's Portland roster includes six former Vernon players. On defence are Jay Stark and Jeff Finley. The forwards are brothers Troy and Trevor Pohl, Troy Mick, and Holland's younger brother, Dennis.

The Pohls moved to Vernon last year to play with Lakers, but the other four all played their minor hockey in this community.

Unfortunately, Finley will miss the Vernon game due to training camp commitments with New York Islanders, who selected him in the 1985 amateur draft. But, Winter Hawks' player personnel director Wayne Meier promises the other five local products will be in uniform.

"They are really looking forward to playing in Vernon," Meier said. "It is like a homecoming game for them. I know Jeff would love to be there too."

The visit by Tigers in 1975 was our last opportunity to watch any of the former Vernon players until they turned pro. Murdoch had two spectacular years with New York Rangers before his much-publicized drug charge turned him into a career minor leaguer.

Holland played pro hockey, including two brief stints in the NHL, for 10 years. Lloyd and Sanche spent several seasons in the minor leagues and Areshenkoff played pro briefly after being drafted by Edmonton Oilers.

Sept. 20 may be our last chance to see the latest group of Vernon products before we watch them on Hockey Night In Canada.