THIRD OVERTIME VICTORY

Knights even series

The Vernon Lakers still don't know who they will face when they host the opening game of the B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior Division final series, Friday night.

The Penticton Knights stretched the division semi-final series to seven games by edging the Kelowna Packers 6-5 in overtime, Tuesday, in Penticton.

The win evened the best-of-seven series at 3-3.

Kelowna had taken a 3-0 lead earlier in the series, but Penticton has battled back with three consecutive overtime victories.

The deciding game is tonight in Kelowna.

Lance Momotani scored four goals for Penticton, including the tying marker with 3:25 left in regulation time, then the winning goal nine minutes into sudden-death overtime.

Brad Heschuk and Shayne Green also scored for Penticton.

Mike Murinko got two goals for Kelowna, while singles came from Alan Schuler, Bruce Bianchini and Cary Kit.

SOCKEYES 7 WHALERS 0

In Richmond, the Sockeyes took a 3-2 lead in their series with the win.

Barry Kress got two goals for the Sockeyes, while singles came from Rick Herbert, Dwayne Wills, Greg Hadden, Dan Walton and Wayne Stripp.

Mike Doyle made 30 saves in goal for Richmond to claim the shutout.

The teams meet tonight in victoria.

CLIPPERS 5 FLYERS 2

In Delta, Corky Parkes scored two goals as for Nanaimo. The Flyers lead the series 3-2.

Nanaimo, which outshot Delta 30-17, led 3-1 at the end of the first period and 5-2 at the end of the second.

Darren Biggs, Marty Peters and Greg Allan also scored for the Clippers.

Doug McDonald and Darren Schwartz scored for Delta.

The teams play tonight in Nanaimo.

B.C. Junior

Nanaimo 5 Delta 2
(Delta leads best-of-seven quarter-final 3-2)

Richmond 7 Juan de Fuca 0
(Richmond leads best-of-seven quarter-final 3-2)

Penticton 6 Kelowna 5 (OT)
(Best-of-seven quarter-final tied 3-3)

Lakers waiting for their opponent



by
Jim Judd
Daily News
Sports Writer

There's an addage in the military that you must "hurry up and wait" and while it is one of the most common cliches applicable to life in the army it also is one of the most frustrating and inconvenient aspects of the service.

Apply the same principle to the Vernon Lakers, however, and you'd be hard-pressed to hear a complaint from anyone — least of all their coaching staff. On the contrary, they are enjoying their current waiting period.

After disposing of the troublesome Merritt Centennials in five short days, in the minimum four games, the Lakers now bide their time to see who they will take on come Friday night. That series will determine the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division Championship. It may be small potatoes in the grand scheme of junior hockey, but it represents a milestone as yet unattained by the local club since they incorporated under their current name back in the 1980-81 season.

All that aside, the six days of rest and recuperation will certainly come in handy while the Kelowna Packers and the Penticton Knights battle one another for the right to face a team that both managed to beat just twice in 10 regular season matchups. The Lakers held 4-1 records both at home and on the road against both teams so provided either team is still physically able to put a team on the ice at the Vernon Civic Arena Friday night, they will have a 20 per cent chance for success. If you were to equate that into usable terms, allowing for the luck factor and the referee factor (poor officiating can afford a weaker team enough opportunities to turn the tide on a more talented club) what it means is that either of those teams have a chance of winning at least one game in a best-of-seven series.

Maybe that might sound a tad overconfident at this point, but the premise of Vernon superiority is based on two facts: the Lakers are back to their mid-season form; and, more importantly, both Dallas Drake and, with any luck at all, Mike Barkley will be back on the scene.

Drake and Barkley, provide what Head Coach Ernie Gare has described as the club's one-two punch. Between them they provided the club with 90 goals and more than 200 scoring points during the regular season.

However, more than his scoring and playmaking touch, Drake's presence on the ice boosts the team's confidence cramatically. Just having their leading scorer on the ice allows every other forward to play with more confidence and greater desire.

In addition, Drake allows the club to gain possession of the puck more often and to maintain control of the puck for longer periods of time. This, in itself, becomes not only an offensive asset but also an ideal defensive strategy.

But the real key to the situation may the reformation of the forward combination of Greg Parnell, Jamie Steer and Ian Alger. Earlier in the season that trio provided the club with much of their offensive punch when Drake and Barkley were still adjusting to the team's style and becoming comfortable with their own roles.

When Parnell dropped out of the picture in mid-season, due to a shoulder injury, the other two, Alger and Steer, were affixed to an endless combination of lines in an attempt to recreate the magic and maintain the club's healthy scoring rate.

Alger struggled with his offensive game, though he managed to maintain his position in the Interior Division's top 10 scoring race all season long with his hard work. In the meantime, his checking and hitting game became the model for everyone else on the club and he put his five years of junior hockey experience to good use.

Steer became the rogue, the lone wolf if you will, never again connecting successfully with any other line combination but forging a name for himself with his relentless ability to skate and check. In the process he created so many opportunities for himself and his teammates that until the late going of the regular season he led the team in the individual scoring department and was challenging for the league scoring championship.

What's more, although it was stated wrongly in this space that Barkley was the only member of the club to reach the 50 goal plateau this season, Steer, too surpassed the mark with 51.

But it's extremely difficult for a 17-year-old freshman to be expected to carry the load for a team. In the absence of Drake and Barkley, Steer just couldn't bare the load on his shoulders when relegated from his secondary role to the primary focus.

Now left with the opportunity to resume his high-scoring second-string role once again, we can expect big things from Steer once again.

One ingredient missing now, that might eventually prove invaluable, is the absence of Trevor Pohl. Pohl, who chipped a bone in his shoulder, represents the only casualty of the series with Merritt as he went down midway through the first game.

With a little luck, and a lot of work, the team may be around long enough for the rugged winger to heal and return to the lineup. Hard-checking muscle is a precious commodity when the going gets tough in playoffs.

Just keep those fingers cross and wait and see.