Inconsistency plagues team as Packers trounce Lakers 7-4

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Would the real Vernon Lakers please stand up?

The local junior hockey team that suffered a humiliating 7-4 defeat at the hands of visiting Kelowna Packers Saturday night at Civic Arena obviously wasn't the same team that trounced Penticton Knights 10-4 on Friday night in Penticton.

While the Lakers have reserved their best, most all-out efforts for the road this season they have resembled a bumbling, careless team in the confines of their own building too often. Saturday night was just another example of the latter.

The victory vaults Packers into first place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division — a position none of the four front-running teams in the division seems too intent upon keeping for any length of time.



Vernon Lakers' defenceman Shawn Hendry gives Kelowna Packers' forward Todd Patz (9) a bit of rough treatment along the board Saturday night at Vernon Civic arena. The Packers earned a 7-4 victory against Lakers to take over top spot in the BCJHL Interior Division. (Daily News Photo)

Lakers now trail the Packers by a single point with their next game Tuesday night against visiting Merritt Centennials, another team which enjoys playing against Vernon in their own building.

As usual when these two clubs meet, the game quickly dissolved into a defensive struggle, albeit a chippy one. However, the Lakers decided to abandon the struggle much earlier than the Packers.

The visitors scored the only goal of the first period in spite of being outshot by a 7-3 margin. In fact, the Lakers outshot Kelowna by a 38-26 margin during the course of the evening.

In the second period the bottom fell out of Vernon's game plan, if, in fact, they actually had a game plan heading into the confrontation with their most bitter division rivals.

The Packers stung Vernon for five goals in the 20-minute span of the second period while the Lakers managed just one tally during a power-play situation at the midway point of the stanza.

Trailing 6-1 heading into the third period, the local club managed to make the score a bit more respectable three straight goals but their comeback bid fell well short. An empty-net goal with 12 seconds remaining ensured the visitors that the two points would be theirs'.

Alan Schuler paced Kelowna with a pair of goals including the last one into the empty twine. Other goals for the Packers came from Jamie Kurki, Len Jorgenson, Mike Murinko, Bruce Bianchini, and Todd Patz.

Wes Wlliott, Chad Biafore and Phil Soukoroff, all defencemen, scored once each for Vernon while Greg Parnell added a single.

The entire team was guilty of putting out an unsatisfactory performance and that included both Vernon goaltenders.

Kelowna's third goal chased starter Glen Fry from the Lakers' net after he made just eight saves in almost half a game. Back-up netminder Barry Rysz was only slightly more reliable, allowing three more tallies while making only 11 saves.

Meanwhile, Packers' Tony Hildebrand kept Lakers at bay until the game was well in hand and recorded 34 saves on the night.

In spite of the lopsided loss on their own ice, the club's assistant coach felt there was still room for some positive comment.

"We showed good character in the third period — we didn't quit," said George Fargher.

Packers managed to contain the Lakers' scoring chances to outside shots until late in the game, putting up an inpenetrable tangle of defence around their own net. Vernon was guilty of playing with the puck more often than they shot in a good number of cases however.

"We were a little unlucky on the power-play a few times and we were trying to get too fancy," explained Fargher. "When we had a seven-minute power-play (in the second period) we wasted it by taking two penalties and that hurt us."

New Jersey Devils become respectable

A year ago, New Jersey Devils coach Doug Carpenter would have drawn snickers by comparing his National Hockey League team to the Philadelphia Flyers.

However, this season it is the Flyers who could be flattered by the comparison, particularly after New Jersey held Philadelphia to a 3-3 tie Sunday at Philadelphia's Spectrum. The Devils beat the Washington Capitals 4-1 on Saturday



DOUG CARPENTER

Whalers 3; the Edmonton Oilers 5, Buffalo 0; the St. Louis Blues 4, the Toronto Maple Leafs 3; Vancouver 4, Minnesota 1; New Jersey 4, Washington 1; the Boston Bruins 4, the Pittsburgh Penguins 1; the N.Y. Islanders 4, the Detroit Red Wings 3; and the Los Angeles Kings 5, the N.Y. Rangers 4.

All the scoring came in the first period in Philadelphia, with Perry Anderson, Aaron Broten and Craig Wolanin scoring for the Devils, who led 3-1, while Doug Crossman, Brian Propp and Ilkka Sinisalo replying for the Flyers.

The Devils outshot Philadelphia 42-31 and goalie Ron Hextall was at his best to stave off yet another defeat for the faltering Flyers.

Carpenter, whose team finished last in 1986-1987, said the Flyers earned the