KENDALLS KORNER

Alger finds the net in his fifth season



by
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Like a fine wine, Ian Alger gets better with age.

Alger is a veteran in the true sense of the word. The 20-year-old winger is playing in his fifth consecutive B.C. Junior Hockey League season.

He helped the Terrace pee wees and bantams capture provincial championships before starting his junior career in Revelstoke. He spent two seasons in Revelstoke before moving, with the franchise, to Abbotsford. The Vernon Lakers acquired him in a trade, along with defenceman Wes Elliott, last December.

Alger has always been known as a hard worker and good man in the corners, but for the first time, he is now considered an offensive weapon.

Statistics released this week by the BCJHL show the rugged left winger has accumulated 43 points, including 21 goals, in just 22 games. His previous career high was last season when he blinked the red light 19 times.

Alger said, "I haven't changed my style . . . I'm still trying to take the body whenever I can. I play better when I'm hitting people . . . it gets me into the game."

But, a couple things that have changed are Alger's linemates and his vision.

"I bought a pair of contact lenses this year and now I can see the net better," he said. "I think they have helped me."

And as for his linemates, Alger is playing alongside two of the most talented forwards in the Interior Division, Mike Barkley and Dallas Drake. Despite missing five games due to an injury, Drake still ranks second in team scoring with 48 points. Barkley, a great two-way winger, has 30 points, including 18 goals.

After four seasons on checking lines, Alger appreciates skating with a couple finesse players.

"Having linemates like Dallas and Mike really helps," Alger said. "When I'm open, they get me the puck."

In training camp, it didn't appear Alger was headed for a banner season, in fact, his name was mentioned in several trade rumors. "Ian has been a pleasant surprise," said Lakers' General Managaer Mel Lis. "We certainly weren't pleased with him at training camp . . . he looked out of shape. But, he has put it all together since then."

Even more valuable to the Lakers than his new-found offensive prowess is his ability to introduce opposing players to the boards. He seldom plays a shift without throwing at least one bodycheck.

"Ian has the ability to set the tempo of a game," Lis said. "When he is hitting, there is nobody more valuable to us than him. He gets us going."

He will never possess the playmaking skills of Drake or the speed of teammate Jamie Steer, but when it comes to going in the corner for a loose puck or banging away at a rebound in front of the opposition's net, there is none better than Alger.

BCJHL

Coastal Division

	W	L	T	F	A	P
Delta	20	4	0	160	78	40
Nanaimo	12	11	1	118	115	25
Richmond	12	12	1	150	122	25
Juan De Fuca	11	9	1	111	99	23
Chilliwack	10	13	0	111	163	20
Abbotsford	8	17	1	134	160	17

Interior Division

Vernon	17	6	0	176	91	34
Kelowna	16	7	2	123	96	34
Merritt	13	12	0	138	153	26
Penticton	11	11	0	125	111	22
Salmon Arm	7	17	1	119	152	15
Summerland	2	20	2	80	205	6

SCORING

Coastal

	G	A	Pts	Pim
Holmes, D	31	36	67	23
MacDonald, D	28	29	57	24
Butterworth, C	22	31	53	8
McDonald, A	19	26	45	4
Biagioni, D	11	34	45	136
Methorst, A	20	24	44	81
Van Sickle, JDF	28	15	43	35
Zulinick, JDF	12	29	41	8
Clarke, R	21	19	40	124
Moore, A	19	20	39	14

Interior

Biller, M	30	25	55	142
Steer, V	23	32	55	8
Drake, V	10	38	48	12
Greyeyes, V	19	26	45	37
Rushton, M	12	32	44	37
Alger, V	21	22	43	81
Hilditch, P	14	27	41	27
Bianchini, K	16	23	39	68
McGowan, M	11	26	37	30
Smiley, P	16	19	35	36

GOALTENDING

Coastal

	MP	GA	Avg
Dickson, D	1048	52	2.98
Holland, D	342	20	3.51
Sutherland, N	373	23	3.70
Dafoe, JDF	716	48	4.02
Palmer, R	825	62	4.51

Interior

Casey, Ke	7002	39	3.34
Fry, V	843	49	3.49
Rysz, V	487	35	4.31
Loewen, P	726	59	4.88
Jones, P	480	43	5.38

VERNON SCORING

PLAYER	GP	G	A	PTS.
Steer	23	23	32	55
Drake	18	10	38	48
Greyeyes	23	19	26	45
Alger	22	21	22	43
Soukoroff	21	9	26	35
Parnell	20	14	19	33
Barkley	19	18	12	30
Biafore	23	7	20	27
Jackson	20	9	12	21
Martini	21	7	14	21
Paller	21	9	10	19
Elliott	19	4	15	19
Dennis	13	7	9	16
Hendry	18	7	7	14
Harder	16	5	8	13
Lightfoot	20	3	5	8
Markin	19	4	3	7