

VERNON LAKERS' goaltender Glen Fry straps on his leg pads in preparation for a practice this week at the Civic Arena. Fry will make his third consecutive start tonight when the Lakers visit the Summerland Buckaroos. (Daily News Photo)

Search ends successfully

By DON KENDALL
Daily News Sports Editor

The search is over!

After starting six different netminders in their first 10 league games, the Vernon Lakers' coaching staff appears to have found what it is looking for.

Barring injuries or a prolonged slump, Glen Fry and Barry Rysz will be stopping pucks in Vernon for the remainder of the B.C. Junior Hockey League season.

The duo, because of their physical stature, could perform a convincing 'Mutt and Jeff' routine. Fry, 20, is a burly 6'2" and Rysz, 17, is 5'6".

Despite the obvious difference in size, there are striking similarities between the two netminders. Both Fry and Rysz possess lightning fast glove hands and have excellent lateral movement. The latter attribute gives them the ability to 'square to the shooter' quickly.

Also, both netminders starred in the Peace Cariboo Junior Hockey League last season, Fry with Prince George and Rysz in Dawson Creek.

Both goalies decided they wanted to move on to the more competitive BCJHL this season, with Rysz coming to Vernon and Fry going to Richmond.

Rysz caught the attention of Vernon's coaches during the team's rookie camp, in August, and Fry came to Vernon last week, from the Richmond Sockeyes, in a deal that sent much-travelled netminder Jason Palmer to the defending Canadian champions.

Fry will be in goal tonight when the Lakers travel to Summerland, to battle the Buckaroos. On Saturday night, Vernon visits the Salmon Arm Tigers.

Vernon Head Coach Ernie Gare said he is impressed with what Fry has shown him. "He has looked sharp, particularly on plays close to the net," Gare said. "Hs doesn't give up many rebounds."

In two outings last weekend, Fry surrendered a total of five goals in victories over Summerland (7-3) and Salmon Arm (10-2). BCJHL statistics released this week show Fry has a 3.92 goals against average, in seven games, with Richmond and Vernon.

After watching his newly-acquired goalie kick out 33 shots in Salmon Arm last Saturday, Lakers' General Manager Mel Lis predicted his club won't lose another game in October. "He (Fry) made some big saves for us," Lis said. "We're happy to have him."

The feeling is mutual . . . Fry is happy to be in Vernon. "I'm surprised, but happy, that Richmond traded me," he said. "I was their number one goalie . . . and I was playing well. But, I wasn't happy in the big city. I like small towns . . . like Vernon."

Fry started his junior career with Salmon Arm, of the BCJHL, in 1984. He then spent two seasons with Prince George before going to Richmond this year.

"I wanted to leave Prince George last year but they wouldn't release me," he said. "I spent about a week with Juan de Fuca Whalers last September. I liked the team and Victoria, but Prince George wouldn't release me so I went back there.

"Then, before Christmas, I talked with Mel (Lis) a few times about coming to Vernon. But, the same thing happened . . . Prince George wouldn't let me go so I ended up spending the whole season there."

Fry is hoping to earn a U.S. college scholarship and realizes that getting traded to Vernon, where the scouts make frequent stops, could be a break for him.

"I know it is tough to get a scholarship," he said. "but I'm hoping. We have a good team and if I play well, I might get lucky. If not, then I wouldn't mind taking a crack at pro hockey in Europe. I know the Lakers helped a couple guys go to Europe this year."

In the lone BCJHL game Thursday, the Merritt Centennials outscored the Salmon Arm Tigers 9-7.

Frank Biller scored twice for the Centennials, who now share first plac in the Interior Division with the Penticton Knights and Vernon.