REFEREE UPSETS COACHES

Steer leads Lakers to victory

By DON KENDALL
Daily News Sports Editor

Neither coach was happy with the officiating and only one liked the result Friday night as the Vernon Lakers defeated the Kelowna Packers 5-3 in B.C. Junior Hockey League action before 350 fans, at the Vernon Civic Arena.

"I thought the refereeing was awful but we'll take the two points," Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare said of the performance of referee Hank Aarsen of Vernon. "I don't know what constitutes a fight but when both guys have their gloves off and are throwing punches, I assume they are fighting."

Gare was referring to an incident late in the third period after a pileup along the boards in the Vernon end. After the altercation, the only penalty was a minor for holding to Shawn Hendry of the Lakers.

Kelowna Coach Ed Ruff also criticized Aarsen for not calling more penalties for hitting from behind.

"That referee was lost out there," Ruff said. "You can't tell me he should be officiating in this league.

"They're trying to clean up the game and there were three checking-from-behind incidents in the third period alone . . . and he only called one. The next thing you know they're going to be carrying kids off the ice on a stretcher."

Rookie Jamie Steer scored two goals and added two assists to pace the Lakers who handed the Packers their first loss of the season after two victories.

Duane Dennis, Kevin Harder, and Mike Paller were the other marksmen for Vernon.

Mike Pavaroli, Mike Kasabuchi, and Mark Schmigelski replied for the visitors.

Once the topic changed to Steer, a broad grin covered Gare's face. "Jamie really got us going," Gare said. "We were behind 1-0 early and he scored twice to get us on track."

Lakers led 2-1 at the end of the first period and 3-1 after 40 minutes.

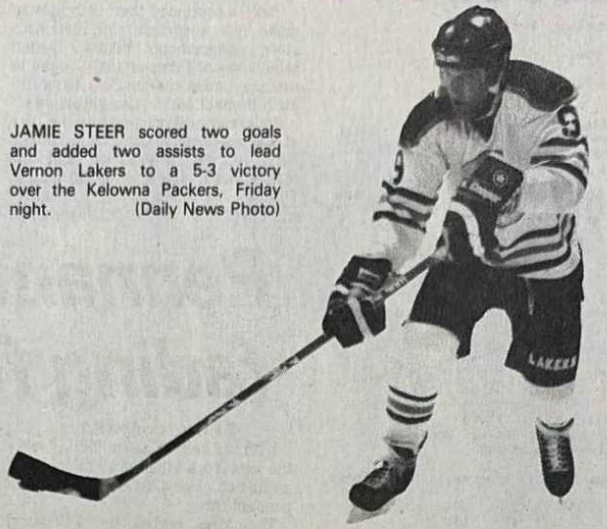
Kelowna netminder Kevin Radbourn made 31 saves, including five breakaways, while Tim Whaley kicked out 30 shots for the Lakers.

Radbourn was brilliant, particularly late in the second period, when his defence appeared to desert him. He robbed Dennis on a breakaway and just 24 seconds later, stopped Phil Soukoroff, who had also broken into the clear. His best stops in the third period were on shots by Dennis and Ian Alger, from point-blank range.

"We should have put the game away in the second period," Gare said. "We're having problems with out guys finishing around the net. But our forwards are young . . . we only have two returning forwards."

Ruff was able to flash a slight smile when talking about his netminder, who played for the North Shore Winter Club midgets last year. "It is too early to tell if he will be our number one goalie . . . we still have four goalies in camp," Ruff said. "But, he played very well."

After Paller's powerplay goal at 8:49 of the third period gave Lakers a 5-3 lead, Packers had a glorious opportunity to narrow the gap.



JAMIE STEER scored two goals and added two assists to lead Vernon Lakers to a 5-3 victory over the Kelowna Packers, Friday night. (Daily News Photo)

Soukoroff was assessed a major penalty for boarding at 11:06 and just 27 seconds later, Vernon defenceman Darcy Martini picked up a minor for cross-checking. During the next 93 seconds, Barry Lightfoot, Hendry, and Paller did an incredible penalty-killing job for the Lakers. Then, after Martini left the penalty box and Vernon was just one man short, Whaley made his best stop of the night on a blast from the slot by Dewayne Gallant.

The two clubs split 28 minor penalties, 10 majors, and 14 players were ejected for fighting.

Lakers return to the ice tonight when they host Penticton Knights, at 8 p.m. Knights lead the Interior Division with a perfect 3-0 record after edging Nanaimo Clippers 6-5, Friday. On Sunday, the Lakers travel to Merritt.

In another game Friday, Chilliwack Eagles trimmed the Summerland Buckaroos 9-8.

The Eagles, who were based in Langley last season, got three goals and two assists from Mike Dutton and a goal and five assists from Doug Lawrence. Erin Williams scored twice for Summerland which is winless in three starts.

In Penticton, Lance West scored an unassisted goal with four minutes remaining for the Knights.

It was an uphill battle for Penticton which trailed 2-0 after the first period and fell behind 3-0 before gaining a 3-3 tie to start the final 20 minutes.

Greg Guest, Brad Heschuk, David McColm, Dowell Frantz and Ivan Moore also shared the Knights scoring. Grant McDonald led the Clippers with two goals. Corky Parkes, Tony Seriani and Todd Finner were the other marksmen for Nanaimo which outshot Penticton 55-37.