Vernon Daily News

sports

Editor—DON KENDALL

SPORTS BRIEFS

Soccer teams battle to draw

Stingers battled to a 3-3 draw with Kimikos in Vernon Women's Recreational Soccer League action, Tuesday night. In other games, Pappy's Restaurant shutout Pink Panters 2-0, Keg Kickers blanked Winfield Lakers 9-0, and Chinook Crushers edged Toros 2-1. Playoffs get under way next week.

Special Olympics

B.C. Special Olympics, through UBC, is providing a province-wide Canada Fitness Program which has been adapted for mentally handicapped children, aged 7 to 18. The program is scheduled Wednesdays from 4 to 4:30 p.m., starting Oct. 1, at My School. Participants will be tested for the Canada Fitness Crest, Nov. 12, at My School and the Priest Valley Gymnasium. To register, or for further information, phone Nancy Pike at 545-3960 or Willie Wendel at 542-9847.

Power skating

Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation District has introduced a kids' power skating class. Any children aged 5 to 7, who can already skate, are eligible to participate. Head instructor is figure skating coach Jennifer Stewart. Sessions are scheduled Fridays, from Oct. 17 to Dec. 19, at the Priest Valley Arena. Cost is $20 per child for 10 sessions. Registrations are now being accepted at the Vernon Recreation Complex. For further information phone 545-6035.

Players honored

NEW YORK (AP) — Quarterback Boomer Esiason of the Cincinnati Bengals and cornerback Hanford Dixon of the Cleveland Browns were named the American Football Conference's offensive and defensive players of the week, respectively, by the National Football League on Tuesday.

Esiason completed 17 of 29 passes for 243 yards and two touchdowns Sunday against Buffalo. He brought Cincinnati back from a 33-23 deficit in the final 6:16, and the Bengals won the game 36-33 on an overtime field goal.

Dixon made an interception and recovered a fumble Sunday against the Oilers. He made five tackles and helped hold Houston receiver Drew Hill without a reception.

Expos injured

MONTREAL (CP) — The injury-plagued Montreal Expos added two more names to their long list of disabled players Tuesday.

Third baseman Tim Wallach and pitcher Bryn Smith were both added to the list by the National League baseball club, and will both miss the remainder of the season.

Wallach was sidelined by a chip-fracture of his left ankle, while Smith will miss action because of a fractured bone spur in his right elbow.

Sheppard sidelined

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — Rookie centre Ray Sheppard, who failed the Buffalo Sabres team physical at the start of training camp last week, might be out up to two months with a knee injury.

Sheppard, signed to a lucrative contract by Buffalo after scoring 81 goals last season for Cornwall Royals of the Ontario Hockey League, will consult with advisers in his native Ottawa before deciding whether to undergo surgery, says Sabres spokesman John Gurtler.

Gurtler said Sheppard, who first injured the knee two years ago, will be lost to the National Hockey League team for six to eight weeks if he decides to undergo surgery.

Sundstrom stays home

NEW YORK (AP) — Forward Peter Sundstrom has notified the New York Rangers that he will remain in Sweden and not return to the National Hockey League team, the Rangers said Tuesday.

Sundstrom, 24, had only eight goals and 23 points in 53 games last season. He played three seasons for the Rangers, with 48 goals and 110 points in that span.

Sundstrom played for the Swedish national junior team in the 1981 world championships. He was the Rangers' third choice and the 50th pick overall in the 1981 draft.

Party planned

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The Pittsburgh Pirates, still seeking to surpass the one million attendance mark, will sponsor a party after their final home National League baseball game on Sept. 28 against the New York Mets.

It will feature prize giveaways, free chicken dinners and a concert by Chuck Berry and the Four Tops.

Prizes to be raffled off include a 1986 Cadillac, a Florida vacation and 1987 Pirates' season tickets. The Pirates, averaging 12,718 fans a game, are the only NL team that has yet to reach the one million mark.

Bassett advances

LARGO, Fla. (AP) — Fourth-seeded Carling Bassett of Toronto won eight straight games en route to a 6-3, 6-0 victory over American Betsy Nagelsen in a first-round match at the $125,000 Eckerd Open tennis tournament Tuesday night.

"One thing for sure, I had to keep returning well and not let her in the match," said Bassett, a semifinalist in last year's tournament.

SCOTT SPECTACULAR

Lakers trounce Bucks

By DON KENDALL
Daily News Sports Editor

Unless Summerland Buckaroos get some help, in a hurry, it is going to be a long, cold winter.

A rookie-laden Vernon Lakers lineup hammered Buckaroos 13-4 in B.C. Junior Hockey League pre-season action, Tuesday night, at the Civic Arena. Summerland has now been outscored 41-10 in three exhibition outings.

Vernon Coach Ernie Gare elected to rest eight veterans to take another look at his rookies before the regular season starts Friday night, at home, against Merritt Warriors. Still, the talent-void Bucks weren't in the same class as Lakers.

In a statement flattering to Summerland, Gare said, "They aren't very strong. They have a lot of young players."

Centre Kevin Scott, who came to Lakers from the now-defunct Shuswap Totems this season, was the best player on the ice. Scott scored four goals and set up a pair by linemate Terry Pohl.

Another standout for Lakers was defenceman Chad Biafore, who scored once and added a pair of assists. Biafore toiled with Cranbrook Colts, who won the provincial junior 'B' title last season.

"Kevin is going to be one of our offensive leaders," Gare said. "He should score 50 goals."

Biafore, known as a good puck-handling rearguard, impressed the coach with his physical play. "We knew Chad could handle the puck, but we weren't sure how he'd handle the hitting along the boards," Gare said. "He finished every check Tuesday."

Wes Gentles, Steve Humphrey, Stacy Hartnell, Derek Webb, Jeff Kental, and Toth were the other goal scorers for Lakers. Rangy defenceman Kris Ganzert, a graduate of the Vernon minor system, picked up three assists.

Kevin Hoey, Mark Valley, Art Martinez, and Tom Cross replied for Buckaroos.

Lakers were assessed 15 of 22 minor penalties, four of seven fighting majors, and four of seven game misconducts for fighting. A rash of Vernon minor penalties, in the first period, permitted Buckaroos to stay close for 20 minutes.

The teams were tied 2-2 at the end of the first period. But, Vernon scored two short-handed goals early in the second period and led 9-4 after 40 minutes.



WES GENTLES



DEREK WEBB

Vernon netminders Darrell Dickens and Pete Repole combined to block 25 shots. At the other end, Damien Holland and Wade Parker kicked out 36 shots.

The impressive performances by Ganzert, Biafore and several other rookies will keep them with the Lakers . . . at least for now. But, Gare trimmed his roster to 24 players today by moving four players.

Vernon sent Pohl and Toth to Summerland as compensation for Greg Bedard and Ed Tuckwood, who came to Lakers from Bucks during the off-season. Also, Webb was dealt to Merritt for Mark Greyeyes, who also joined Vernon this summer. And defenceman Darcy Martini was dispatched to Quesnel Millionaires, of the Peace Cariboo League.

"I won't know until later today if Pohl, Toth, and Webb will report to their new teams," Gare said. "I don't think any of those guys could have helped us this year, but those teams (Summerland and Merritt) feel they can help their clubs."

No further cuts, or trades, are anticipated before Lakers host Merritt, Friday at 8 p.m., and Portland Winter Hawks, in an exhibition game, Saturday.

Weitzel frustrated after dismal placing

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Three seasons with the Canadian National Volleyball Team has certainly given Vernon native Sharon Weitzel ample time to adjust to the hardship and disappointment of international competition. Unfortunately, the 1986 World Women's Volleyball Championship held recently in Czechoslovakia was just another disappointment for the local court star.

Ranked 13th overall among the 16 competing nations, and hoping to finish among the top 10, Weitzel and the national squad had to settle for 15th place and the frustration of realizing an entire year's work was virtually for nothing.

"All the teams were incredibly stronger than we anticipated so we ended up in the 12-16th pool and ended up 15th overall," explained Weitzel. "It was kind of frustrating because we certainly didn't do as well as we should have."

Although this sort of disappointment leads to a lot of finger-pointing when searching for the cause of their problems, Weitzel feels the pre-championship tournament the team entered in Germany might have caused the club to reach its peak before the world championships got underway.

"We peaked too early," she suggested. "We plyed well in that tournament (Germany) but we couldn't get six players all going well in Czechoslovakia."

Weitzel also expressed some disappointment in the way the championships were set up with the 16 competing nations spread over the whole country instead of competing in the same Czechoslovakian city.

"It was quite an unusual setup . . . all the pools played in a different city so we never ever saw some teams," she said.

The 16 competing nations were broken into four pools of four teams each with each pool competing against the teams within itself in a different Czecholslovakian city — as much as 300 miles apart.

With the world tournament now behind her, life returns to normal for a few weeks. She'll dissolve back into the crowd at the University of Regina for the next several weeks and become a college student once again. However, the anonymous life will last only a brief while before she is again working out with the national team. They'll begin training in about two weeks in preparation for a world tournament in South Korea, in November. The years of disappointment haven't deterred her personal will to succeed, nor has it caused her to doubt the benefit of the intense and often relentless training schedule.

"I really feel that the team is moving forward, but maybe we were hoping for too much too soon," she asid in retrospect of the world championship.

Life was never meant to be simply a series of disappointments and the same holds true for Weitzel. No sooner had she absorbed the shock of the world championship than it was announced the team would tour the west, including the Okanagan Valley, next summer. It will mark the first occasion since she joined the national team that they have played anywhere near Vernon and naturally she is excited.

"I'm really excited about it . . . we can finally play in front of our hometowns," she said.

In addition to Weitzel, two other national team members are from B.C. One of those is from Vancouver while the other, Armenia Russo, hails from Kelowna.

JUDD'S JOURNAL

Junior team has lots of potential



by Jim Judd
Daily News Sports Writer

The current edition of Vernon Lakers Junior Hockey Club takes to the ice Friday night to commence the 1986-87 B.C. Junior Hockey League season, marking the sixth campaign for the local club under its present colors.

But before the puck is dropped to inaugurate the season, let's just clear up some misconceptions and get rid of any foregone conclusions about the team . . . starting with the myth that they will be a virtual powerhouse in the BCJHL Interior Division.

Bear in mind I'm shooting straight from the hip with these observations, but having followed the club around for the past five seasons let us assume, just for the sake of argument, that I know of what I speak. Besides, I've had ample opportunity to scrutinize the collection of players at the club's training camp these past two weeks.

Let's start things off right by merely suggesting that the team has at least a reasonable chance of achieving a high degree of success in the coming season if they perform to the best of their modest capabilities.

Too bland for you? Okay, how about if I just say they have a good chance, but they better be willing to bust their butts if they expect to advance beyond the first round of playoffs again this season.

Lakers have developed a reputation for being bride's maids in the past five years — never able to win the big game in the playoffs.

They've made post-season play four consecutive seasons now, but have been halted after just one playoff series in each of those seasons. A creditable achievement in itself to appear so consistent over those hockey seasons, but there have been at least two occasions when they had as much, or more, talent than any other team in the league and didn't do squat come playoff time.

The 1983-84 season was just such an occasion while the 1985-86 season might well have been their best chance yet for a crack at all the marbles.

The biggest difference this season in comparison to those two others, is the fact that the club has far less talent on the ice right now than it did during either of those campaigns . . . players with good skills, yes, but not a lot of raw talent.

However, it's quite possible they have a better balance of players now than they did during those other two years. The band width between the best and the worst is going to be much narrower this season. Nobody is going to stand out like a sore thumb, but at the same time they will likely have three solid lines to work with.

There may be a few exceptions, of course. Centre Doug Spooner could blossom into a bonafide star, but even if he doesn't set the world on fire, he's likely going to collect in the neighbourhood of 100 points. There are a good number of wingers on the club who seem to have a touch around the net but they are balanced by a handful who have no touch around the net. Fortunately the latter group seems to have proven defensive skills, but this is offset by the observation that the ones with the scoring touch have basically no interest in their defensive game.

In net it will be interesting to see whether or not Darryl Dickens assumes his starting role once again. Although he had this position last year, his flashes of brilliance between the pipes were matched by his spells of coolish goaltending. If Dickens does get the number one spot and manages to make his goaltending more consistent, the club will be adequate in this position. Backup duties are, and will remain for some time, a question mark, with Peter Repole and Vernon's Randy Zemlak vying for a position that could end up belonging to Ryan Dennis, if he gets cut by Kamloops Blazers.

Last season the Vernon defence gave away the puck far too often to justify any offensive power they added to the club. With the appearance of Keith Chase and Tony Toth the blueline corps will at least be capable of clearing bodies out from in front of its own net. Both the aforementioned are stay-at-home type defencemen while the other veteran blueliners, most notably Campbell Blair and Sean Hartnell like to pack the puck. Darcy Martini has a bullet from the point but has no Junior A experience.

So the picture I get in my mind is a team that will be very good in the offensive zone, adequate or better in the neutral zone but only slightly better than average in the defensive zone. Their chances could improve in the defensive end of the rink of the forwards are willing to come all the way back and their chances in the neutral zone will improve if they practice some strict discipline.

Everything, however, will hinge on the proper coaching and with that in mind, let's hope Ernie Gare can keep his players properly disciplined and adequately versed in basic plays.

Yes, I'll go so far as to say the club has potential, but owing to the fizzles of past seasons I'll reserve final judgment for some time next spring.

Between now and then, there's an awful lot of hockey. It should be interesting.