Teams reluctant to trade with Lis

His reputation as a shrewd trader is cramping the style of Vernon Lakers' General Manager Mel Lis.

Since purchasing the Lakers last year, Lis has made several deals that have helped to build his club into a runaway leader in the B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior Division. Now, other teams are reluctant to trade, or even talk, with Lis.

"It is tough to make any trades these days," Lis said. "The other teams are scared to deal with me."

Vernon has won 14 consecutive road games and has pulled 16 points ahead of the second place Kelowna Packers. But, Lis isn't content to stand pat with his current roster.

"I'd still like to make one or two moves before the signing deadline (Jan. 10)," he said. "With (Greg) Olson coming back, we'll have to do something."

Olson, an all-star defenceman during the 1986-87 season, has been sidelined while recovering from two ankle operations. The speedy rearguard is expected to resume skating next week and could be ready to play in early-January.

"When Olson comes back, we'll be one man over the roster limit (21)," Lis said. "So if we can't make a trade, we'll have to release someone or send a player down to the farm (Columbia Valley Rockies)."

Nine of the 22 players on the Vernon roster were acquired, in trades or outright purchases, from other junior teams. They are: Wes Elliott, Ian Alger, and Mike Paller, Abbotsford; Phil Soukoroff and Mike Barkley, Juan de Fuca; Glen Fry, Richmond; Kevin Harder, Nanaimo; Mark Greyeyes, Merritt; and Darren Hlarsa, Olds, Alta.

The Lakers are idle until Jan. 5 when they host the Salmon Arm Tigers.