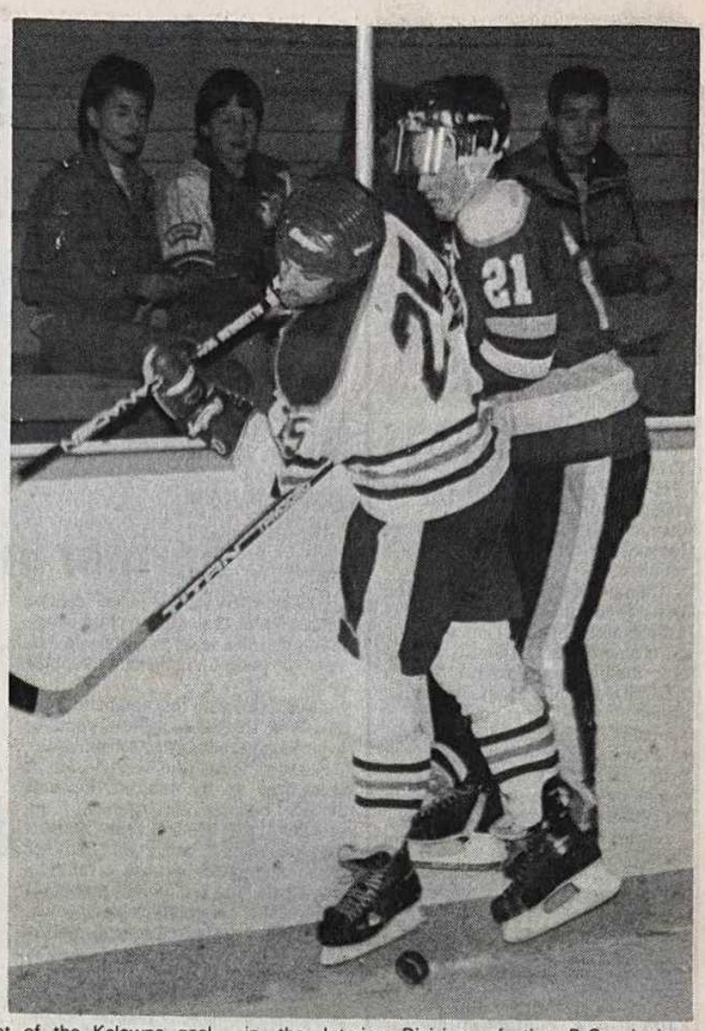




VERNON CAPTAIN Doug Spooner (25), above, right photo, takes Kelowna's Kerry Russell heavily into the boards during action Saturday night at the Civic Arena. Left, Ian Alger (16) cradles the puck in front of the Kelowna goal but Lakers came up empty-handed on this attempt and many others as they suffered a 5-2 loss to Packers. Lakers remain in second place in the Interior Division of the B.C. Junior Hockey League while Kelowna is in first place.
(Daily News Photos)

BAD WEEKEND FOR VERNON

Packers dump Lakers

Kelowna packers handed Vernon Lakers a few lessons in the game of hockey at the Civic Arena, Saturday night, skating off with a 5-2 victory over the hometown squad before a crowd of more than 1,000 hockey fans.

The loss, the second for Lakers in as many nights, leaves them a single point ahead of Penticton Knights in the battle for second place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior Division. Kelowna leads the Interior loop by a healthy margin and showed Vernon fans why Saturday.

Packers played a sound defensive game, and at the same time, exposed the soft underbelly of Lakers' defensive corps on numerous occasions.

Lakers got off to a good start and held a wide margin of the play throughout most of the first period. However, it was Kelowna who led the game 1-0 when the period ended. By the midway point of the second frame, the visitors were enjoying a healthy 4-0 lead with Bruce Bianchini scoring twice along with singles from Kevin Taillefer and Kerry Russell.

All three Kelowna goals in the second frame were the direct result of sloppy defensive work by Lakers in their own zone.

Lakers' attack caught fire in the dying minute of the second period when rearguard Greg Olson finally managed to beat Packers' Lucien Carrignan with a low blast from the slot off a rebound from Kevin Scott. The goal came at 19:01.

At the 19:40 mark Al Young slipped a wrist-shot past Carrignan to close the score to 4-2.

A Kelowna goal, scored with no time remaining on the clock, was disallowed but it didn't make any difference. Packers came out flying in the third period and popped in a quick goal at 1:01.

The goal took the wind out of Lakers' sails and for the remainder of the game, Packers were content to put up a defensive shell that the Vernon squad seemed to have little interest in getting past.

Later, both coaches agree that the early goal in the third period took the spirit out of Lakers.

"That fifth goal was a big one," suggested Packers' Coach Bill Hogoboam. "If they had got the first goal in the third, it may have swung the momentum but we got it and it pumped us up."

Lakers' Coach Ernie Gare concurred with Hogoboam's analysis.

That goal in the third period definitely hurt us," he said. "It was the same goal as the first one — a guy all alone in front and (Jason) Palmer didn't have much of a chance on it."

Palmer turned in a solid performance, despite the loss, blocking 35 of 40 shots directed his way. He kept the Packers from completely running away with the contest, in the second period.

"We got caught going the wrong way in the neutral zone," suggested Gare. "We were moving up when we should have been backing up. They (Packers) break out fast and they don't miss on those two-on-ones and three-on-one breaks."

Lakers had numerous opportunities to score early in the game, but the local club couldn't hit the net, let alone beat Carrignan. Later they found new ways of missing opportunities as both Ian Alger and Al Young missed on clear breakaways. If Vernon had cracked Carrignan's confidence early in the game, it could have been a different story.

"If you don't score early on these guys they seem to get stronger," suggested Gare, while Hogoboam once again concurred with the observations of the opposing coach.

"They (Lakers) come out strong and if you can withstand the onslaught, then we tend to get stronger," Hogoboam said.

In other BCJHL action Saturday, the road-weary Summerland Buckaroos suffered a 13-2 thrashing at the hands of Delta Flyers while Juan De Fuca doubled Nanaimo 6-3 and Richmond handled Abbotsford 7-1.

In action Sunday, a pair of former Vernon players held the spotlight as Wes Gentles scored four goals and assisted on one other to lead Langley Eagles past Juan De Fuca 8-3. Elsewhere, Stacey Hartnell scored twice as Penticton defeated Merritt Warriors 5-1.

Jim Butterworth, Bruce Kenward, Vern Kinley and Mike Dutson had singles for the Eagles while Jeff Dobish, Bruce Robinson, and Kevin Nohr replied for the Whalers.

Ivan Moore, Jackson Penney and John DePourcq added singles for Penticton while Merritt's only goal came from Cal McGowan.

Lakers' next home action will be Friday night when they host Langley Eagles. Thursday night, the annual BCJHL All-Star game takes place in Merritt.

Vernon rink loses in final

It was close but no cigar for a pair of Vernon women's curling teams in their respective zone playoffs on the weekend.

Shirley White and her foursome lost out to Kelowna's Doreen McGruther in the senior women's playoffs, in Armstrong, while Sharon Delver and her rink dropped an 8-6 decision to Kelowna's Marian Radcliffe in the last end of the final game in the women's zone curling playoffs, held in Penticton.

Delver had a slim chance of forcing an extra end with Radcliffe, but had to draw around a guard into the four-foot circle in order to accomplish the task.

"They had a guard up front and we missed trying to take that out so I had to try draw around it," she explained. "It curled too hard and missed the four-foot.

"I missed a draw to the four-foot and she won so I'll have to live with that. Mind you, as they say, you can't lose a game on just one shot so I'll stick with that."

The playoff consisted of a four-game, round-robin during which Delver won two and lost two. Radcliffe, after dropping her first game to a second Vernon were almost as tight as the White rink came within a single end of going to the senior women's provincial championships.

The senior women chose to engage in a four-team, round-robin with no secondary round of playoffs. The winner of the round-robin portion advanced.

White and her rink posted a 2-1 record while McGruther had a record of three wins and no losses. Naturally, the only loss White suffered was a narrow one to McGruther.

"I had one rock in the house and she (McGruther) made a take-out and stayed for shot-rock to win the game," explained White.

Also curling with the Vernon senior women's team were Alvida Johnston, third, Thelma Trickett, second, and Pat Stewart, lead.

Pleads guilty

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (AP) — Michael Dokes, former World Boxing Association heavyweight champion, pleaded guilty Thursday to possession of a controlled substance in a plea bargain agreement with