PENTICTON 6, VERNON 5 IN OVERTIME

Knights spoil Lakers' season opener

Vernon Daily News | sports
Editor—DON KENDALL

Vernon Lakers dominated their opposition during the exhibition season but Head Coach Ernie Gare is probably wishing now that his club had saved some of their good fortune for the regular season.

Lakers, touted as the team to go all the way in the B.C. Junior Hockey League this season, got off to a shakey start Friday night in Penticton. Knights' Dowell Frantz scored at 1:41 of sudden death overtime to give the hometown squad a 6-5 victory over Vernon in their B.C. Junior Hockey League season opener.

"We didn't play as well as we did in pre-season," admitted Gare who guided his club to a 5-0 exhibition season record. "We played well enough to win but we didn't capitalize on all our chances.

"We went down there (to Penticton) a little nervous," he added. "A lot of kids were playing their first game."

Knights' veteran goaltender Jamie Loewen, an all-star last season and a member of the club which won the Centennial Cup in 1986, made 46 saves against Lakers' shooters but at the same time Mark Tyszka was credited with 46 saves in the Vernon nets.

"We carried the play in the third period but he (Loewen) came up big," explained Gare. "It was more just that we didn't finish up around the net, though."

Lakers were without the services of two of their experienced defencemen with Wes Elliot and Greg Olson on the sidelines. Elliot is sitting out the last game of a three-game suspension he picked up for a spearing infraction during an exhibition game against Salmon Arm. Olson is on the injury list awaiting an operation to correct a problem with his ankles.

Meanwhile, Gare sited his defensive unit as one of the major reasons for the loss to Penticton Friday night.

"Our defence played their worst game yet this year," suggested Gare. They didn't play well behind our own blueline but we'll get a lot better."

The two clubs were deadlocked 2-2 after one period and were still tied 4-4 at the end of 40 minutes.

Chad Biafore, Duane Dennis, Jamie Steer and Mark Greyeyes had goals for Lakers while defenceman Darcy Martin scored late in the third period to force the game into overtime.

Frantz had two for Knights including the overtime winner. Other goals came from Clayton Fahey, Todd Hilditch, Darcy Pruden, and Darren Harrold.

Lakers' next BCJHL action won't be until next Friday night when they host Kelowna Packers at Civic arena. The club will play a three-game weekend with Penticton in town the following night and Lakers travelling to Merritt Sunday night.

Tonight the local club hosts Portland Winter Hawks of the Western Hockey League with a number of familiar faces in the Hawks' lineup. Lakers trimmed Portland 7-4 in an exhibition contest last season.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Cross-country club to hold work party