Not a pretty victory but Lakers will take it

In the words of Ernie Gare, it wasn't a pretty game but when a team is on the road any kind of a win is important.

Saturday night the Vernon Lakers picked up their eighth road victory of the season in Summerland, trouncing the hometown Buckaroos 9-4 in a game that featured more officiating than hockey playing according to Head Coach Gare.

The win improves Vernon's record to 15-6 and keeps them one point ahead of Kelowna Packers in the search for first place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division. Packers were 6-4 winners against fourth-place Penticton Knights Saturday night while third-place Merritt Centennials defeated Salmon Arm Tigers 8-3 to remain four points back of the Lakers.

In a repeat performance of their home game against the Buckaroos Friday night, the Lakers took a 2-0 advantage in the first period but only led 6'3 after 40 minutes with Summerland capitalizing on several power-play opportunities.

"We had a lot of penalties and they scored a couple of power-play goals," admitted Gare. "It was kind of a scrambly game and they (officials) called a lot of penalties — especially in the second period."

Gare's charges answered the call to arms in the third period with three quick goals that put the game out of Buckaroos' reach. Gare suggested that he had to recall the memory of his club's early season loss to the Buckaroos to inspire them in the third period. The Buckaroos rallied from a second period deficit to defeat Vernon in late September and that win stands as their only one so far this season.

"After beating a team 12-1 (Friday night) the guys lose a little of their intensity," suggested Gare.

Team scoring leader Jamie Steer scored a pair of goals as did Duane Dennis who also had two assists on the night. Hard-working Ian Alger scored his 20th goal of the season giving him one more than he collected in a whole season last year.

Also scoring for the Lakers were Mike Paller, Adrian Markin, Dallas Drake and Mark Greyeyes. Defenceman Chad Biafore contributed three assists and just about every member of the club put their number on the scoresheet at some time during the game.

"The scoring was actually spread out pretty good," said Gare.

The victory was not without it's cost in human suffering however. Greg Parnell, a winger on Greyeyes' line, went down in the second period after receiving a hard check into the corner. He suffered a shoulder injury and will be lost for an indefinite period of time.

"He (Parnell) spent the night in the hospital," said Gare. "He got caught the wrong way on a weird check — it was a legal check though."

The Lakers' next game is at home Tuesday night when they entertain Merritt Centennials once again. Centennials are currently sporting a 13-10 won-loss record.

Second best isn't good enough anymore

In other years, second best in the Okanagan High School Volleyball Championships would have been sufficient for a team to head on to the Provincial Championship but that is no longer the case.

And it is certainly an unfortunate twist of events for Vernon Royals who dropped a decision to Penticton High Saturday in Rutland at the Okanagan Senior Girls "AA" Volleyball Championship. The VSS team lost 4-15, 13-15 to Penticton which captured the only berth available for Okanagan girls' high school teams this season.

"The girls were right with them (Penticton) but in the first game we were a bit nervous," explained Coach Denis Murdoch.

Murdoch lamented the availability of only one berth instead of two out of the Okanagan zone but felt his club was in charge of their own destiny anyway.

"There were two berths right up until last year but now they go strictly by population," explained Murdoch.

Royals finished first in round robin play beating Brocklehurst and Westsyde of Kamloops Friday night and sidelining the host Rutland team Saturday morning before advancing to the quarter-final round against Kamloops. In that game Royals pounded their opponents 15-2, 15-3. In the semi-finals they defeated the second Kamloops team by an equally impressive 15-4, 15-4 margin.

Meanwhile, Fulton Maroons finished fourth in the Senior Boys "A" High School Volleyball Championship held at KLO in Kelowna on the weekend. Maroons dropped a decision to KLO in the quarter-final playoff round after placing fourth in the round robin portion of the tournament.

KLO and Revelstoke advanced to the Provincial Championships.

The Senior "A" Girls' Championship will get underway this weekend also at KLO in Kelowna. Fulton Lady Maroons will compete in that event.