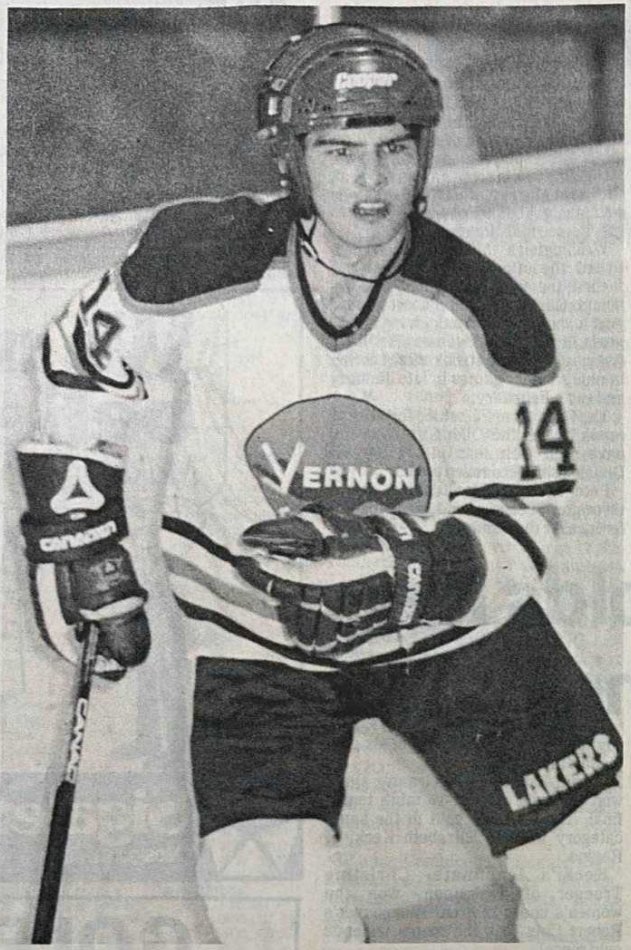
OVERTIME WIN IN GAME THREE

Lakers just one win away



MARK GREYEYES scored at 2:24 of the second overtime period Friday night to give Vernon Lakers a 4-3 victory over Penticton Knights in game three of their best-of-seven BCJHL Interior Division semi-final series. Lakers, who hold a 3-0 lead in the series now, would like to end it all tonight in Penticton.

(Don Weixl photo)

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Mark Greyeyes scored at 2:24 of the second overtime period to give Vernon Lakers a 4-3 victory over Penticton Knights before a near-capacity crowd of more than 2,000 Friday night at the Civic arena.

The win leaves Lakers with a 3-0 lead in their best-of-seven B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division semi-final series with Knights. They need just one more victory to win their first playoff series in the club's six-year history.

Greyeyes and Kevin Scott produced a two-on-one break into Knights' zone after forcing a turnover at centre ice. Scott took the initial shot and Greyeyes, left with an open net and a rebound right on his stick, made no mistake as he deposited the puck behind Penticton goaltender Jamie Loewen.

The goal ended a night of frustration for Lakers who had numerous chances to put the game away but hit posts and cross-bars or simply missed open nets. Neither team managed to score in the first 10-minute overtime period.

Lakers departed, somewhat, from their usual game plan Friday night, maintaining a good positional game but not skating quite as hard and certainly not taking the body as effectively as they had done in the first two games of the series. The team's defence looked very quiet on two of Knights' three goals, both of which might have been avoided if the club's forwards had been coming back as they did in games one and two.

The local club came alive in the third period after Craig Bedard scored at 13:19 to tie the game at 2-2. Knights led 2-1 after the second period getting a pair of unanswered goals in the middle frame from Greg Guest and Brad Treliving.

Todd Demchuk gave Lakers a 1-0 first period lead when he converted a passing play by centre Al Young and defenceman Wes Elliott. The fiesty forward showed a crowd-pleasing display of emotion following his goal, somewhat reminiscent of Tiger Williams' victory antics.

Demchuk also scored what appeared to be the game winner at 16:52 of the third period when his quick shot from the point threaded its way through heavy traffic in front of Loewen.

However, Knights' captain John DePourcq sent the game into overtime when he banged in a rebound during a goalmouth scramble at the 17:59 mark.

Lakers outshot Knights by a slight margin on the night 52-45. Jason Palmer turned in his best performance to date in kicking out 42 of Knights' shots. The Vernon goaltender kept the team alive in the early going when Penticton managed a number of quality, high-percentage scoring opportunities but came away empty-handed thanks to the quick glove of Palmer.

Though he appeared calm and cool on the ice while scoring the game winner, Greyeyes was delirious with emotion and joy following the game.

"(Kevin) Scott took the shot and it came right to me," he explained while still trying to catch his breath. "Loewen was on the other side and it (the net) was wide open — I couldn't miss."

Demchuk, meanwhile, whose spirited play lifted Lakers on both occasions when he scored, had noticed the club's lack of energy earlier in the contest and hoped his play would help them overcome it.

"We came in after two periods and some guys said we weren't playing the same game but we dug down deep," he said.

"Our line is really just out there to forecheck and keep them in their end," he continued. "It's a real bonus when we score."

Lakers' Coach Ernie Gare was equally impressed with the goal-scoring production coming from his third line though he is extremely happy with the all around effort of his club as well.

"That's a real bonus for us when a checker like Todd comes through with two big goals," he concurred with Demchuk. "We were getting the chances but we didn't get the breaks.

"That's probably the best game they (Knights) have played yet but we were a bit better," he added.

Game four of the series takes place tonight in Penticton and Lakers would dearly love to end the best-of-seven affair in the minimum number of games with a win. In Game two they checked Knights to a standstill in their own rink and earned an impressive 6-3 victory. They would like more of the same tonight and according to Gare the club can smell blood now.

"We don't want to even give them (Knights) a smell," he suggested. "We'll be out gunning for them tonight."

In other BCJHL playoff action Friday night, Kelowna Packers spotted Merritt Warriors a 1-0 lead before finding their form and cruising to an 11-2 victory. Kelowna now holds a 3-0 advantage in that best-of-seven Interior Division semi-final as well.

In Coastal Division action Richmond Sockeyes also earned a 3-0 lead in their series with a 7-3 victory over Nanaimo Clippers while Delta Flyers and Langley Eagles are tied 1-1 after two games following a 5-3 Eagles' victory.

Packers, who held period leads of 2-1 and 5-2, were led by Kevin Taillefer and Kerry Russell with two goals and two assists apiece. Singles came from Mike Wegleitner, Jason Ruff, Mike Murinko, Tim Roux, Brent Mowery, Pat Mangold, and Greg Andrusak.

Vernon Master ski racer picks up silver at Games