

VERNON LAKERS' forward Ian Alger goes for a rebound in front of Delta goalie Randy Beekhuizen during BCJHL action, Saturday, at the Civic Arena. Beekhuizen was able to clear this rebound, but Alger set up a key goal to help the Lakers dump the Flyers 8-6. (Daily News Photo)

Lakers clinch title by defeating Flyers

By DON KENDALL
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The Vernon Lakers clinched first place overall in the B.C. Junior Hockey League with an 8-6 win over the Delta Flyers before 1,150 fans, Saturday night, at the Civic Arena.

The victory gives the Lakers 74 points, 15 more than the Flyers, who lead the Coastal Division. Vernon clinched first place in the Interior Division several weeks ago.

The Lakers, apparently fired up by the large crowd and the opportunity to clinch top spot, took a 2-0 lead before four minutes had been played.

After Mark Greyeyes rattled a shot off the goal post and Flyers' goalie Brian Tessier made several good stops, Steve McNutt narrowed the gap to 2-1 when he was left alone in front of the Vernon net at 11:22. That goal changed the flow of the game and Delta took control.

The Flyers scored two more goals before the first period ended and increased their lead to 4-2 early in the second when Jeff Nottingham scored a short-handed goal.

But just when it appeared Delta was going to end Vernon's winning streak at eight games, a pair of 20-year-old veterans got the Lakers back on track. Winger Ian Alger won a battle along the boards against two Flyers' defenders and centered the puck to linemate Mike Paller, who fought off a checker and beat Tessier at 6:09.

Vernon then scored six times within seven minutes, including four power-play goals. The Lakers led 8-5 at the end of the second period.

Greyeyes led the attack with two goals and two assists. Phil Soukoroff, Jamie Steer, Dallas Drake, Darcy Martini, Duane Dennis, and Paller added singles.

The other Delta marksmen were Richard Stentiford, with two goals, Scott Frizzell, and Doug MacDonald.

Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare made an obvious observation that his club was hot and cold on Saturday night.

"When it was 2-0, it looked like we were on the way to blowing them out of the building," Gare said. "We stopped working and let them back in the game. Paller's goal got us going and then our power-play scored a lot of goals for us."

Vernon goalie Glen Fry stopped 25 shots while Tessier and Randy Beekhuizen combined to stop 39 shots for Delta. Beekhuizen, who starred in the Vernon Molson Pro-Am League last summer, replaced Tessier after the sixth Vernon goal.

The Flyers were assessed 12 of 22 minor penalties and one of two, 10-minute misconducts.

Gare admits his club may be looking past its final six regular season game towards the playoffs. But, he doesn't expect to have trouble motivating his troops during the next three weeks.

"We are in a tight race with Delta for the goals against trophy," Gare said. "And we want it. We can't afford to have one bad night."

The Lakers lead the Flyers by seven goals in the race for the Forslund Memorial Trophy, emblematic of the best goals against average in the BCJHL.

The Lakers are idle until Friday when they host the Chilliwack Eagles. On Saturday, ex-Vernon Coach Chuck Tapp brings the Penticton Knights to town.

In Sunday's lone BCJHL game, the Flyers scored three unanswered goals in the third period to defeat the hometown Merritt Centennials 6-3. Frizzell tallied twice for Delta.

On Saturday, the Nanaimo Clippes trimmed the Abbotsford Falcons 7-6, the Kelowna Packers crushed the Summerland Buckaroos 12-5, the Juan de Fuca Whalers downed the Langley Eagles 3-1, and the Penticton Knights beat the Salmon Arm Tigers 3-1.

Penticton has won four consecutive outings since Tapp took over as head coach.

SPORTS BRIEFS

Vernon skier on winning team

Mike Maloney of Vernon helped the Okanagan team win the boys' relay race at the B.C. High School Cross-country Championships, Sunday, at Whistler Mountain. Joining Maloney on the valley squad were Steve Brewer of Kamloops and Tracy Hodgkins of Kamloops. In the junior girls free technique race, Grace Ann Webb of Armstrong was third in the five kilometre race with a time of 15 minutes, 47 seconds. Sarah Hickinbottom of Vernon was sixth in 17:39. And in the junior boys' 7.5 km event, Maloney was ninth in 18:20.

Winter Hawks win

The Portland Winter Hawks ended a seven-game losing streak with a 5-2 win over the Spokane Chiefs in Western Hockey League action, Sunday night, in Portland. Vernon minor hockey graduates Troy Mick and Dennis Holland led the Winter Hawks with a goal and two assists.

Bowlers honored

Dawn Klym and Wayne Clack have been honored by the Polson Bowling Centre as its Bowlers of the Week. Klym rolled an 803 triple, 233 pins over her 190 average. Clack had a three-game total of 766, 248 pins over his 176 average.

Eagles victorious

The league-leading Sicamous Eagles defeated the Enderby Buccaneers 13-2 and the Lumby Flying Frenchmen 7-4 in Monashee Hockey League action over the weekend. Sheldon Pukas scored twice for the Eagles against Lumby. Shane Gauge replied with a pair of goals for the Flying Frenchmen. Lumby returns to the ice next Saturday night when it hosts the Revelstoke Merchants.

Juveniles share lead

The Vernon Coca Cola Juvenile Reps trimmed Kamloops 3-1 to move into a first place tie with Salmon Arm in the Okanagan Mainline Juvenile Hockey League, Sunday. Ralph Lett, Mike Weir, and Peter Catt each scored once for the local club which held a 2-0 lead after 40 minutes following a scoreless first period. Both Vernon and Salmon Arm have 6-2 records and will meet in two weeks in a game that will decide the overall leader.

Lyle tops field

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Sandy Lyle found one good thing to say about his performance in the last round of the Phoenix Open golf tournament.

"I didn't do anything daft," Lyle said Sunday.

He left that to Fred Couples.

In less than an hour, Couples twice hooked tee shots into the water on the 18th hole at the TPC course at Scottsdale.

The first one, which trickled into the lake after hitting a spectator, cost him an opportunity to win in regulation play.

The next one cost him the three-hole sudden-death playoff.

Medal contender

KRANJSKA GORA, Yugoslavia (AP) — Mateja Svet of Yugoslavia won her second World Cup ski race in two days Sunday, capturing a women's slalom and establishing herself as a strong medal contender for the Winter Olympics at Calgary.