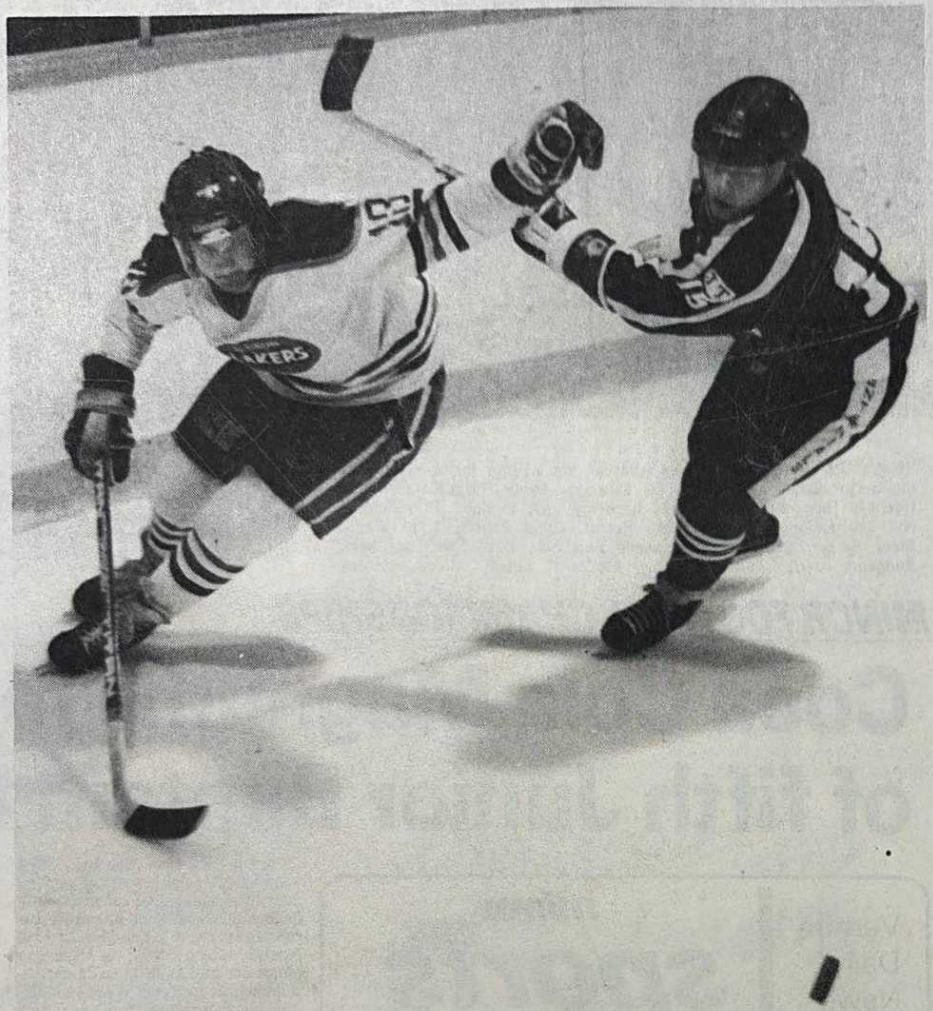
## VERNON LEADS DIVISION

# Lakers trounce Centennials



DUANE DENNIS (18) avoids the stick of Merritt Centennials' defenceman Glen Blair (15) during second period action between the two teams Tuesday night at the Vernon Civic Arena. Vernon completely dominated the game from start to finish and scored a convincing 9-1 victory to move three points ahead of Kelowna Packers in the race for first place in the BC-JHL Interior Division.

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

The Vernon Lakers played it strictly "by the book" and the result was a 9-1 thrashing of the visiting Merritt Centennials Tuesday night at the Vernon Civic Arena.

The win improves Vernon's record to 16-6 and gives them a three-point lead over second place Kelowna Packers in the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division. Merritt remains in third place in the division, six points behind the Lakers.

"That was pure textbook hockey," suggested Head Coach Ernie Gare following the one-sided victory. "We took the body, forechecked well, and not too many giveaways — overall we dominated the game entirely."

The Lakers held a great territorial advantage all night with their aggressive forechecking. If not for an outstanding job by Merritt goaltender Gord Besse, the game might have been out of reach far sooner than it was.

Besse faced 61 shots during the game and many of those were good scoring opportunities. At the other end of the rink, Vernon's Glen Fry was full value for his one-goal effort, making 28 saves. It wasn't until the 10:47 mark of the third period that Merritt spoiled his shutout bid with a power-play goal by Richard Brew. The play began when the Lakers lost a faceoff in their own zone and the Vernon defence was caught out of position. Fry had no chance on the goal.

"Glen never had a lot of shots but he came up big on a few occasions," said Gare.

In spite of their concentrated efforts in the first period, Vernon managed only one goal in the first frame. Kevin Harder scored his first of two for the night with Mark Greyeyes and Mike Paller picking up assists. Paller, the team captain, turned in one of his best all round performances of the season with a goal and two assists on the night and won a split decision against Merritt's Chris Forsberg late in the third period.

In the second stanza, Vernon added three more goals to their lead which stood at 4-0 after 40 minutes. Mike Barkley scored his first of two for the night while Greyeyes and Duane Dennis also had goals.

In the third, the Lakers ran their lead to 7-0 before the Centennials got on the board. Paller scored once as did Barkley, with his second, Harder and Greyeyes, with their second goals, and Jamie Steer completed the scoring with a power-play goal.

The club also received good support offensively from the blueline as Darcy Martini had four assists on the night and Phil Soukoroff added three. In total it was a well-rounded effort by the local club and one which didn't go unnoticed by Gare and his staff.

"We've played that well on the road but that's the best we've played at home," he said. "The intensity level was there right from start to finish."

In other BCJHL action Tuesday night Delta Flyers, the best team in the league at this point, improved their record to 20-2 with 4-0 shutout performance against Juan De Fuca Whalers. In one other contest Abbotsford Falcons edged the Nanaimo Clipper 4-3 as Doug MacDonald notched the game-winner with 51 seconds remaining.

In Delta, Chris Dickson made 27 saves for the shutout while John Spencer scored twice, Doug MacDonald and Ben Biagioni had singles.

Nanaimo will play in Vernon, Saturday night.

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