

VERNON LAKERS presented seven of their top players with team awards during the annual awards dinner and banquet held at Village Green Inn Wednesday night. In the back, from left are Ed Tuckwood, winner of most popular player award, and Campbell Blair who received best defenceman and most inspirational player awards. In the middle row are Greg Olson, left, winner of rookie of the year award, and veteran Al Young who received most sportsmanlike player award. In front, from left, Jason Palmer, playoff most valuable player, Kevin Scott, team top scorer, BCJHL top scorer and Doug Spooner, regular season most valuable player.

(Daily News Photo)

Pair split big share of Lakers' top awards

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers capped their most successful season ever with their biggest and most successful team banquet Wednesday night at Village Green Inn. More than 150 team members, coaches, management, booster club members, families and billets as well as Vernon media persons attended the gala function which saw all-star defenceman Campbell Blair and high-scoring centre Kevin Scott take home the lion's share of the trophy hardware.

Scott, a 19-year old from Cranbrook, became only the second player in the club's six-year history to reach the 50-goal plateau this season. The shifty forward scored 56 goals with 37 of those coming in the last 22 games of the season. Only one other player, Greg Kowal, who had 50 goals during the 1984-85 season, ever reached such a scoring milestone with the local club.

Consequently, Scott, who finished the regular season with 126 points, received the team top scoring award as well as the B.C. Junior Hockey League trophy as top scorer Wednesday night. Scott, who will attend Northern Michigan University this fall on a full scholarship, also received lesser team awards for scoring more than 100 points in a season, more than 50 goals in a season and more than 200 points in a career.

Blair received the team award as best defenceman though the accolade was something of an understatement. Co-Coach George Fargher bestowed the honor on Blair who scored 110 points during the regular season which enabled the high-scoring rearguard to break four BCJHL records during the course of the year. Among these were records for most goals in a season by a defenceman (38), most points in a season by a defenceman (110), most career points (248) and most career assists (170).

In view of the record-setting season by Blair he was also bestowed with the team award as most inspirational player. Like Scott he also received a number of lesser team awards for his points.

Meanwhile, a number of other players on the Vernon hockey club received awards as well.

Rookie of the year award, an honor voted for by local hockey fans, went to defenceman Greg Olson. Olson, who was selected to the BCJHL Interior Division All-Star Team in his first full season, received the award from long-time club executive member Vern Dye.

Most popular player award, another voted for by Vernon fans, went to fiesty Ed Tuckwood. Tuckwood, who came to Lakers from Summerland Buckaroos, picked up 83 points this season and gave the club some much-needed toughness. His hard-nosed attitude proved to be a winner with both players and fans alike.

The most sportsmanlike award went to four-year veteran Al Young who had 80 points during the regular season and combined his scoring skills with an almost uncharacteristic gentlemanly manner on the ice. In previous years Young developed a reputation for his hard-nosed hard-hitting approach to the game.

The most valuable player awards for regular season and playoffs, were split among goaltender Jason Palmer and team captain Doug Spooner.

Spooner, a second-year veteran with the club, picked up the award last season as well. He was chosen MVP for regular season when he picked up 106 points while leading the club with his own example. Palmer, Lakers number one goaltender, received the playoff MVP award for his part in helping the club win six games and lose four in 10 playoff appearances.

Each player also received a package gift from the Lakers' Booster club which included a personalized scrapbook momento with clippings, pictures and programs as well as other bits of memorabilia and a monogrammed drinking mug.

Following the presentation of awards, defenceman Keith Chase expressed his appreciation, on behalf of his teammates, to team owner and general manager Mel Lis.

"I've never run into a man who cared so much for a team," said Chase. "This is a class organization and he (Lis) put things together the way he wanted. He (Lis) wasn't in it for the money he was in it for the 21 guys who played on the team."

Lis reciprocated by thanking the players and coaching staff for the role they played in making his first season as team owner such a successful one.

"I like working and hockey is my life," he said. "I would be nothing without these players and the coaches.