## PACKERS EDGE CENTS

# Lakers hold slim lead

Dewayne Gallant scored at 7:42 of overtime to give the Kelowna Packers a 4-3 win over the Merritt Centennials in B.C. Junior Hockey League action, Thursday night.

The victory moves the Packers to within one point of the first place Vernon Lakers in Interior Division standings. Lakers, who have one game-in-hand on Kelowna, host the Nanaimo Clippers, Saturday night.

In Merritt, it took an hour to complete the penalty-filled first period, in which the Centennials chalked up 100 minutes and Kelowna 70.

There was a pre-game scuffle and at one point all players were cleared from the ice when a Kelowna player shot the puck at Merritt goalie Randy Beekhuizen after a whistle.

In other games, the Abbotsford Falcons upset the Delta Flyers 6-5 and the Penticton Knights trimmed the Salmon Arm Tigers 7-6.

Lance Momotani led the Knights with four goals, including the winner with 2:56 left in the third period.

At Abbotsford, Brad Trudeau scored at the five-minute mark of overtime to lift the last place Falcons past the Flyers. Delta, which leads the Coastal Division, has lost only three times in 23 outings.

Meanwhile, the Clippers will have a new man behind their bench when they visit the Vernon Civic Arena on Saturday.

Rick Dutka was fired Thursday as head coach of Nanaimo following a 4-3 loss to Abbotsford.

General Manager Ron Opheim will serve as interim coach until a replacement is found, the board of directors decided at a late-night meeting.

The Clippers are in third place in the Coastal Division with an 11-9-1 record.

Dutka coached the Clippers for more than two seasons and compiled a 60-62-3 record, including the unexpected Wednesday night loss to the Falcons.