KNIGHTS 4, LAKERS 2

Penticton wins playoff preview

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

If Friday night's game between Lakers and Penticton Knights is a taste of what is to come in the Interior Division semi-final series beginning Tuesday night, Vernon hockey fans would probably have wished for a different outcome.

Knights scored the only goals in the second and third periods, both on defensive miscues by Lakers', and held the host squad scoreless for the final 45 minutes of the game as they etched out a 4-2 victory. It was the final game of the regular season for Knights who face Lakers beginning Tuesday in a best-of-seven playoff series. The outcome of Friday's encounter in no way effected the standing of the two teams as Lakers will finish the season in second place while Knights are third.

Lakers close out the regular season tonight when they host Kelowna Packers at Civic arena.

Vernon opened the scoring with a power-play goal just 54 seconds into the contest and it looked as though the club would walk away with the game easily. Lakers were fore-checking hard and taking the body but strong goaltending by Knights' Jamie Loewen kept the local club from expanding their lead in the opening frame.

Kevin Scott also tallied on the power-play at 14:53 of the opening period with the Vernon goals sandwiching a pair of markers by Knights' Kevin McArthur and Steve Chelios. Both goals were slapshots from well out with the first one simply eluding Jason Palmer and the second one using a screen effectively to beat the Vernon goaltender.

Brad Heschuk scored the only goal of the second frame and it proved to be the winner as Knights capitalized on a sloppy play in Lakers' zone at 17:09 of the period. Palmer and defenceman Greg Olson misread the situation trying to clear the puck out of Lakers' corner and Heschuk had an empty net to shoot at.

The score remained 3-2 for Knights until late in the third period when former Vernon player Greg Guest stole the puck in Lakers' zone and beat Palmer with a quick wrist-shot to put the icing on the cake.

Though the game had its moments it was played with caution and deliberation on both sides resulting in a defensive battle. While Penticton Coach Duane Pentland hoped it would be an indication of the upcoming playoff series, Vernon Coach Ernie Gare hoped it would be just the opposite.

"I think it's an indication of how the playoffs will go," suggested Pentland. "Everyone is cautious and there's lots of hitting. It should be a good series."

Meanwhile Gare, who chewed his players out following the game, thought the one-sided penalty factor, in Knights' favor, helped decide the outcome.

"We killed a lot of penalties in the second period and it sort of burned us out so didn't have a good third period," he said. "We didn't get a good team effort tonight for some reason.

"It's a preview of what's to come though," he continued. "They (Knights) threw a blanket around us and goaltending is going to be a big factor — we'll have to play a more tight-checking game."

Meanwhile, in Kelowna, Merritt Warriors proved to Packers that they were ready for a longer series than most have predicted as they dropped a narrow 5-3 decision to the hometown squad in a fight-filled affair.

On the Coast, Nanaimo and Abbotsford had their game called in the third period with Nanaimo out front by a 15-3 margin. And, in one other game it was Richmond over Langley Eagles by a 9-2 margin.

Vernon Daily News | **sports** | Editor — DON KENDALL

Fulton Maroons advance to final

Fulton Maroons defeated Clearwater 66-60 to advance to the Championship final game of the Okanagan Senior Boys' Basketball Championship Friday night.

In other basketball action Friday VSS Panthers surprised Spring Valley 46-37 while Fulton Junior Boys were upset 60-49 by KSS. In Junior Girls play Vernon Royal-Panthers defeated KSS 57-26 without two fo their starters while in Senior Grils action both Pleasant Valley Secondary and of Armstrong, and Charles Bloom, of Lumby, were opening round losers.

Ted Rush paced Senior Maroons with a 21-point performance while Richard Bothe added 16 points. Sean Milliken, with 14, and Mike Pottinger with 12 helped spread the scoring out for Maroons who advance to the Okanagan Championship final tonight against Keremeos.

Sheldon Brown's 18 points helped VSS Junior Panthers defeat Spring Valley. Panthers led 24-23 at half time but were ahead by a 13-point cushion heading into the final quarter. Panthers will play in the semi-final today versus Summerland. Came time is 1 p.m.

Meanwhile, Junior Maroons, heavily favored to win the Okanagan Valley title, picked a bad day to turn in a substandard performance.

"We didn't expect to lose," explained Coach Bob Shannon. "They (KSS) played well and we didn't shoot well at all — we picked a bad time to play badly."

Todd Dulaba netted 16 points in a losing cause for Fulton boys.

Paula Dibski picked up the slack compensating for the loss of star forward Corrine Vanderwal. Dibski scored 27 points while Vanderwal, who checked out of the game after the first quarter due to illness, helped out with eight points before she left.

Meanwhile, also in Junior Girls play, Fulton lost 51-43 to KLO of Kelowna. The Fulton girls trailed throughout the contest but closed to within four points late in the fourth quarter before a couple of fast break plays sealed their fate.

Charles Bloom Senior Girls were on the short end of a 72-70 heartbreaker in overtime to St. Ann's High School. PVSS dropped a 45-35 decision to Westside.



DAVE WENSLEY slides the puck past a Providence goaltender during recent NCAA hockey action. Wensley was recently named to the University of Maine's 'Team of the Decade.' However, the slick centre will miss the remainder of the college season due to a knee injury.

U.S. college honors former Vernon star

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

A minor knee injury suffered in a game against Providence College Driars Feb. 1 has sidelined former Vernon Lakers' star Dave Wensley for the remainder of the regular season with University of Maine Black Bears.

However, the injury didn't prevent Wensley from moving into eighth place in the University of Maine's all-time top 10 scoring list and his 97 career points, including 32 in 27 games this year, make Wensley the leading scorer among active players on Black Bears' roster.

The icing on the cake of a spectacular regular season was Wensley's recent selection to the University of Maine's Hockey Team of the Decade. The Players of the Decade will be invited to take part in a ceremony honoring them at the Maine-Boston University game Feb. 27.

Wensley, who led Lakers in scoring during the 1983-84 season, suffered strained ligaments in his right knee when he was involved in a mid-ice collision with a Providence College player midway through the second period.

"We already miss his scoring touch," suggested Greg Reid, assistant sports information officer at University of Maine. "We was with our most explosive line."

The slick centre spearheaded a line comrised of Eric Weinrich and rookie scoring sensation Dave Capuano, who currently leads Black Bears with 16 goals and 32 assists for 48 points. Wensley, who has 16 goals and 16 assists for 32 points, was headed for his best season ever though he has been one of the most consistent scorers with the club over the course of three seasons. In his rookie campaign, 1984-85, he had 34 points and added 31 points during the 1985-86 season.

However, it was Wensley's defensive play that improved greatly this season. In his first two seasons, Wensley was last in plus-minus ratings for the team, but this season he completely turned things around and is currently sitting at plus-14 . . . one of the top figures on the club.

"He's always had that scoring touch but now he plays both ends of the ice," suggested Reid of Wensley's improvement defensively.

"I've got my mind on defence this year," Wensley said. "Rather than putting the puck in the net. If I was more puck-conscious I'd have more points but I'd probably be -10 and that wouldn't be helping the team."

Just prior to his injury Wensley was on a tear in the NCAA's Hockey East Division. In his last 14 games, prior to the incident, he had scored 13 goals and added 11 assists for 24 points. Since the injury he has missed five games and will miss the remaining four regular season games. He is expected to return to the ice March 10 in time for the first playoff round.

Olson's hot hand gives Lumby a win

Dale Olson scored 52 points to lead Lumby Sun Auto Parts to a 99-84 win over Sun Valley Sports in Vernon Intermediate Men's Basketball League action, Thursday night.

Lee Hesketh, who scored 20 points, also held a hot hand for Lumby.

Stacey Smith and Victor Eng countered with 19 points apiece for Sun Valley Sports.

In other games, Kokanee Masters thumped National Hotel 83-59 and Squires Four Pub defeated Golden Crown Restaurant by default. Golden Crown was penalized for using an ineligible player.

Bill Pitcher, with 32 points, and Tony Wolcott, with 26, were the offensive stars for Masters.

Doug Galuska replied with 22 points for National Hotel.

Arriving early helps Ripken's form

Arriving early for baseball spring training is nothing new for Cal Ripken of the Baltimore Orioles. Pedro Guerrero's presence in the Los Angeles Dodgers' camp is another matter.

"No. 1, I miss it, and I enjoy it," Ripken said Friday after reporting early to the Orioles' Miami training site. "Plus, it gives me an extra week to gradually work into shape."

It was the fifth consecutive early spring appearance for Ripken, who has a couple of other streaks going — 765 consecutive regular-season games and 6,947 consecutive innings.

He was joined in Miami by younger brother Billy, Jim Traber, Larry Sheets, Alan Wiggins and John Shelby. None are pitchers, and therefore need not arrive until March 1.

Guerrero's appearance this early is a first. The outfielder has traditionally been the last Dodger to report. After batting .320 with 33 home runs and 87 runs batted in in 1985, he missed all but 31 games last season with a knee injury sustained on the final week of spring training.

"With what happened last year, I figured I'd need more time to get ready for the season," Guerrero, 30, said at the Dodgers' Vero Beach, Fla., training site.

OTHERS RECOVERING

Besides pitchers and catchers, the Dodgers greeted several players recovering from a rash of injuries.

The others are outfielders Mike Marshall, Ken Landreaux and Reggie Williams, and infielders Mariano Duncan, Steve Sax, Manuel Francois, Bill Madlock, Dave Anderson and Len Matuszek.

Reliever Willie Hernandez, who also is not required to report until March 1, arrived at the Detroit Tigers' camp at Lakeland, Fla.

At the Toronto Blue Jays' camp at Dunedin, Fla., pitcher Tom Filer was early. Filer, with a surgically rebuilt elbow, is attempting a comeback.

Meanwhile, Oakland A's manager Tony La Russa said he is "teed off" over the retirement earlier this week of left-hander Vida Blue, 37. "Anything that hurts our chances to win upsets me," he said.

Blue, obtained in the off-season, was 10-10 with a 3.27 earned-run average for the San Francisco Giants in 1986.

Pitcher Joaquin Andujar also was a no-show in the A's camp at Scottsdale.

Hockey violence declining

KAMLOOPS, B.C. (CP) — It's Saturday, Nov. 22, 1986.

The Kamloops Midget Reps are playing in Vernon — one of thousands of minor hockey games being played across Canada that day.

Midway through the game, Jamie Schlichter, 16, was helping Kamloops kill a penalty.

"We were shorthanded," Schlichter recalls. "I was straddling the blueline, ready to pass behind my back. Just as I passed, a guy hit me from behind.

"I fell, and I tried to get up and felt a real bad pain in my back. I lay back down."

Forty-five minutes later the St. Ann's Academy student was carried off the ice.

When Schlichter was hit he fell headfirst into the boards — the impact snapped his neck and cracked his spine.

He was in hospital four days and faces more than a year of recovery and rehabilitation. The player who charged into him from behind received five minutes in the penalty box.

The B.C. Amateur Hockey Association drafted rules two years ago to restrict these lethal practices such as the that nearly crippled Schlichter. The question is: Are they working?

"Hockey is a violent game — there's no doubt about that," said association president Bruce Allison of Richmond. "But it's no more violent than say, basketball."

INCIDENTS DECLINE

Allison said violent incidents, such as the Schlichter case, are declining. The rules against stickwork are having an effect on the game.

"We have in the last two years brought the sticks down to the ice," he said. "We insist upon it.

"Long before the Ontario government or anyone else came out of the woodwork to clean up their act, we have come down strongly in all leagues that the sticks must come down to the ice."

The Ontario government introduced new policies to curb hockey violence, including grants to promote education among coaches, players, and parents, and penalties — such as loss of funding, for leagues which fail to act.

Allison said his association has similar programs and feels provincial government interference with minor hockey is unwarranted.

Barry Kelsey, assistant deputy minister of British Columbia's Recreation Ministry, agrees, adding that he doesn't know of any plans to adopt a grant policy similar to Ontario's.

SKI TIPS

Check your equipment for warm spring days

of grit before you put your skis on, as