VERNON 8, PENTICTON 2

Lakers win rookie battle in first pre-season game

Vernon Lakers might have had problems with their transportation Friday night but there certainly wasn't anything wrong with the team of rookies they iced against Penticton Knights in their first pre-season contest at Penticton's Memorial arena.

Newcomer Greg Parnell, who played midget hockey in Prince George last season, scored three goals and linemates Duane Dennis and Jamie Steer accounted for three others as an all-rookie lineup of Vernon Lakers humbled the hometown Knights 8-2 in B.C. Junior Hockey League exhibition action.

What's more, Knights had 12 veteran players in their lineup for Friday night's game. In fact, when Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare took a look at all the familiar names in the Knights' lineup he only hoped his club could keep the score close. He certainly wasn't prepared for the manner in which his new recruits man-handled the BCJHL veterans.

"I was a little worried when I saw all those vets in their lineup so I thought we'd just like to keep the score close," explained a jubilant Gare. "I wasn't worried about the score that much really, I just wanted to evaluate our players.

"We were a lot quicker (than Knights) and we handled the puck a lot better," added the Vernon coach. "They (Knights) didn't have many good scoring chances."

Meanwhile, some problems with the team bus resulted in a late night for Gare and his young squad as they didn't arrive home until 2:30 a.m.

On the ice, Dennis, a Vernon native, scored twice while Jamie Steer, who played on the Pacific Region under 18 team this season, scored once. Jamie Graham, a midget player out of Edmonton, scored the other two goals for Lakers who held period leads of 1-0 and 4-1 before outscoring the hometown Penticton team 4-1 in the third frame.

While things up front were looking after themselves quite well, things weren't going that badly in nets either. Barry Rysz who played for Dawson Creek of the Peace-Cariboo Junior Hockey League last season, started in the first period. He was replaced by Gordie Dale, formerly of Westbank Midget reps, for the second period while Travis Piercy, a midget out of Swift Current, Sask., played the third stanza.

"All three boys played very well even though they didn't have a lot of scoring chances," Gare said.

Gare made no more cuts after Friday's game but definitely will drop the axe again after the club plays Merritt in Winfield tonight in another exhibition matchup. Lakers have signed eight new players in addition to the veterans they have on hand at camp to this point however.

Tonight in Winfield, Gare will suit up three veteran forwards but very few of the players who saw action in Penticton will be on the ice again tonight.

"We'll have almost an entirely different team playing tonight," said Gare. "We'll have three veterans in the lineup but that's what these games are for — to look at the rookies."

Vernon Daily News | sports
Editor — DON KENDALL

It's mission accomplished as Canada defeats Sweden

MONTREAL (CP) — It's mission accomplished for Team Canada — so far — in the Canada Cup hockey tourament.

"I think we're exactly where we want to be, in that no matter what happens on Sunday night, we won't have to face the Russians in the first round of the playoffs," said Wayne Gretzky on Friday night, after he engineered a 5-3 victory over Sweden by scoring once and assisting on three goals.

Gretzky, whose play set up Mario Lemieux's second goal that ended a 3-3 tie at 5:40 of the third period, was referring to the fact that Team Canada can't finish any lower than second in the preliminary round, and no combination of the round-robin standings would have Team Canada and the Soviets meeting in a semifinal.

The Canadians end the pre-playoff round Sunday night in Hamilton with a game against the Russians, an 8 p.m. EDT start televised by the CTV network. They enter the game as the only undefeated country in the six-team tournament, with a 3-0-1 won-lost-tied mark.

The Swedes, who are 2-2, and tied for third place with the United States, made Team Canada work to maintain its unbeaten mark. They yielded an early power-play goal to Gretzky before scoring twice in a span of 1:25 in the opening period — Bengt Gustafsson and Lars Petterson doing the honors.



WAYNE GRETZKY



MARIO LEMIEUX

Another penalty produced a tying goal by Team Canada. Anders Eldebrink was fingered for elbowing Claude Lemieux, although Karl-Gustav Kaisla, the Finnish referee who was berated for his officiating in the Team Canada-US game earlier in the week, made the call after about 20 seconds hesitation.

AIDED BY CROWD

"I thought he reacted to the crowd," said Mats Naslund, the Montreal Canadien who played with the Swedes and was accorded a prolonged standing ovation by the Forum crowd of 12,360 in pre-game introductions.

The penalty opened the door for some Gretzky-Lemieux magic, although defenceman Paul Coffey's backchecking was a major contributor to Lemieux's goal at 17:10.

Lindmark, brilliant in the opening period when his team was outshot 11-5, remained solid in the middle period until Mike Gartner's shot from a few feet inside the blueline struck him and deflected into the net, giving Team Canada a 3-2 lead at 18:23.

The margin disappeared at 2:12 of the third period, as Team Canada fiddled in the corner and Mikael Andersson burned them, beating Fuhr from the centre of the face-off circle.

But Gretzky and Lemieux, described by Naslund as "a couple of players with good heads," used their smarts and skills to scuttle the Swedes.

The winning goal was a thing of beauty, as Gretzky faked one defender with a slapshot before coaxing another to leave his post. He slid the puck to Lemieux, who swept it in from the edge of the crease.

"I knew that he had seen me," said Lemieux, who has five goals in the tournament. "He was just waiting for the right moment to give me the puck."

Michel Goulet added more breathing space at 11:20 when he redirected James Patrick's point shot.

besides the defeat, the Swedes also lost a player. Kent Nilsson suffered a charley horse midway through the first period. He is expected to play in their game Sunday against Finland.