KELOWNA 4, VERNON 3

Packers halt Lakers' win streak

All good things must come to an end and that is especially so for winning streaks.



GLEN FRY

The Kelowna Packers snapped a five-game losing streak with a narrow 4-3 home-ice victory over the Vernon Lakers Friday night to end Vernon's consecutive winning streak on the road at 15 games. It was the first loss on the road for the Lakers since Sept. 29 when they were beaten by the Summerland Buckaroos.

The loss leaves Vernon with a 28-9 record and a comfortable 18-point lead over the second place Packers in the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division. The Packers improved their own record to 18-15-2.

Not only did the local club lose the game but it cost them dearly in manpower as well with two key players now out of the lineup due to injuries.

Chief among these is goaltender Glen Fry who left the game with six minutes remaining when he had his wrist cut by a skate blade. The injury required some stitching and means the league-leading netminder will be out of action for a few days.

"He (Fry) got two pretty good cuts on his writs," explained Vernon coach Ernie Gare.

Fry will dress for tonight's game against Abbotsford but backup netminder Barry Rysz will get the nod to start.

Meanwhile, forward Greg Parnell, who sat out a dozen games earlier in the season, has re-injured his shoulder and will be lost to the club for an indefinite period of time.

In adding insult to injury Friday ight, Kelowna capitalized on numerous power-play opportunities afforded them by what Gare considered to be suspect and lopsided officiating directed against his club through most of the night.

"He gave us a lot of extra penalties," suggested Gare. "We were shorthanded for 16 minutes of the second period and it was a credit to our team that we stayed as close as we did with all those penalties."

Gare didn't blame the officiating for his club's loss however, since he also felt that they had enough chances to win the game if they had concentrated enough.

"We had enough chances to win the game," he said. "We should have been up by three goals after the first period but the puck just wouldn't go in for us."

Kelowna ended up with three power-play goals during the game. Bruce Bianchini, the Packers' top scorer, notched a pair of goals for the winners while Cary Kit added a pair as well.

Mike Barkley scored twice in a losing cause for the Lakers who trailed 3-2 after 40 minutes and were tied 1-1 after the first period. Wes Elliott provided the third goal.

Tonight Vernon hosts the Abbotsford Falcons of the Coastal Division. It will mark the first occasion in which the two clubs have met this season and judging by the fac that the Falcons disposed of Penticton 7-3 Friday night, the Lakers could have their hands full.

"We haven't seen them play before so we'll really have to put in a big effort and make sure we capitalize on our chances," said Gare.

In one other game Friday night Richmond Sockeyes edged the hometown Nanaimo Clippers 8-7.

Prior to tonight's game, against Abbotsford, a special ceremony is scheduled to recognize the Vernon Civic Arena's 50th birthday.

Hockey and lacrosse players from the past five decades will be introduced at centre ice.

There will be several door prizes and the first 350 fans to pass through the doors will receive free coffee and donuts.

Game time is 8 p.m.