FIRST WIN ON ROAD THIS SEASON

Good defence, goaltending, pays off



Vernon goaltender Jason Palmer made a most auspices deput in net Friday night and, backed by solid defensive performances, helped Lakers to a convincing 5-1 victory over Penticton Knights in the Peach City.

It was the first win of the season on the road for the local club who managed to stay in a two-way tie for first place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division while knocking Knights into second place.

In fact, Lakers held onto the hope of a shutout until late in the third frame. A goal by Brad Heschuk at 17:11 of the period spoiled the bid.

"We would have liked to have gotten that goose egg (shutout) but we'll take the two points," suggested Vernon Head Coach Ernie Gare.

"Jason (Palmer) played well but our defence played their best game of the season," he continued. "He didn't have to make a whole lot of tough saves but he acted like a third defenceman back there most of the night handling the puck. He also gave our guys a lot of confidence back there."

Lakers battled to a 1-0 first period lead weathering a brief storm of enthusiasm by Penticton in the early going of the game. In the second frame Lakers opened some breathing space with three unaswered goals for a 4-0 lead. They extended their lead to 5-0 with a short-handed goal by Mark Greyeyes — his second tally of the night.

Dane Jackson also scored twice for Vernon while Shawn Hendry added a single marker.

Gare was impressed with the play of one particular line during the course of the game and expects good things in future from the trio as well. The three include Dallas Drake, Dane Jackson, and Mike Paller.

Lakers outshot their hosts by a 36-29 margin.

However, the victory didn't come easily, costing the club a number of injuries and adding to the team's growing list of injured regulars.

Leading goal scorer Jamie Steer suffered a should injury and will be out of the lineup for at least a week. Duane Jackson re-injured his ankle and will also be out of action for some time. Defenceman Keith Chase was kept out of Friday's lineup after complaining of a sore head suffered in the club's last outing. Barry Lightfoot, another blueliner, suffered a charliehorse and will sit out again tonight.

The Vernon club faces Kelowna Packers tonight at Civic arena starting at 8 p.m. A victory tonight would be another welcome sight for Gare and his charges who have a six-day layoff following the game.

In spite of Palmer's success Friday night Gare will give the starting nod to the diminutive Barry Rysz tonight.

"He (Rysz) beat Kelowna last time and he hasn't had a start in two weeks," explained the Vernon coach.

Meanwhile, in other BCJHL action Friday night, Merritt Centennials kept pace with Vernon in the search for first place as they defeated Summerland Buckaroos 7-5. Kelowna trounced visiting Chilliwack Eagles 8-3 and Nanaimo Clippers scored three shorthanded goals on their way to an 8-4 victory over Abbotsford Falcons.