PLAY NANAIMO, JUAN DE FUCA ON ISLAND

Lakers tough on the road

By DON KENDALL
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(RICHMOND (Special) — Vernon Lakers stole two points in B.C. Junior Hockey League action Thursday night at Richmond.

Lakers edged the Coast Division- leading Sockeyes 7-6, despite being outshot 55-31.

Vernon netminder Jason Palmer turned in probably his best performance since joining the Lakers in early December. Palmer made numerous spectacular saves, including two in the final 25 seconds after Richmond had pulled goalie Frank Romeo in favor of an extra attacker.

Lakers twice held three-goal leads, 4-1 and 6-3, but the Sockeyes battled back to within a goal on both occassions.

Centre Kevin Scott and his linemates continued their torrid scoring pace. Winger Doug Spooner scored four goals, including the winner on a backhand with less than seven minutes remaining in the third period.

Scott scored once and set up four others while Mark Greyeyes added four assists. With an assist from Spooner, the line finished the night with 14 points and now has 53 points in four games since being united last week. Scott now leads the Interior division scoring race with 101 points.

Campbell Blair and Jan Zeidel, with his first goal since being acquired from Penticton Knights, rounded out the Vernon scoring. Blair's goal gave him 235 career points which equals the league record for defencemen, set by Ian Kidd, formerly of Knights.

Dean Rutledge, with two goals, Paul Rutherford, Bill Hardy, Rob Clarke, and ex-Laker Jason Phillips replied for the Sockeyes.

Vernon Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare said it was a great way to start a road trip.

"Richmond doesn't lose many games in their building," Gare said. "Palmer was the difference, he held us in there."

The Vernon coach also praised Spooner. "Dougie is one of those guys who plays well every night but doesn't always get noticed," Gare said. "Now that he is scoring everybody is taking notice."

Richmond Coach Orland Kurtenbach echoed Gare's opinion about Palmer's goaltending.

"We dug ourselves into an early hole and then couldn't get the puck past Palmer," Kurtenbach said. "When Palmer was in the Coast Division (with Delta and Langley) he usually played well in Richmond."

On the other hand, the former NHL star wasn't impressed with his starting netminder. Glenn Pencer was lifted, in favor of Romeo, midway through the second period. Pencer stopped only 12 of 18 shots he faced.

Kurtenbach said, "When you outshoot someone 55-31, you expect results."

Each team was assessed eight minor penalties in the hard-hitting contest.

Lakers travel to Vancouver Island for games with Nanaimo Clippers, tonight, and Juan De Fuca Whalers, Saturday.

While Gare is pleased with the play of Scott's trio, he is concerned that his offence is firing on only one cylinder.

"If we want to win two games on the island we have to get some production from our other two lines," he said.

Lakers are without defenceman Chad Biafore who is nursing an injured ankle. Biafore will be sidelined for up to four weeks.

Vernon now leads third-place Penticton by five points with two games in hand.

In other BCJHL action Thursday night, Merritt Warriors trounced the struggling Summerland Buckaroos 8-2.

Paul Krune and Trent McNab scored two goals each to lead the Warriors and singles came from Barry Jackson, Troy MacLeod, Kevin Ned and Frank Biller.

Darren McFarland and Rich Reay replied for Summerland.

In BCJHL play tonight Delta visits Langley and Penticton plays host to Kelowna.



DOUG SPOONER, Lakers' captain, scored four goals and added an assist to power Vernon Lakers to a 7-6 victory against Coastal Division-leading Richmond Sockeyes Thursday night in Richmond. Spooner and his linemates racked up 14 points during the night with Kevin Scott picking up a goal and four assists. Scott now leads the Interior Division of the BCJHL with 101 points. (Don Weixl photo)

Mixed success for Royals and Panthers

VSS Senior Basketball teams had mixed success against Rutland VooDoos Thursday evening at VSS Panther Pit.

Panthers dropped a 59-31 decision to the VooDoos who lead the South Division of the Okanagan-Mainline Senior Boys "AA" Basketball League with a 5-0 record. Panthers' record dropped to 4-3 with the loss.

Although their offense was running on all four barrels, Royals' defence was working overtime as well. In the fourth quarter the VSS Senior Girls team didn't allow the visitors a single point while they scored 26 themselves.

Royals led 16-2 after one quarter and upped their lead to a convincing 40-6 by half time. VooDoos had their best quarter in the third when they managed to put 12 points on the board to Royals' 20.