League-leading Lakers blast lowly Buckaroos

While four teams jockey for playoff positions in the B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior Division, two things are certain . . . the Vernon Lakers will finish first and the Summerland Buckaroos are stuck in the basement.

The red-hot Lakers blasted the lowly Buckaroos 8-1 in BCJHL action, Friday night, in Summerland.

The Lakers have already clinched first place in the Interior Division and can put a lock on top spot overall when they host the Delta Flyers tonight. On the other hand, the Buckaroos have only six victories, in 43 outings, and have not yet won a game in 1988.

Ian Alger and Jamie Steer scored two goals each to lead the Lakers, who were in front 2-1 at the end of the first period and 5-1 after the second.

Mike Paller, Greg Parnell, Mike Barkley and Dallas Drake also scored for Vernon.

Eric Sandford replied with the lone goal for Summerland, which was outshot 56-26.

Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare singled out defenceman Adrian Markin and Alger for their outstanding play. But, the Vernon coach saved most of his praise for the Buckaroos.

"You have to give those kids (Buckaroos) a lot of credit," Gare said. "They know they don't have the talent to beat us and they know they aren't going anywhere this season, but they never quit. They were in the game until we scored our third goal late in the second period.

"I think the only thing that has kept that franchise going is the attitude of their players. Hopefully, that will be our last trip to Summerland . . . ever."

Delta, which invades the Civic Arena tonight, is a much more formidable foe than the hapless Buckaroos. The Flyers currently rank second in the Coastal Division, one point behind the Richmond Sockeyes.

Gare said, "It should be a great game. We want to clinch first place and Delta is in a dogfight for first place on the Coast. Every point is important to them right now."

The Lakers currently have 72 points, 14 more than Richmond. A victory tonight would give Vernon an insurmountable 16-point lead in the overall standings.

The Flyers and Lakers are also battling for the best goals-against average in the league. After Friday's games, Vernon has allowed two fewer goals than Delta.

"Winning the goals against trophy is important to us," Gare said. "It is named in memory of Ed Forslund's dad."

Forslund, a Vernon resident, starred in the BCJHL with the Vernon Essos and the Victoria Cougars.

Game time tonight is 8 p.m.

In other BCJHL action Friday, the Kelowna Packers edged the Merritt Centennials 7-6 in overtime, the Penticton Knights doubled Delta 4-2, and the Nanaimo Clippers blasted the Chilliwack Eagles 10-4.

"They had us on the run," a relieved Kelowna coach Ed Ruff said after the home-ice win. "It's scary what happened. We were too cocky. We're lucky we came out of it."

Merritt coach Ed Beers said his players can "feel good about coming back the way they did. We won't hang our heads in shame over this one."

Don Burke scored at 8:27 of overtime to give Kelowna the win.

Dewayne Gallant scored three goals for the Packers, who led 5-2 after two periods. Bruce Bianchini, Brian Lofroth and Cary Kit added singles.

Frank Biller scored twice for Merritt while Al Rushton, Stu Henderson, Doneau Menard and Jay Porter each scored once.

Merritt goaltender Laurew Belland made 30 saves. Tony Hildebrand stopped 19 shots for Kelowna.

KNIGHTS 4 FLYERS 2

In Penticton, the Knights, who outshot Delta 35-31, led 1-0 at the end of the first period and 3-0 at the end of the second.

Todd Hilditch, Lance Momotani, Brad Smiley and Ivan Moore scored for Penticton.

Doug McDonald and Doug Lawrence scored for Delta.

CLIPPERS 10 EAGLES 4

In Nanaimo, Mike Kanpton and Matt Woods scored two goals each for the Clippers, who outshot Chilliwack 48-30 and led 3-1 at the end of the first period and 6-3 at the end of the second.

Pat Hodgins, Sean Stotts, Laurence Amy, Wally Bzoell, Darren Biggs and Corky Parkes added singles for the Clippers.

Mike DUtton, Dave Tisdelle, Bruce Kenward and Rob Stier scored for Chilliwack.

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Editor — DON KENDALL

SPORTS BRIEFS

Seven Lions on hoop squad

Seven players will represent the B.C. Lions in the second annual Canadian Football League Basketball Tournament, Feb. 7-9, in Vernon. The B.C. line-up released this week includes Jamie Buis, Peter VandenBos, Rick Klassen, Jim Mills, Ray Crouse, Andre Francis, and John Ulmer. The Calgary Stampeders, Winnipeg Blue Bombers, Saskatchewan Roughriders, and the Grey Cup champion Edmonton Eskimos will also compete in the tourney. A slam dunk contest is scheduled in conjunction with the tourney on Feb. 7, at 2:30 p.m., at VSS.

Austrians sweep

SCHLADMING, Austria (AFP) — Austrian skiers swept the top four places in the men's World Cup giant slalom here today with Rudi Nierlich leading the way, followed by Hubert Strolz, Helmut Mayer and Guenther Mader.

Nierlich, who was second after the first leg of the two-leg race, had an aggregate time of two minutes, 45.54 seconds to score his first ever World Cup win.

Strolz was timed in 2:45.63 and Mayer, who had led after the opening run, was clocked at 2:46.03. Mader's four-place time was 2:46.91.

Beck in front

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Chip Beck, a seven-time runnerup but a non-winner in his first nine years on the PGA Tour, comliled an 8-under-par 63 and took the second-round lead Friday in the $650,000 Phoenix Open golf tournament.

"The key to my round was that I took advantage of my opportunities," Beck said after making five of his eight birdies on putts of three feet or less. "At this level, that's the name of the game."

Beck completed two trips over the TPC Course in 129, 13 shots under and two in front of Davis Love III at the halfway point of the chase for a $117,000 first prize.

It's a position with which he's familiar.

"Who knows how many times I've been there?" asked Beck, whose list

a second and a half to spare on world champion Vreni Schneider of Switzerland.

Svet consolidated her lead on the second run, when conditions had drastically improved, to win an aggregate time of two minutes, 15.75 seconds.

Schneider timed 2:17.41 for second place, ahead of Austria's Annita Wachter and Spain's Blanca Fernandez-Ochoa, who were timed in 2:17.92.

It was the 19-year-old Svet's third World Cup win but first since winning two giant slaloms in 1986.

Feels disliked

DENVER (AP) — Bill Johnson, controversial 1984 Olympic downhill champion, says "the coaches are trying to get rid of me" and he doesn't think he will be chosen to the U.S. Olympic Alpine ski team. In a telephone interview from Schladming, Austria, where he is competing, Johnson said, "They (the coaches) don't like me ... As far as them selecting me that way ... they like me as much as they like fleas in their beds."

Twins keep Carlton

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Minnesota Twins agreed to contract terms Friday with veteran left-handed pitcher Steve Carlton, who had become a free agent after not receiving a contract offer from the Twins at the end of the 1987 season. Terms of the one-year pact were not