DEFENCE SCORES SIX GOALS

Lakers scuttle Clippers 9-2

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Facing their first formidable opposition of the new season, Vernon Lakers rose to the occasion by posting a convincing 9-2 victory over visiting Nanaimo Clippers at Vernon Civic arena.

The victory gives Lakers a perfect 3-0 record for the season, two points back of Kelowna Packers who won their fourth straight game Friday night with a 10-6 decision against hometown Langley Eagles.

Lakers broke open a close 4-2 game with five unanswered goals in the third period, one on the power-play and another while shorthanded. The local club had two short-handed goals for the night while their power-play accounted for three tallies.

The most interesting statistic of the evening however, was the six goals scored by the Vernon defensive corps, three by veteran rearguard Campbell Blair. Blair scored his first two while Lakers had a man advantage and picked up his third while the club was short-handed in the third frame.

Blueliners Greg Olsen, Jason Fox and Chad Biafore also scored for Lakers who were tied 1-1 after one period after allowing Clippers the first goal of the game.

Naturally, Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare was modestly impressed with the offensive display put forth by his defensive unit and he was equally satisfied with the defensive game they've put on the ice to date. In their first three games, lakers have allowed just six goals against.

"Our defence moves up with the play and they really add an extra dimension to our offence," suggested Gare. "We'll have to throw a lassoo around Campbell now . . . he had a heck of a game. "I'm very happy with our goals against, especially with the number of penalties we've been taking," added Gare. "Our penalty-killing has been really terrific and we're stressing defence even though we might have the game well in hand . . . we don't want any bad habits."

Clippers, perhaps one of the largest teams in the B.C. Junior Hockey League physically, looked intent on upsetting the hometown squad from the opening whistle, pressuring Lakers in their own end. Forced to take an early penalty defending against the Clippers' onslaught, Lakers gave up a power-play goal to Dave Young. It was one of two power-play goals they would surrender.

Stacy Hartnell pulled the local club even at 9:02 of the first frame, with his first of two goals on the night. Biafore and goaltender Darryl Dickens drew assists.

Clippers went ahead for the last time early in the second stanza when Brett Mayor beat Dickens but Olsen's tied it with a shorthanded goal just 28 seconds later.

Captain Doug Spooner and Blair, with his first, put Lakers out front 4-2 before the second frame ended.

Spooner and brothers Stacy and Sean Hartnell each drew two assists during the game while Blair added a helper to his three-goal output for the night.

Dickens was called on to make 19 saves while at the other end of the rink Drew Smith was much busier making 35 saves off Lakers' shooters.

The game was marked by a number of bone-crushing hits on both sides but Lakers managed some of the best of the game, most notably a couple by defenceman Keith Chase and a clean, well-executed hip-check by Sean hartnell at his own blueline.

Lakers take to the road Sunday travelling to Merritt to take on the winless Warriors.

Warriors, 5-4 losers to hometown Penticton Knights Friday evening, with that game ending in overtime, during a Penticton power-play.

John DePourcq, Ken MacArthur, Brent Johnson, and Mike Barzal scored for Knights while Link Gantz, with two, Allan Suzuki and Daryl Kirkpatrick had one each for Merritt.

In other BCJHL action Friday night, Kelowna got three goals from Kerry Russell while Kevin Taillifer had two goals and three assists. Jay Luknowsky added a pair of goals while singles were scored by Walter Sheloff, Brent Mowery and Alex Patterson.

Langley got two goals from Rob Clark and one each from Bryan Moller, Rod Olver, Cam Matches, and Neil Eisenhut.

