THREE GAMES IN THREE DAYS

Busy week for Lakers

The Vernon Lakers have an opportunity to open some breathing room atop the B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior Division with three games, in three days, this weekend.

The first place Lakers have 40 points, four more than the Kelowna Packers. And Vernon has two games-in-hand.

The Lakers play a home-and-home series with the Salmon Arm Tigers, tonight in Salmon Arm and Friday at home, before travelling to Kelowna, Saturday night.

Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare said he is looking for three victories this weekend. But, Gare cautioned that his club can't look ahead to meeting the Packers until they have finished their games with the fifth place Tigers.

"Salmon Arm has played well lately," he said. "We can't take them for granted."

Lakers will be without all-star defenceman Phil Soukoroff for the two confrontations with the Tigers. The speedy rearguard is touring the University of North Dakota campus this week.

However, centre Greg Parnell returns to the Vernon lineup tonight after missing more than three weeks due to a shoulder injury.

"We want to be careful with Parnell," Gare said. "He'll see some spot duty tonight . . . and we'll see how he feels."

Defenceman Darren Halrsa, who joined the Lakers this week, is not yet eligible to play. Vernon obtained Hlarsa from the Olds Grizzlies, of the Alberta Junior Hockey League, in a cash deal.

"We're waiting for his papers (release and transfer) to be approved by Victoria (B.C. Amateur Hockey Association)," Gare said. "We hope to use him in Kelowna."

Meanwhile, Rob Clarke scored twice to lead the Richmond Sockeyes to a 6-4 win over the Nanaimo Clippers in the only BCJHL game played Wednesday night.

Nanaimo outshot Richmond 32-27, but trailed 2-1 and 4-3 at the period breaks.