

"PLAYER OF THE MONTH"

Phil Soukoroff, left, a standout defenceman with the Vernon Lakers, was named "Player of the Month" for October. Soukoroff, one of the top scoring blueliners in the league, received a plaque from Great West Life Insurance representative Brian Lutz. (Daily News Photo)

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sports

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SPORTS BRIEFS

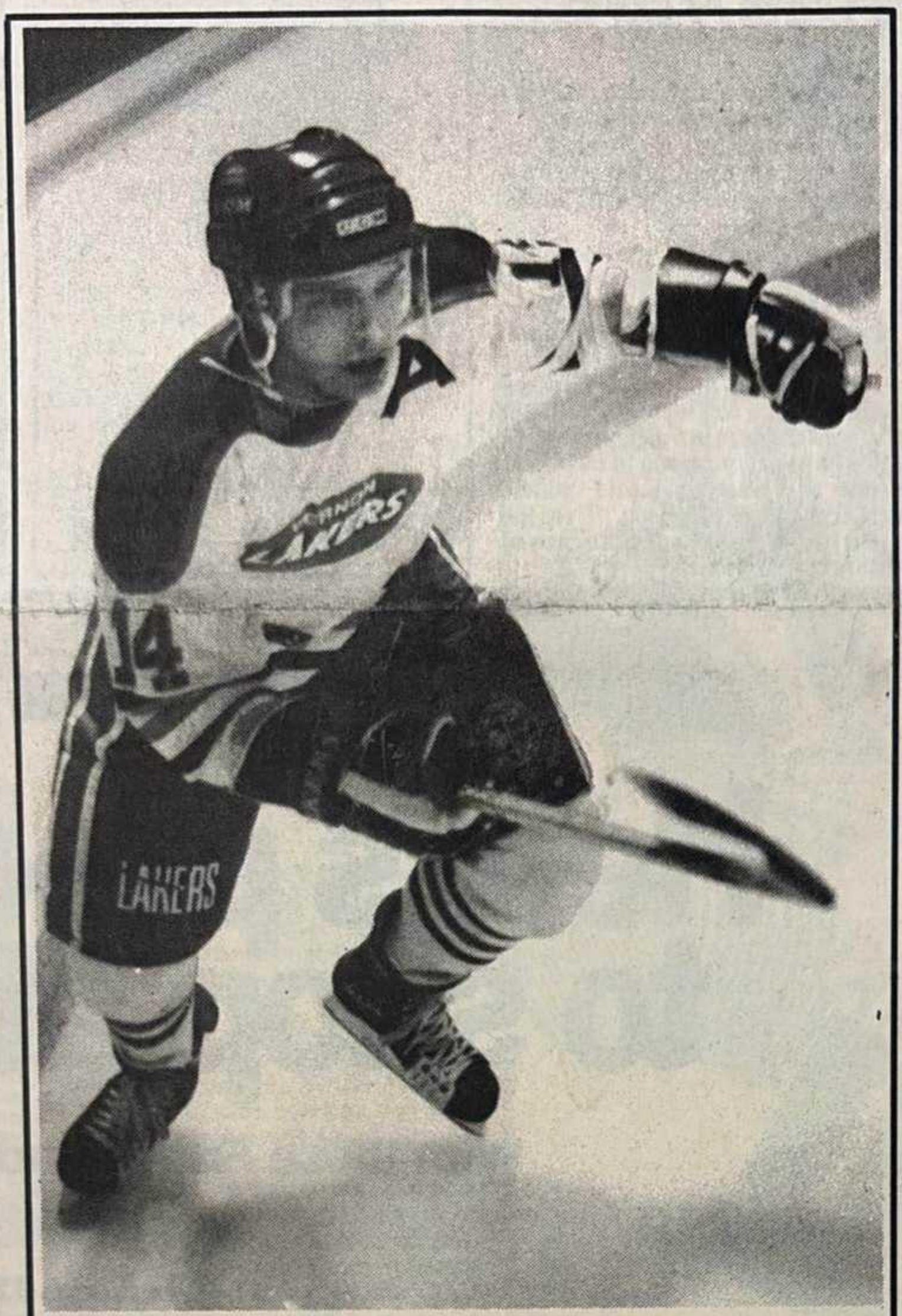
Penticton coach suspended two games

Assistant Coach Glen Wylie of Penticton Knights was suspended for two games for using verbal abuse against an official during a game Oct. 30 against Kelowna Packers.

The announcement was made today by Vernon Dye, Vice-President of the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division.

"He (Wylie) received a misconduct and a game misconduct on that occasion so we were forced to take action against him," explained Dye, of Vernon. "We look after our referees is the message we're trying to make clear here."

The Knights are currently in fourth place in the Interior Division with a 9-8 record.



Speedy centre Mark Greyeyes, above, is one player who will take an opportunity to fatten his personal numbers as the Vernon Lakers embark on a home-and-home series with lowly Summerland Buckaroos beginning tonight at 8 p.m. at Civic arena. Greyeyes was one of the club's top scorers last season and recently broke into the Interior Division top 10 as well this year. (Daily News Photo)

Lakers looking for first place

Ordinarily a home-and-home series against lowly Summerland Buckaroos wouldn't appeal to the Vernon Lakers' coaching staff but following Kelowna's 5-3 loss to Salmon Arm Tigers Thursday night, a sweep of the two games could mean sole possession of first place for the Lakers.

Currently the local club trails Kelowna by a single point though they have two games in hand over the Orchard City crew in the race for first in the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division.

"Salmon Arm did us a big favor last night (Thursday) so if we can win these two games we'll be in first place," said Head Coach Ernie Gare.

Summerland will face the Lakers tonight at 8 p.m. at Vernon Civic Arena while Saturday night the two teams clash once again in Summerland. The Buckaroos are dead last in the Interior Division with just one victory in 20 games. However, that win came at the expense of Vernon back in late September. As a result, Gare and his staff don't plan to take the Buckaroos lightly.

"You never know for certain with a team like Summerland," he said. "We want to get an early lead again and we also want to keep our goals against down during these games."

A conscious effort to keep the number of goals scored against them to a minimum has paid dividends for the club during their last 10 games. According to Gare, during the first 10 games of the season the Lakers' goals-against average was 4.8 per game. In the last nine games however, that number has fallen to 3.65 per game which is below the target area set forth by the coaching staff.

"We set our goal at 3.75 so we want to concentrate on good habits and keep them (Buckaroos) from getting any good scoring chances," Gare said.

In the meantime, a number of Vernon players will be looking to fatten their point totals during the two-game series. Last week the club boasted four players in the Interior Division top 10 scoring. Among these are Jamie Steer, Ian Alger and Mark Greyeyes.

Meanwhile, the club is anxiously awaiting the return of veteran defenceman Greg Olsen who has been sidelined since the pre-season after several operations to rectify a problem with his ankles.

"We hope to have him (Olsen) back before Christmas," suggested Gare."

Olsen played on the blueline last year but because of his great speed and accurate, quick-release shot he would be an ideal candidate as a winger with a centreman such as Greyeyes.

"He (Olsen) is more valuable to us as a defenceman but we can move him forward or back," added Gare.