Familiar face returns to Vernon Lakers' lineup

A familiar face is currently practicing with Vernon Lakers, hoping to earn a position in goal and in the process shore up Lakers' sagging goaltending. In the meantime the local club will face Richmond Sockeyes tonight at Civic arena.

Frank Romeo, who was released by Victoria Cougars earlier this season, is the newest face at the Vernon practice sessions. Some may remember Romeo as Lakers' starting netminder during the 1983-84 season but most will remember him for his stalward goaltending in the Interior division semi-final playoff series last spring. Romeo stoned Lakers more often than not while helping Kelowna Packers advance to the division final after a seven-game battle.

However, having not been on the ice for an extended period of time now, Romeo needs practice and conditioning before he can offer a clear picture of his worth to Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare.

"His reflexes are a bit slow because he hasn't played in two and a half months," said Lakers' General Manager Mel Lis.

"We're practicing him right now but we don't want to start him too early or he might get injured," added Lis. "We feel he could help our club though, he just needs some time."

Romeo has had a lengthy junior hockey career, most of it in the BC Junior Hockey League. He has played with Revelstoke Rocketsand Dauphin Kings of the Manitoba Junior Hockey League in addition to Packers and Lakers.

Meanwhile, hockey fans get an opportunity to see former Vancouver Canucks' tough guy Orland Curtenbach in action behind the bench when Richmond Sockeyes take to the ice at Civic arena tonight.

Sockeyes leaf the BCJHL Coastal division currently with a record of 15 wins and only four losses and boast the best two goaltenders on the Coast in Glenn Pencer and Dave Rawson. The club also had a pair of players in the top 10 scoring on the Coast in Mario Desjardins and Dave Tomlinson.

In BCJHL action Thursday night, visiting Abbotsford Falcons built up period leads of 5-0 and 8-2 before coasting to a 9-2 victory over hometown Merritt Warriors.

Mike Paller scored three goals for Falcons, Ian Elger scored twice while Rick Rozecki, Brad Smiley, Darryl Regier and Davey Haines added singles.

Merritt got goals from Steve Manuel and Troy MacLeod.

Abbotsford netminders Darcy D'Amour and Tim Whaley combined to make 29 saves while Warrios; goalies Randy Beekhuizen and Gordon Besse stopped a total of 39 shots.