Lakers' comeback bid falls short

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Officially, Kelowna Packers won the game with an overtime goal at 4:26 of sudden death but unofficially, Vernon Lakers handed Packers a 7-6 victory long before the game ran into extra time.

Jamie Kurki scored his third goal of the game, in overtime, to give Kelowna the important victory and tie the best-of-seven B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division Championship 2-2. Game five takes place tonight in Kelowna Memorial arena beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Vernon began weak and finished weak in the loss. Packers stormed out of the starting gate and ran up a 4-0 first period lead against the sleepy Lakers. Then, in overtime, the Kelowna junior squad swarmed all over Vernon like angry bees, out-shooting them 6-1 in the brief sudden-death affair before their persistence paid off with Kurki's goal.

There were a few bright lights for Lakers despite the loss however. Defenceman Campbell Blair carried the team during the evening scoring once and setting up four other goals. However, Lakers' first goal, by Al Young, was also set up by the Vernon rearguard although he received no credit for the feat.

Mark Greyeyes celebrated his 19th birthday with a pair of back-to-back second period goals helping Lakers totally erase a 4-0 deficit and forge a brief 4-4 tie. However Kurki put Packers ahead with his second goal of the night late in the second frame.

Other members of the Vernon club simply didn't show up to play and while some eventually found their legs, others, particularly a number of defencemen, never got their minds into the game at all. Vernon rearguards deflected three shots past their own goaltender including Kelowna's sixth goal which seemed to break Lakers' momentum and certainly ended up being their demise.

In the first stanza Lakers were totally flat, allowing Packers to skate freely out of their own zone and freewheel in Vernon's defensive zone. Kelowna beat Vernon to the puck in both ends of the rink in the opening 20 minutes and it soon began to show up on the scoreboard.

Kelly Hurd broke the ice at 10:44 when he was allowed to walk in unmolested. Kurki put his first tally of the night on the board just 50 seconds later getting a little help from the stick of a Vernon defenceman. One minute and 42 seconds later Tim Roux also scored with the aid of a Vernon defenceman's stick blade.

Jay Luknowsky increased Packers' lead to 4-0 on a power-play situation with Lakers playing three gaainst four.

Packers outshot Lakers 22-6 in the opening frame and Jason Palmer had to be as sharp as he could, in spite of an injury he received in warm-up earlier in the evening. Mike Sutherland replaced Palmer to begin the second period. Between them they faced 54 shots while Vernon directed 28 at Lucien Carrignan.

"I don't know why I was playing," admitted Palmer who took a slapshot on the inside of his knee in warm-up. "I just wanted to play so bad. It (knee) is stiff and it hurt when I went down."

"Palmer got hurt in warm-up, I shouldn't even have let him start — it wasn't his fault," said Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare.

The second period was a different story however. Lakers were the ones who stormed out of the starting gate this time, catching Packers with Young's goal just 26 seconds into the stanza. It was the first of three consecutive power-play goals for Lakers.

Greyeyes brought the crowd to life with his first goal at the 4:08 mark then put another past Carrignan at 7:33.

Kevin Scott rifled in a wrist-shot to tie the game 4-4, at 14:18, just two seconds after yet another Kelowna penalty had expired. Scott's goal broke a seven-game scoring drought for the speedy centre who has set up more than a dozen playoff markers but wasn't putting them in himself.

Kurki's goal ended the period with Packers in front 5-4.

Blair opened the third period with another power-play tally just 55 seconds into the play. Blair skated around the defenders and cut in front of the net where he took one shot then poked home his own rebound.

Packers took the lead once again at 4:16 of the third stanza when Terrance Head's shot from the point, on a power-play situation, was batted out of the air into the net by a Vernon defenceman.

However, veteran forward Ed Tuckwood managed to square the two teams at 6-6 at 5:58 of the period when he got his blade on Blair's shot along the ice from the circle. It was Vernon's fifth power-play goal of the evening.

The two teams battled each other for almost 15 minutes without managing to break the deadlock though Packers were already pressing Lakers before the game went into overtime.

In the extra time Kelowna carried play from the drop of the first puck, bottling up Lakers in their own zone and eventually the local club simply couldn't move the puck out over their own blueline.

"We lost a couple of draws and we had problems getting it out of our end," sighed Gare after the game. "It's tough to come back after you spot a team like Kelowna that many goals though."

The tired, worn-out look of the Lakers brought some doubt as to the wisdom of skating the team in the afternoon before a big game but Gare defended his actions.

"That's standard procedure the day of the game," he suggested.

With the momentum shifted to Packers Lakers will have to dig deep to earn another victory in Kelowna tonight.

In other BCJHL playoff action Tuesday night, Richmond Sockeyes got an overtime goal from Mike McCormick at 3:19 of extra play to defeated Delta Flyers 7-6 and move in front of them 1-0 in the Coastal Division Championship series.



SHAWN HOWARD (21) hands a straight-arm to Packers Dan Bustin (6) during second period action Tuesday night at Vernon Civic arena. Howard failed to score a goal and Packers earned a 7-6 overtime victory against Lakers to even the best-of-seven BCJHL Interior Division Championship series 2-2. Game five takes place tonight in Kelowna. (Daily News Photo)

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

Canucks' rookie Sandlak scores winner over Wings

VANCOUVER (CP) — More ice time may be the answer in the development of rookie Jim Sandlak of the Vancouver Canucks.

Sandlak was moved to a line with veterans Barry Pederson and Petri Skriko, replacing captain Stan Smyl, and the right winger scored the winning goal Tuesday night in a 7-4 Vancouver upset of the Detroit Red Wings in the National Hockey League.



JIM SANDLAK

Skriko and Rich Sutter added two goals each as the desperate Canucks moved to within eight points of the fourth-place Los Angeles Kings, who occupy the final playoff berth in the Smythe Division.

"I do what the coach wants and I earlier in the day. "The younger players have to earn their spots.

"Sandlak played well tonight and I'm sure he'll get more ice time next game."

Dan Hodgson and Patrik Sundstrom also scored for the Canucks, who have the worst record (22-40-8) in the league. Vancouver has 10 games left and the Kings have 13.

Detroit lost its second straight road game despite two goals by Gerard Gallant, giving the left winger 37 for the season, and singles by Steve Yzerman and Petr Klima.

The Wings, 30-29-9, remained in first place in the Norris Division, four points in front of St. Louis Blues.

Detroit coach Jacques Demers said his team made many mistakes in its zone and the Wings were hesitant instead of forcing the issue.

Sandlak also stole the puck from O'Connell for Skriko's insurance goal at 7:49 of the third period, his 26th of the season. Sutter's second goal went

Marouelli had problems with five fights. Both coaches blamed the other team.

"It was cheap coaching on his (Watt's) part; he should know better," said Demers. "We wanted to leave with class, to avoid any kind of incident."

Watt said the Wings were frustrated.

"He (Demers) can say what he wants, but Detroit has the most penalized team in the league," said Watt. "We held them to 19 shots on goal, only three in the third, so don't you think there was some frustration on their part."

Demers pulled starting netminder Mark LaForest early in the second period with the score tied 3-3 and replaced him with Hanlon. Vancouver outshot Detroit 33-19.

Vancouver did not use Raimo Summanen, acquired Tuesday from Edmonton in a trade involving Moe Lemay, while the Wings dressed Mel Bridgman, obtained Monday from the