HOCKEY ACTION TONIGHT

Sockeyes looking to improve record

Richmond Sockeyes will be looking to further improve on their impressive BCJHL record tonight while their hosts, Vernon Lakers, will have their work cut out for them as they struggle to keep their heads above water in the early going of the new season.

Sockeyes and Lakers face-off tonight at Civic arena beginning at 8 p.m.

Fresh off a 7-5 victory Friday night in Penticton, Richmond now sports a 5-1 record and trail only divisional counterparts Delta Flyers for first place overall in the league.

Lakers, meanwhile, have just two wins in five starts though they have been impressive in their own building in both victories. However, three losses in five games from a team picked to win their division and possibly the league title hasn't sat too well with Head Coach Ernie Gare who decided to put his team right back through their training camp paces after an embarrassing 6-5 loss to Summerland Buckaroos last weekend.

"We practiced our defensive game in our own end," explained Gare who is now in his second full season as head coach of the local junior A franchise. "We have to look after our end first and the other end will look after itself."

The local club was considered to be strong defensively entering this season, with six veteran defencemen back in the lineup, but in five dates so far they have allowed 29 goals against — almost six per game.

The return of goaltender Jason Palmer may help to alleviate some of this difficulty though Palmer will only serve in a back-up capacity this evening according to Gare.

"He (Palmer) hasn't played during the week he's been here but we'll get him into the warmup and he'll get some shots at least," he said.

Sockeyes, defending Centennial Cup champions, have some of the flashiest players in the league amongst their lineup including centre Mario Desjardin, right-winger Rob Clarke and veteran left-winger Tony Bobbitt.

Clarke was a 65-goal man last year in the BCJHL and was a first-team all-star as well. Desjardin, one of the fastest skaters in the league, has accumulated seven goals and 10 assists for 17 points in six games so far.

Bobbitt was one of the integral members of the club which won the junior A hockey title last spring.

If they have one weakness, it would be on defence, a position which Sockeyes are currently rebuilding after losing four of their regulars from last season.

However, with Head Coach Orland Curtenbach behind the bench again this year things are looking good for Richmond as their 5-1 record would indicate.

Friday night in Penticton, Desjardins scored twice while Clarke, Bobbitt, Kirk Phare, Brad Dickson, and Garth Geddes scored once each for Sockeyes. Lance West, David McColm, Bob Platzer, Darcy Pruden, and Brent Johnston each had one for Penticton which outshot Richmond 36-23 on the night and 16-5 in the third period alone.

In other BCJHL action Friday night Ron Dahala and Mike Van Sickle each scored twice to lead Juan De Fuca Whalers to a 5-3 win over Kelowna Packers while Delta Flyers scored an empty-net goal to earn a 5-3 victory over hometown Nanaimo Clippers.

It was the fifth consecutive win for Delta without a loss.

LOOK BACK FIVE YEARS

OCTOBER 1982

It took two and one-half hours, but when the last ball was kicked, National Hotel Oldtimers emerged as champions of the Vernon City Soccer League. Oldtimers edged Longhorn Leghorns 2-1 in the final game at Polson Park. The clubs played to a 1-1 draw in regulation time and battled through 20 scoreless minutes of overtime before National won the game on its sevenths penalty kick.

OCTOBER 1982

Vernon Cougars moved into a tie for first place in the North Okanagan Hockey League with a 5-2 win over Oliver Bighorns. The day before, Cougars crushed Princeton Coyotes 15-2. Cougars are now tied with Kelowna Packers for first place, both with four points.