

Mike Barkley (15) battles along the boards against Kelowna defenceman Cris Hicks (27) during second period action Saturday night at the Civic Arena. Packers overcame a 2-0 Vernon lead with three power-play goals in the second period and added a pair of unanswered third-period tallies to steal a 5-3 victory from Lakers and in doing so tightened up the BCJHL Interior Division standings. (Daily News Photo)

# Packers battle back to defeat Lakers 5-3

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers won the game on the ice but couldn't win the game on the scoreboard Saturday night as the visiting Kelowna Packers escaped with a 5-3 come-from-behind victory.

The loss leaves Vernon in fourth place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior Division, just two points behind first place Merritt Centennials. The Cents have 12 points, Kelowna Packers and Salmon Arm Tigers have 11, and Lakers are deadlocked with Penticton Knights with 10 points.

Vernon held the Packers off the scoreboard until midway through the second frame, scoring powerplay goals in the first period and early in the second to go ahead 2-0.

Undaunted, Packers capitalized on some costly minor penalties to Lakers, scoring three times in the second half of the period, each goal coming with a man advantage. The teams were tied 3-3 heading into the third stanza.

A pair of unanswered goals in the third period, despite being outplayed and outshot, allowed the visitors to steal the win from under the noses of the host Vernon club.

The loss left Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare scratching his head while Packers' coach Ed Ruff was a vision of pure delight.

"We really wanted to win in this rink," exclaimed a jubilant Ruff. "We like nothing better than to win here because they (Lakers) are tough here."

"We should have been up two or three goals in the first period, we should have put them away," sighed Gare. "We didn't capitalize on our chances. When we were five-on-five we outplayed them badly.

"You can't kill penalties all night," Gare added. "We outplayed them for the majority of the game but it didn't show up on the scoreboard."

Lakers outshot Packers by a 38-29 margin and, to his credit, goaltender Dennis Casey came up big for the visitors on key situations. However, Vernon's Barry Rysz was equal to the challenge in the Lakers' goal in spite of the loss.

Defenceman Darcy Martini scored the only goal of the first frame when his bullet from the point beat Casey low on the stick side from the point.

In the second period Lakers went ahead 2-0 on Mark Greyeyes' goal at 8:39.

Packers tied the game with two consecutive goals at 9:04 and 11:29, both by Mark Merritt and both on power-plays.

Mike Barkley put Lakers ahead for the last time at 15:04 of the middle frame. Before the period had ended, Jamie Kurki put the visitors on even terms with another power-play goal.

Dallas Drake, chosen star of the game for Lakers, assisted on all three Vernon goals.

Packers went ahead early in the third stanza on a goal by Doug Gardiner and put the icing on the cake with their fifth goal at 10:50, coming off the stick of Len Jorgensen.

In the third period, Lakers outshot Packers 10-6 but couldn't keep pace with the visitors' scoring.

"They (Lakers) certainly put the pressure on us but our defence came up big," explained Ruff. "We took a lot of opportunities away from them by coming back strong."

Lakers' next game is Friday night when the Summerland Buckaroos visit the Civic Arena. Bucks' only victory so far this season was a 6-5 win against Lakers in Summerland.

In other BCJHL weekend games, Salmon Arm edged Kelowna 8-7, Penticton thumped the Chilliwack Eagles 8-1, Juan de Fuca Whalers edged the Richmond Sockeyes 8-7 in overtime, the Delta Flyers downed the Abbotsford Falcons 5-2, and the Tigers aced the Eagles 6-5.

# Vernon, Richmond swap goaltenders

Nomadic netminder Jason Palmer is on the road again.

Vernon Lakers' General Manager Mel Lis announced today that he has traded the 19-year-old veteran to Richmond Sockeyes in exchange for goalie Barry Fry.



JASON PALMER

Palmer starred with the Lakers during the 1986-87 season and looked sharp in his season debut, last Friday, when Vernon dumped Penticton Knights 5-1. But, he was unhappy in the Okanagan, according to Lis.

"Jason wanted to be closer to home (Surrey)," Lis said. "There were other problems, but the main thing is he wanted to play somewhere in the Coast Division."

Palmer was expected to play with Seattle Thunderbirds of the Western Hockey League this season. But, he walked out of Seattle's training camp in September and played three WHL exhibition games with Portland Winter Hawks, on loan from the Thunderbirds, before returning to Vernon.

Lis said, "Seattle still owns his WHL rights and they won't release him. By playing in Richmond, Palmer will be within a couple hours of Seattle if they want to call him up."

Fry was an all-star with Prince George Spruce Kings, of the Peace Cariboo Junior 'A' League, last winter. He has been impressive with the Sockeyes, particularly during a 40-minute stint against Vernon, Oct. 3.

"If Fry had started against us, they might have won that game," Lis said. "He made some great stops."

Vernon led 5-0 before Richmond Coach Orland Kurtenbach inserted Fry. Fry allowed three goals in the final two periods, but Lakers hung on for a 8-5 victory. The next night, Fry led the Sockeyes to a 7-1 victory in Salmon Arm.

Lis said, "Fry wants a college scholarship so we know we'll get 100 per cent from him every time he steps on the ice."

Vernon also has goaltenders Barry Rysz, Mark Tyszka, and Jaki Turunan on its roster. Turunan, from Finland, joined the Lakers last week after being released by Kamloops Blazers, of the WHL.