LAKERS HOST KNIGHTS

Bedard gifted around net



HIGH-SCORING winger Craig Bedard leads Vernon Lakers against Penticton Knights, tonight, in the Civic Arena. Bedard has fired 14 goals, in his last five games. (Daily News Photo)

By DON KENDALL
Daily News Sports Editor

Goal scorers are born, not made. Hockey coaches can teach players to shoot harder and more accurately, but the knack of putting the puck in the net is a gift some players possess the moment they step on the ice.

Vernon Lakers' winger Craig Bedard is one of those gifted snipers. Bedard joined Lakers this year after scoring 71 goals, in the past two seasons, with Summerland Buckaroos. After a slow start in Vernon, Bedard has regained his scoring touch.

The 19-year-old Cranbrook native is among the B.C. Junior Hockey League's leading goal scorers with 19, in 17 games. During the past two weeks he has blinked the red light 14 times, in five games . . . a streak Wayne Gretzky would envy.

Bedard feels he got off to a slow start due to the change of teams. "It took me a while to get adjusted to Vernon," Bedard said. "And I was fighting the puck during the first few games."

Bedard and another Summerland refugee, Ed Tuckwood, were counted on by Head Coach Ernie Gare to be among his club's offensive leaders this season. When the Lakers, including Tuckwood and Bedard, struggled early in September and early-October, Gare was forced to juggle his lines. The outcome was a line with three-year veteran Al Young, flanked by Tuckwood and Bedard.

"Al is playing really well," Bedard said. "He is getting a pile of assists."

Even though Bedard and Tuckwood were both with Buckaroos last season, they seldom played together. "We were on the same line a few times last year, but Ed was usually kicked out by the second period," Bedard said jokingly.

In fact, Tuckwood was known as much for his pugilistic skills as his goal-scoring ability until a few weeks ago. As his penalty total has dropped, his offensive statistics have risen. Tuckwood is also among the Interior Division's top 10 scorers.

Young's line is expected to carry a large part of the load this weekend when Lakers face one of the toughest 48-hour stretches of the BCJHL season. Lakers host second place Penticton Knights, tonight; host first place Kelowna Packers, Saturday; and visit Penticton, Sunday.

Naturally, Bedard is hoping for three victories this weekend. But, realistically, he'd be happy with two wins.

"We can play with either of those teams (Penticton or Kelowna)," Bedard said. "We've lost some close games to them, but this is no time to panic. I think we'll have a good weekend."

Game time tonight is 8 p.m.

LOOK BACK FIVE YEARS

NOV., 1981

Vernon Teachers edged Armstrong 78-75 in the Carling O'Keefe Men's Basketball League season opener this week at Priest Valley gym. Rene Dolcetti led the way offensively for Teachers with a 24-point night. Morris Vardabasso sunk 22 points in a winning cause, 18 of them coming in the first half. Tony Wolcott led the losers with a 20-point effort, three more than Mike MacKay.

CURLING CLUB NEWS

Women host