PACKERS TAKE 3-2 SERIES LEAD

Lakers take it on the chin



KEITH CHASE, Vernon Lakers' defenceman (2) wrestles Kelowna Packers' Kerry Russell (21) out from in front of the Vernon net as Russell struggles with the puck in his skates. Lakers skated with Packers through the first period but shortly into the second frame the Packers took control of the game ending up with a convincing 9-4 victory and a 3-2 stranglehold lead in their best-of-seven BCJHL Interior Division Championship series.

(Daily News Photo)

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

The roof caved in on Vernon Lakers Wednesday night at Kelowna Memorial arena.

Packers took complete control of a close game in the second period by scoring four consecutive goals, then added three unanswered tallies in the third period to coast to a convincing 9-4 victory over Lakers.

The loss leaves the Vernon club perched on the verge of elimination from their best-of-seven B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division Championship series. They trail Kelowna 3-2 with game six scheduled for Friday night at Vernon Civic arena.

A combination of events led to Lakers' destruction Wednesday. Foremost, the loss of such talented individuals as Doug Spooner and Al Young, who weren't dressed, goaltender Jason Palmer who watched the game on crutches, and the loss, in the second period, of centre Kevin Scott all of which left the Vernon club severely short-handed in the goal-scoring department.

However, even more instrumental, was the fact that Lakers stopped their checking game in the second frame, allowing Packers to skate easily out of their own end and set up well-organized passing plays in the Vernon defensive zone.

"We laid off a little bit and we let them come out of their own end too easily," explained Lakers' Assistant Coach George Fargher. "It put pressure on our defence and goaltender and it cost us four goals."

The onslaught began with Terrance Head's goal at 4:59 of the middle frame, pulling Packers onto even terms with Lakers who had gone ahead 3-2 just 36 seconds into the period on Campbell Blair's goal.

Pat Mangold put Packers in front 4-3 at 6:14 while Doug Gardiner and Mangold, with his second, gave Kelowna a 6-3 lead. Shawn Howard provided Vernon with a faint glint of hope as he scored with just seven seconds remaining to narrow the gap to 6-4.

In a well-balanced first period, Mark Greyeyes, with a splendid individual effort, and Ed Tuckwood, with a very strong individual effort, helped Lakers to a 2-2 tie. Kevin Taillefer, who left the game after the first period when he irritated an injury to his elbow, and Bruce Bianchini, replied for Packers.

Lakers outshot Packers 11-10 in the first frame but it was the only occassion during the night in which they would do so. Packers held a 16-8 edge in shooting in the second frame and outgunned Lakers 12-4 in the final period.

"We took foolish penalties in the first period and it broke the momentum for us," explained Kelowna Coach Bill Hogagoam. "In the second period we went with four lines so 19 guys were contributing and when we got our chances we put them in."

Mike Sutherland, who replaced Palmer in net to start game five, put in a solid performance, particularly in the third period when Lakers took eight minor penalties to just two for Packers but Kelowna scored just one power-play goal.

Kerry Russell, with two goals, and Jay Lukowsky, provided the scoring for Kelowna in the third period as Lakers failed to muster any kind of scoring threat but were outstanding penalty-killers.

Hogaboam said he never felt secure at any time while his club was leading since the club has blown leads of two, three and even four goals earlier in this series.

"You can't afford to relax at any time," he said. "Both teams can score a lot of goals and if you let up at any time it can hurt you."

Meanwhile, Fargher didn't think the loss of quality manpower should have made such a big difference in the Lakers' game.

"It definitely hurt to lose Kevin (Scott) but our other guys have to realize that a few guys aren't the whole team and they'll have to play better as a team to win," said Fargher.

Although none of Lakers' coaching staff or management has confirmed the report, Spooner and Young will dress for Friday's game which is a do-or-die situation for Lakers.

In other BCJHL playoff action Wednesday night it was no contest in Richmond as Sockeyes blanked Delta Flyers 9-0 to take a 2-0 lead in their best-of-seven Coastal Division Championship series.

Dean Rutledge had his second three-goal performance in as many games to lead the Richmond attack. Stan Czencsek and Brian Kozak each had two goals while singles went to Mike McCormick and Jason Philips.

Former Vernon goaltender Frank Romeo picked up the shutout as Richmond outshot Delta 58-22.

The Coastal series shifts to Delta for the next two games Friday and Saturday nights.

Vernon Daily News | sports
Editor—DON KENDALL

T-Birds seeded number two

HALIFAX (CP) — The Victoria Vik-

toss-up," Donahue said in a telephone

year was voted Canada's outstandin