TIGERS IN TOWN TONIGHT

Alger enjoys best year

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon forward Ian Alger took a brief pause during the Lakers' first practice session of the new year Sunday night and took a look around him.

It's a scene that he is accustomed to seeing and a situation that he has been in many times before. In fact, Alger has returned to the BCJHL after Christmas more often than anyone else on the current edition of the Vernon squad. This is the fifth season for the veteran 20-year-old and rightly so it is turning out to be the best of his lengthy junior hockey career — a fact for which the Lakers are truly grateful.

"This is a great team," he sighed. "We've got a little bit of everything and we really get along well."

Alger began his career five seasons ago with the Revelstoke Rangers, moving to Abbotsford with the club when they changed locations three years ago. A trade last season brought him to the Lakers in his fourth junior hockey season and a career season this year has kept him on with a team that is threatening to go all the way.

It would be a fitting way to end a five-year junior hockey career for the average-size, average-talented Alger who plays with both his heart and his head not to mention his body. He has led the club in the physical aspect of the game since the 1987-88 campaign began and will no doubt continue to do so as the season progresses.

His physical style of play came to the attention of local hockey fans during the playoffs last season in which the Lakers won their first playoff series since the team was resurrected in this city seven seasons ago.

This year he has added something of a scoring touch to his rugged style of play, finishing off around the net on numerous occasions and showing an equally adept ability to set up plays. In 36 games he has scored 24 goals and added 28 assists for 52 points which places him among the top 10 scorers in the Interior Division. He has also amassed 111 penalty minutes.

One of the major reasons for his stellar play around the net has been confidence. After five years of playing in the BCJHL anyone would have enough confidence to do whatever they feel they can, but Alger insists that he has received a lot of his new-found confidence from coach Ernie Gare.

"Ernie puts a lot of confidence in everyone," he said. "Personally I'm playing with a lot of confidence but we've got a lot of good players so it helps a lot — you're never playing with a bad player anytime."

As a way of illustrating Alger's point one need look no farther than his own exploits this season. As a winger with the club's first line, with Mike Barkley and Dallas Drake, Alger kept abreast of their personal scoring exploits during the first half of the season. Then,





IAN ALGER



TODD DEMCHUK

moved to the second line when Gare switched Mark Greyeyes to the Drake-Barkley connection, Alger hardly lost stride in the scoring department, continuing to rack up points at an impressive clip.

This is first time the veteran winger has made the BCJHL all-star team.

In spite of the personal success he has enjoyed this season, Alger puts the team goals above his own — a fact which should surprise few local hockey fans who have watched the rugged winger this season.

"I'd just like to go as far as we can go and to know that it'll have to be a better team than us who finally beats us," he said.

Alger and his teammates return to the ice tonight when they host the Salmon Arm Tigers. Game time is 8 p.m.

In the lone BCJHL game played Monday night, ex-Laker Todd Demchuk scored two goals to help the Juan de Fuca Whalers hammer the Abbotsford Falcons 13-5 in Victoria.

Reddick 21 0 0 0 0 0

BCJHL

Coastal Division

	G	W	L	T	F	A	P
Delta	36	28	7	1	229	119	57
Richmond	35	21	13	1	217	147	43
Juan De Fuca	35	18	16	1	169	153	37
Nanaimo	34	16	16	2	164	171	34
Chilliwack	34	15	19	0	159	231	30
Abbotsford	37	12	24	1	177	219	25

Interior Division

Vernon	34	26	8	0	248	126	52
Kelowna	34	17	15	2	152	149	36
Merritt	35	17	18	0	191	208	34
Penticton	34	16	18	0	184	170	32
Salmon Arm	35	12	22	1	168	262	25
Summerland	35	6	28	1	141	300	13

SCORING

Coastal

		G	A	Pts	Pim
Holmes, D		44	47	91	443
MacDonald,	D	38	43	81	36
Van Sickle,	JDF	44	29	73	81
Butterworth,	C	30	41	71	10
Clarke, R		31	29	60	198
Biagioni, D		15	45	60	217
Zulinick,	JDF	21	38	59	12
McDonald,	A	23	32	55	10
Methorst,	A	26	26	52	89
Parkes,	N	24	27	51	48

Interior

Steer, V	35	43	78	12
Biller, M	42	35	77	185
Drake, V	20	51	71	24
Greyeyes, V	22	34	56	65
Rushton, M	19	37	56	53
Hilditch, P	17	36	53	56
McGowan, M	13	40	53	36
Alger, V	24	28	52	130
Barkley, V	26	23	49	72
Smiley, P	22	24	46	38

GOALTENDING

Coastal

	MP	GA	Avg
Popp, R	730	34	2.79
Dafoe, JDF	1347	88	3.92
Holland, A	545	41	4.51
Renton, JDF	801	62	4.64
Beekhuizen, D	1461	119	4.88

Interior

Fry, V	1666	72	2.59
Rysz, V	996	47	2.83
Austin, K	489	29	3.55
Casey, K	862	58	4.03
Weber, SA	514	40	4.67