VERNON 10, DELTA 6

Lakers put best foot forward

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers put their best foot forward Friday night at Civic arena and it paid off handsomely with a 10-6 victory over visiting Delta Flyers.

The victory improves Lakers' record to 13-11-1 and keeps them in third place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division behind Kelowna and Penticton.

Lakers led the contest from the outset and saved their strongest performance for the third period, much to the relief of local hockey fans who have seen the club go down the tubes often enough in the late going. With the exception of unforgiveable give-aways in their own zone, which cost the club at least three goals Friday, Lakers carried the play and the outcome was never in any serious doubt.

However, Head Coach Ernie Gare still wasn't ready to give his club a full measure of credit for the victory because he wasn't too happy with the six goals the club allowed the visitors.

"I wasn't too happy with our goals against," said Gare. "We worked better defensively in the third period though. We played a lot more disciplined in the third period — that was our objective.

"We got stung by those give-aways," he added with some concern. "Eliminate those and it wasn't even close."

Lakers received a rare four-goal performance from captain Doug Spooner who has disappointed the home-crowd most of this season with his offensive performance.

However, if Friday night's performance from Lakers is an indication of a growing team trend, then Spooner's output may grow to match last year's.

"He (Spooner) has had so many chances and it's important to put those kind away," suggested Gare of his captain. "Doug did that tonight (Friday) and it helped us to bury them (Flyers)."

Lakers' special teams did a good job against Flyers, scoring four times while at a man-advantage and adding another goal while short-handed. Spooner scored the latter when he stole the puck at centre ice and went in alone on the Delta goaltender.

Kevin Scott, who had no puck-luck whatsoever in the first period, added a pair of goals for Lakers who held period leads of 4-2 and 7-5 before outscoring Delta 3-1 in the third frame.

Jason Fox, Ed Tuckwood, Al Young and Mark Greyeyes were the other marksmen for Vernon while Lance Momotani and Link Gates scored two apiece in a losing cause for Flyers. Randy Olson and Cal McGowan added singles.

Jason Powell had a relatively strong night in goal for Vernon, facing 38 shots and getting burned three times by give-aways by Vernon in their own zone. Chris Dickson and Bob Nickel combined to stop 48 of 58 shots directed their way by Vernon.

Lakers lost forward Ed Tuckwood along with rearguards Bob Dever and Lorne Cummings at the end of the first period following a brief but costly bout of fisticuffs. Dever suffered a broken nose and some wobbly legs at the hands of Delta badman Mike Bafaro while Cummings was ejected during the same altercation. Tuckwood was thrown out by referee Darren Zupp for his misinterpretation of the linesman's instructions when aid was being administered to Dever.

Other than that the game was a bit tough at times but relatively free of related incidents.

Lakers have a golden opportunity to fatten their record for the remainder of the weekend as they have a home-and-home stand with hapless Summerland Buckaroos. The next home game is Sunday night.

In other BCJHL action Friday night Kelowna Packers overcame a 4-0 deficit to defeat Penticton Knights 7-5. In Richmond, goaltender Frank Romeo stopped all 34 shots directed his way to lead Sockeyes to a 3-0 shutout win over Langley Eagles, and Nanaimo Clippers doubled visiting Abbotsford Falcons 10-5.

In Kelowna, Kelly Hurd scored two goals for the Packers who evened the score at 4-4 by the middle of the second frame. Singles went to Brent Mowery, Greg Andrusak, Stan Marple, Jay Luknowsky and Pat Mangold who scored into an empty net.

Knights got two goals from Shawn Howard while singles went to John DePorcq, Jackson Penny and Brad Treliving.

