CENTENNIALS ALONE IN FIRST PLACE

Merritt handles Lakers easily

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Two teams were tied for first place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division heading into Friday's game at Civic arena but one club felt it could stay there by simply going through the motions.

The other team felt it could remain in first place with hard work and disciplined hockey tactics.

For one team the idea paid dividends while for the other it meant accepting second place when the night had ended.

Merritt Centennials dominated Vernon Lakers for almost the entire evening Friday night en route to a 7-5 victory. However, only a flurry of four straight goals late in the third period enabled the local club to escape with some of their humility still intact.

The victory, coupled with Penticton Knights' 3-2 loss at the hands of Kelowna Packers, leaves Centennials alone in first place with a 10-5 record.

Vernon's record drops to 9-5 although it is the second time this season that Merritt has walked all over the Vernon team, considered by most to be the pride of the league before the season began. The two clubs meet again tonight, in Merritt.

The teams skated through an entertaining first period though Vernon Minor Hockey graduate Frank Biller scored the lone goal of the opening frame to give the visitors a 1-0 lead.

Lakers only slightly resembled a hockey team interested in playing the game in the second frame as Centennials continued their disciplined work ethic and hammered out a 6-1 lead after 40 minutes.

They increased that lead to 7-1 early in the third frame before a series of two battles in front of the Vernon net managed to ignite Lakers' spirits until the end of the contest.

However, in spite of the four-goal outburst, it was clearly a case of too little, too late for Vernon at that point.

"I can't believe this is the same team that played Salmon Arm," sighed Head Coach Ernie Gare, referring to Lakers' 14-2 victory last week in the Shuswap City. "We weren't skating and passing at all.

"They outplayed us and outworked us in the first two periods," he added.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the rink, Merritt Head Coach Brian Barrett chastised his young team for failing to insert the killing dagger when they had Lakers on the ropes. In the final analysis he was pleased with their effort however.

"We certainly came to play and we had our work ethic up for the first two and a half periods," suggested Barrett. "We have a young club and we show a lack of discipline at times — we need some leadership."

Actually, Merritt received outstanding leadership from club captain Richard Shaw who scored twice and set up two other goals before exiting the game, along with Lakers' Wes Elliott, early in the third period.

The visitors also got goals from Glen Blair, Cal McGowan, Brent Thurston and Pat Corrado. Biller's first period goal was his 21 of the season.

Defenceman Phil Soukoroff scored twice for Lakers during their third period outburst. Dane Jackson, Mark Greyeyes and Greg Parnell added singles.

Despite the score Lakers managed to outshoot Merritt though the eager visiting defenders wouldn't allow any white sweaters close enough for rebounds. Merritt's Randy Beekhuizen made 38 saves while Glen Fry, along with Barry Rysz, combine to block 28 shots.

In other BCJHL action Friday night Kelowna edged Penticton while Salmon Arm Tigers defeated visiting Nanaimo Clippers 7-4. In one Coastal Division matchup Chilliwack Eagles defeated Abbotsford Falcons by a 7-4 margin as well.



LEN MILLER laces up the blades in preparation for an over-50 hockey session at the Priest Valley Arena. The sessions are scheduled every Thursday afternoon. (Daily News Photo)

OVER 50 MEN'S HOCKEY

You're never too old to play with the puck

By DON KENDALL
Daily News Sports Editor

Old hockey players never hang up their skates . . . they just take a little longer to do up the laces.

Every Thursday afternoon the over-the-hill gang hits the ice at the Priest Valley Arena for 50 and over drop-in hockey sessions. The players may have lost a step or two, while adding a little extra beef around the midsection, but that hasn't dulled their love of hockey.

"I really look forward to Thursday afternoons," said Len Miller, who turns 65 in January. "This is a great idea for fellas who are retired, semi-retired, or self-employed."

Miller played minor hockey in Winnipeg, junior in Winnipeg and Thunder Bay, and more recently spent 12 seasons with the Vernon Canadians Oldtimers.

Miller admits he is a little disappointed that only three or four players have turned up for the first three sessions. "But, once the weather cools off, I think you'll see more guys out here," he said. "I know some guys are still golfing . . . and there are a few others who are orchardists who aren't quite finished their work yet."

The drop-in sessions are scheduled from 1:30 to 2:45 p.m. in the Priest Valley Arena. The time is a bit of a problem, but the price is just right, according to Miller.

"It would be nice to have a prime evening time, but there is nothing available," he said. "It is either Thursday afternoon, late Saturday night, or a weeknight after midnight.

"But we can't complain. We don't have to pay a lot of money up front . . . it is only $2 per week."

For further information phone 545-6035.

Vernon Daily News | **sports**
Editor — DON KENDALL

SPORTS BRIEFS

Locals play key roles in Winter Hawks' win

It was an all-Vernon show Friday night as hometown Portland Winter Hawks defeated Seattle Thunderbirds 8-6 in Western Hockey League action. Troy Mick scored the tying goal late in the third frame while Dennis Holland scored the game-winner just minutes later before Troy Pohl added an insurance marker. Mick and Holland each collected an assist in the contest as well. Other Portland goals came from James Black, Jamie Graham, Ted Hutchings, Jamie Nicolls, and Calvin Thudium. Hawks led 4-2 after the first period but the clubs were tied 5-5 at the end of two. Glen Goodall and Lindsay Vallis scored two goals each for Seattle while Victor Gervais and Dean Sexsmith rounded out the scoring with singles.

Major Men play

Two games are scheduled for Monday night in Vernon Major Men's Basketball League at VSS gymnasium. At 7 p.m. Scenic Valley squares off with Molsons Silver Bullets while at 8:15 p.m. it's Shuswap Lakers versus Nor Kor Buds.

Intermediate men

Four games are scheduled for Nov. 5 in the Vernon Intermediate Men's Basketball League. At 7 p.m. at VSS gym Kokanee Masters meet Sun Valley Sports while at 8:15 p.m. Golden Crown plays National Hotel. At Priest Valley Gymnasium Spallumcheen squares off with Squires Four Pub at 7 p.m. while at 8:15 p.m. it's The Squires versus Okanagan College.

Officials meeting

There will be a general meeting of all basketball officials in the Vernon

Viola chosen MVP

NEW YORK (AP) — Frank Viola has thought about leaving the Minnesota Twins as a free agent. A World Series title and most-valuable-player award may have changed that. The 27-year-old Viola — a left-handed pitcher who was 17-10 during the American League baseball season — will be eligible for free agency after 1988. He signed a one-year deal last January for a reported $837,000 after winning a $674,000 arbitration award the year before. Viola was in New York to accept a new car and a trophy as the World Series' Most Valuable Player. He started Games 1, 4 and 7 of the Series, winning the first and the last while losing the fourth.

Teltscher advances

HONG KONG (AP) — Third-seeded Eliot Teltscher of the United States, the only top-ranked player