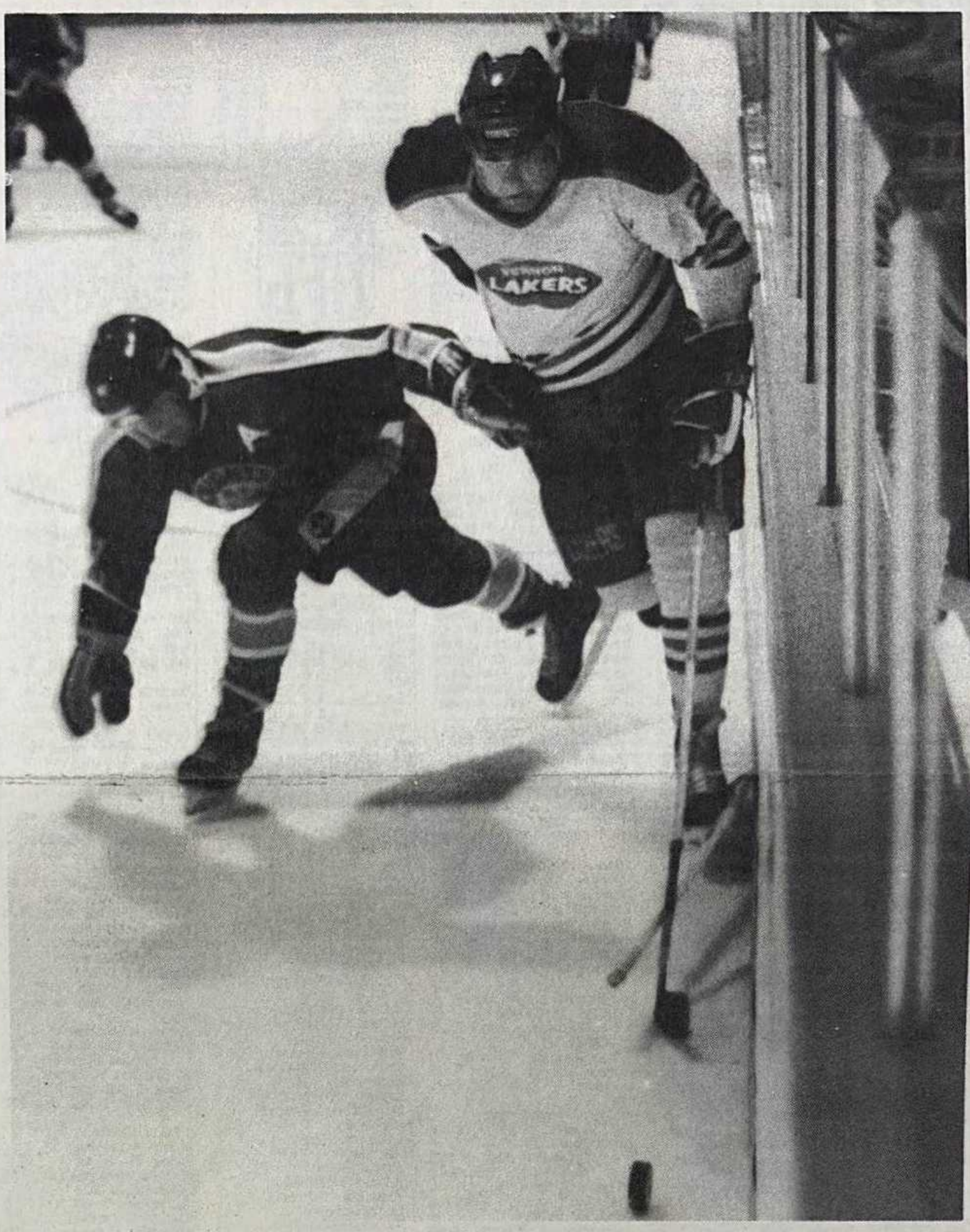

DANE JACKSON (25) sneaks by a Penticton defender along the boards during second period action Saturday night at the Vernon Civic Arena. The visiting Knights stunned the Lakers with a 6-5 overtime victory, scoring with just over a minute gone in the sudden-death extra period. The loss didn't alter the standings in the BCJHL Interior Division, however, and Vernon still leads the six-team loop by a two-point margin. (Daily News Photo)

PACKERS SLUMPING

Lakers still on top despite overtime loss

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

One of two things happened to the Vernon Lakers Saturday night — either the law of averages caught up with them or else they were a victim of Murphy's Law which refers to the fact that anything that can go wrong will go wrong.

Whichever the reason, the local club was its own worst enemy at times as they suffered a 6-5 overtime loss to the visiting Penticton Knights, at the Civic Arena.

Despite the loss, Vernon remains in first place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior Division with a two-point edge over Kelowna Packers, with three games in hand. Packers dropped three straight games on the weekend including losses Saturday to Salmon Arm and Sunday to Merritt.

In all fairness to visiting Penticton, it was a sound all-round performance by the struggling club. They kept the big Vernon guns at bay most of the night with close checking and some hard hitting.

"We have to be physical to be effective but this is really one of the first games that we've actually played a full 60 minutes of hockey," suggested Knights' coach Dwayne Pentland.

In fact, the Knights played more than 60 minutes of hockey — it was 61 minutes and 11 seconds to be exact.

At 1:11 of sudden-death overtime, Penticton's Brad Heschuk put the puck past Vernon goaltender Glen Fry for the game-winner. It was Heschuk's second tally of the night and was the result of a three-on-one break that wouldn't have happened if Vernon's last man back at the time had played the situation properly. Instead he tried to stickhandle the puck and a Penticton forward stole it.

"We should have shot the puck out in that situation but we tried to carry it out and they (Knights) ended up with a three-on-one," concurred Vernon's assistant coach George Fargher.

By contrast, three Vernon forwards had a similar opportunity to win the game in the last minute of regulation time but failed to get a shot on net during a three-on-one situation.

"There was a lack of communication and Mark (Greyeyes) didn't really know we had a three-on-one," added Fargher.

The Knights scored twice in the first period on shots by David McColm and Ivan Moore. Vernon had a number of excellent scoring chances during the first frame but couldn't finish off the play.

After two periods the clubs were tied 3-3 with Dane Jackson, Ian Alger and Mike Barkley each scoring once for Vernon and Lance West notching a single for Penticton.

Brad Smiley gave the visitors a 4-3 edge less than two minutes into the third period, heading in alone on Fry as the Lakers were caught flat-footed on a shift-change.

Kevin Harder tied the score at 4-4, then Heschuk, with his first goal, put the visitors ahead again. Barkley, with his second of the night and a fine individual effort, knotted the score at 18:51 setting up the overtime.

Fry ended up with 29 saves on the night while Jamie Loewen made 38 saves for Penticton.

In BCJHL action Sunday night, Merritt doubled Kelowna 4-2 to stay in third place in the Interior Division with a 14-14 record. Knights are fourth at 13-12.

Saturday night, Merritt beat Summerland 11-8, Salmon Arm defeated Kelowna 8-5, Abbotsford nipped Juan De Fuca 5-4, Nanaimo beat Chilliwack 8-5 and Richmond handed Delta its fifth loss of the season with a 7-4 victory.

LOOK BACK FIVE YEARS

NOVEMBER 1982

Vernon Coca-Cola Juvenile Reps blasted Kelowna 10-3 in Okanagan-Mainline league play in Kelowna. The victory leaves Vernon (7-2) in second place, behind undefeated Penticton. Kelly Rosehill, Kevin Aeichele, Duane Jackson and Shane Koski scored two goals each for Vernon while Richard Belec and Bill Bishop added singles.