PARNELL IS HOT

Lakers sweep Centennials

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

A reunited forward line did most of the damage for the Vernon Lakers Saturday night as they completed a four-game sweep of the Merritt Centennials with an 8-3 victory.

The Lakers will meet the winners of the Kelowna-Pencticton semi-final, in a best-of-seven final series to determine the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division champion. That series opens Friday night in the Vernon Civic Arena.

Greg Parnell, the scoring leader for the Vernon squad in the first-round playoff series, was reunited with former teammates Ian Alger and Jamie Steer and the line responded with four goals and nine points.

The trio was one of the hottest line combinations in the league earlier in the regular season until a shoulder injury sidelined Parnell and the other two began drifting through various line combinations for the rest of the year.

Alger, a five-year veteran of the BC-JHL, scored twice and had a pair of assists while Parnell notched his fifth and sixth goals of the playoffs. Steer, who has managed just one goal in the first four playoff dates, added three assists Saturday night.

Following Vernon's 10-4 win Friday night, the Centennials looked like a team that was willing to admit defeat. Saturday's encounter only proved the point but not before Merritt turned in one more good period of hockey.

The Lakers led by a slim 1-0 margin after 20 minutes and were having difficulty breaking away from the Centennials until a pair of goals 29 seconds apart opened things up in the second frame. Parnell and Mark Greyeyes scored in the 29-second span to open up a 5-2 lead. Before the period ended the Lakers held a 6-3 lead.

"We played much better than we did in the first two games," said Lakers's Head Coach Gare. "We skated better and moved the puck much better — they (Centennials) just couldn't keep up with us."

Gare fingered Alger as one of the key performers in the win, particularly his physical presence on the ice. However, he was impressed with Alger's scoring touch as well.

"Ian takes the body well and when he gets points it's a real plus for us," Gare said. "When he's going well the whole team is going well."

Greyeyes also scored twice for the Lakers while Dane Jackson and defenceman Shawn Hendry, with a 100-foot slapshot that fooled Gord Besse with a strange bounce, completed the Vernon scoring. Dallas Drake didn't score but set up three goals.

Bill Birks, Richard Brew and Frank Biller replied for the Centennials.

Meanwhile, things are going as expected in the other Interior Division semi-final series, much to the enjoyment of Gare and the entire Vernon team who now only have to wait for a winner of the series.

"Hopefully Penticton can take them (Packers) another game or two yet," suggested Gare. "We're hoping the series will go seven games."

The Knights, down three games to none, have fought back with a pair of overtime victories. Game six of that series takes place Tuesday night in Penticton and game seven, if necessary, will be in Kelowna, Wednesday.

Regardless of who wins that series, Gare insists that his club will be better prepared for the next series than they were for the one they just won.

"We'll be more prepared for this series," he insisted. "We got a slow start against Merritt but everyone began to realize the situation we were in."

Gare expects that 50-goal scorer Mike Barkley could be back in the lineup for the next series.

"Once we get our one-two combination again we'll be back to normal," said Gare referring to Barkley and Drake.



GREG PARNELL (22) of the Vernon Lakers, was one of the players who helped make life miserable for Merritt goaltender Gord Besse, Saturday night. Parnell scored twice to help power the Lakers to an 8-3 victory over the Centennials and a four-game sweep of their best-of-seven BCJHL Interior Division semi-final series. They'll begin the Interior Division Championship series Friday against the winner of the Penticton-Kelowna series. (Daily News Photo)

Rockets upset Maroons

The Summerland Rockets upset the Fulton Maroons 77-75, Saturday, in the Okanagan Senior Boys' A Basketball Championship game in Clearwater.

Summerland, the Maroons, Clearwater and KLO of Kelowna advance to the provincial tournament, March 9-12, at Fulton.

Ricardo Uruel led the Rockets past the Maroons with 23 points.

Sean Milliken, with 22 points, and Ted Rush, with 13, were the only Fulton players who hit double figures.

Summerland led 23-21 after the first quarter and 41-39 at half-time, but trailed 58-55 after three quarters.

Fulton Coach Bob Shannon said his club had a terrible game. "We took too many silly fouls and our shooting was awful," he said.

The Maroons were good on only 34 of 91 field goal attempts. On the other hand, Summerland shot 50 per cent from the field.

In earlier games, the Maroons defeated Oliver 8)-63 and KLO 76-63.