POHL JOINS LAKERS

Top spot up for grabs

First place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League will be up for grabs this weekend when the Vernon Lakers visit the Coastal Division for three games, in three nights.

The Lakers meet the Abbotsford Falcons, Friday; the Delta Flyers, Saturday; and the Richmond Sockeyes, Sunday.

Vernon currently leads the Interior Division and the overall standings with 58 points, one more than Delta. The red-hot Sockeyes are closing in on the leaders with 51 points.

Lakers' General Manager Mel Lis said his club is looking for at least two victories this weekend. "It will be a tough trip, but we play well on the road," Lis said.

Vernon will have a surprise for their rivals when they step on the ice this weekend. Rugged winger Trevor Pohl signed with the Lakers, Wednesday, and will be in the line-up Friday night.

"We feel Trevor will be a tremendous addition to our club," Lis said. "He fills a big hole for us."

Pohl is expected to play alongside centre Greg Parnell and right winger Jamie Steer, who leads the Interior Division in scoring. However, that line will probably not be united for about a week due to a shoulder injury to Parnell.

"Parnell is coming to the Coast with us, but we don't expect him to play," Lis said. "We'd like to rest him for another week."

In Parnell's absence, Steer may shift to centre between Darren Hlarsa, who was obtained from the Olds Grizzlies last month, and Pohl.



TREVOR POHL



KEITH CHASE

Dennis Holland, along with twin brothers Troy and Trevor Pohl, formed Vernon's top line during the 1985-86 season and joined the Portland Winter Hawks, of the Western Hockey League, last year. Trevor was traded to the Medicine Hat Gigers in December, but after nine games with the Tigers, he was released and was expected to return to the Winter Hawks. However, he instead chose to join the Lakers.

Lis said, "Trevor has quite a reputation around the league as a fighter, but he can play hockey too. I wouldn't be surprised if he scored 10-12 goals for us in our last 14 games."

The addition of an aggressive winger couldn't have come at a better time for Vernon. The Lakers receive notification this week that defenceman Keith Chase, who leads the club in penalty minutes, has been suspended for six games. The stiff sentence is the result of a match penalty given to Chase, Jan. 8, in Kelowna.

In the lone BCJHL game Wednesday, Rob Clarke scored three goals to lead Richmond to an 8-3 win over the Chilliwack Eagles.

Busy weekend for Lakers



by
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Sports Writer

Playing junior hockey these days, particularly in the B.C. Junior Hockey League, is like flying a jet you might say: a few hours of pleasure then a few minutes of pure panic.

Similarly, the Vernon Lakers rest for long spells of four or five days and then condense a handful of games into a weekend. Such is the case this weekend, much as it was last week. Last week the local club played four games in five nights after just nicely returning from a 16-day layoff period. After five more days of rest they will head for the Lower Mainland today to squeeze three more games into three consecutive nights.

This weekend, however, represents perhaps the toughest three-day stint for the local team this season. Beginning in Abbotsford, Friday night, the Lakers will take on the Falcons, the Delta Flyers and the Richmond Sockeyes in descending order. The order of these teams ability, mind you, ascends from the first to the last game meaning that on day three, road-weary and bleary-eyed, the club must face the reigning Centennial Cup champion Sockeyes.

The Sockeyes are favored once again to repeat as BCJHL champs though until this point in the season it was the Flyers who were running away with both the Coastal Division and the league. However, a few things have taken place in recent history. The Sockeyes have obviously bolstered their lineup considerably while the once mighty Flyers are taking a tailspin.

In the meantime, the Lakers emerged this week as overall leaders in the league thanks, in part, to the fact that they won three of four games last week.

Ordinarily it would be a tough way to defend a lofty position such as the one the club has just recently attained, but for the best road team in the league all it means is something else to look forward to.

Friday night, in Abbotsford, should be no contest. With Glen Fry back in the lineup the flimsy Falcons can't hope to score six times on 21 shots. If the Lakers play anything like they did against Abbotsford when they were in Vernon last weekend, and it's highly probable that they will, the lights will go out pretty quick for the Falcons.

Saturday night, in Delta, will be the biggest challenge yet this season for the Vernon road record while Sunday, in Richmond, they will have to rely on pure guts and determination if they hope to sweep yet another road trip to the Coast.

Incidentally, the club's roster is now frozen for the remainder of the season as is that of every other junior A club in the country following the Jan. 10 deadline that has come and gone. What they do now with what they've got will pretty well determine how things will turn out in the end since there isn't any more help on the way.

While the Lakers have taken over number one position in the league, they haven't quite proven themselves to be the best defensive club in the 12-team junior loop. That honor still belongs to Delta, though without their early season veteran goaltender in the lineup, things will no doubt slip a lot in that department.

The Lakers have the league's top netminder in Fry, but they've got a lot of other little things going for them on their defensive squad — some little details that they might not even have noticed yet.

Pairing defensive partners can often be the key to their success on the ice and in turn will reflect a lot of the team's success as well since the best offence is a good defence. However, discovering the right defensive pairings isn't an easy thing to do and sometimes a club goes through most of the season before the right chemistry is discovered in the defensive corps.

If Ernie Gare hasn't yet tried the combination of Wes Elliott and Darcy Martini together perhaps he should consider it seriously. Ditto for the defensive duo of Chad (Bif) Biafore and Greg Olson.

Why, you ask, would these combinations be any better than those they've already tried? Simple . . . both pairs share something in common — their birthdays.

Both Elliott and Martini were born Jan. 30, though Elliott is Martini's senior by one full year. This means both will be celebrating their birthdays when the Delta Flyers are in town — what better way to celebrate a couple of birthdays than with a rollicking victory over an opposing team?

Olson and Biafore share common birthdays as well and, like the former pairing, one is a year older than the other. The two were born March 28, with Biafore coming into the world a year ahead of Olson.

As superstitious as athletes generally are, and hockey players are generally considered to be the most superstitious of the lot, this sort of luck going for you is what everyone hopes for.