CENTENNIAL CUP PLAYDOWNS

Calgary hosts opener

CALGARY (Special) — The Vernon Lakers will face perhaps their most formidable opposition of the season tonight when they take to the ice against the Calgary Canucks in game one of the best-of-seven Pacific Region championship playoff series.

Action gets under way at 7:30 p.m. at the Max Bell Arena where the Canucks play their home games on the largest ice-surface the Vernon Lakers have ever been on. The ice is 100 feet wide which means that speed will be a major factor in the early games of their series against the Alberta Junior Hockey League victors.

Though once again the Lakers and their coaching staff are in the wilderness where the Canucks are concerned, the same cannot be said for the Calgary club which has had the benefit of observing the Lakers through the use of videotape already. Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare and his staff know little, if anything, about the Canucks other than what their impressive record tells him. The Canucks were 51-9 in regular season play and have gone 12-2 in playoffs while winning three straight series.

"They (Canucks) have a lot of triple A midgets that played with Jamie (Steer) last season," said Gare as his team prepared for their first practice at the impressive Max Bell facility. "They've got three or four 20-year-olds but generally they're pretty young."

"They only lost nine games in regular season so that's got to say something. We'll have to be a lot more intense than we were on the weekend. We hope to get off to a quick start and we want to stay out of the penalty box."

The Lakers wrapped up their best-of-three mini series against the Grande Prairie North Stars on the weekend, winning two straight games by lopsided scores though the club didn't look overly sharp in doing so. The club took a lot of minor penalties in that series and doing so against the Canucks could prove more costly than against the North Stars since the line on Calgary is that they play a very disciplined game.

"They've got a good skating team from what I hear and a very mobile defence," Gare said.

However, both teams are experiencing the woes of playoff injuries. For the Canucks, leading scorer Martin Jiranek is a doubtful starter tonight as he's apparently nursing a serious charleyhorse injury back to health.

For the Lakers, Mike Barkley is once again a doubtful starter. Barkley injured his back during the Lakers' practice session in Grande Prairie and didn't play in either of those games. He has practiced with the club in Calgary and will see a physiotherapist before the final word on his status is determined. Jiranek had 60 goals and 57 assists for 117 points and third place in the AJHL scoring race. Barkley potted 50 goals for the Lakers.

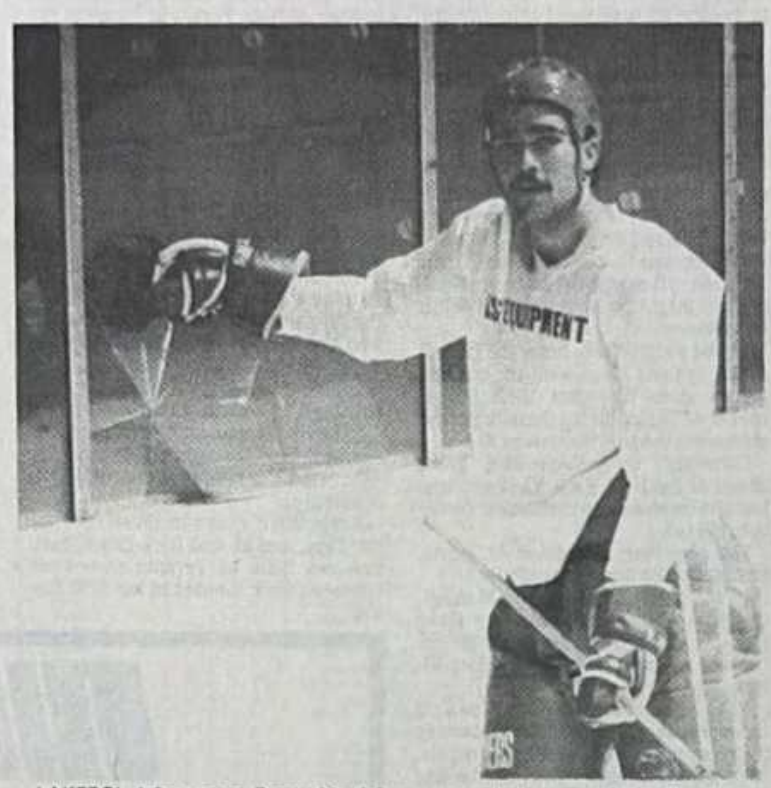
The Lakers, of course, still have 53-goal scorer Jamie Steer who has been very steady performer for them in the playoffs and centre Dallas Drake is in good form as well.

In addition to their injury bug, Gare sent right-winger Trevor Pohl home Monday afternoon, citing disciplinary problems as the source of a conflict between the two.

With just 18 players left, Gare and General Manager Mel Lis decided to bring up forward Farrell Goodwin from the Columbia Valley Rockies, the Lakers' Junior B affiliate team in the Kootenays. Goodwin, a right-handed shot, has good speed and puck sense, according to Gare, who will put him into active service in game one. Greg Olsen will likely take Barkley's spot on wing with Drake and Mark Greyeyes.

Other reports on the Canucks indicate that they have an excellent defensive unit, but that their goaltending is only average. However, the Canucks' defence allowed their opposition an average of just 20 shots per game during their regular season and had only 198 goals scored against them in 60 games while putting 402 past their opposition.

Gare will likely pay some attention to Mike Bertamini, who is the second top scorer for the Canucks with 47 goals and 62 assists for 109 regular season points which was good enough for sixth place overall.



LAKERS' defenceman Darcy Martini surveys a hole he made in the plexiglas at the Max Bell Arena. Martini unleashed one of his wicked slapshots, during practice Monday, that went right through the glass.
(Daily News Photo)



VERNON LAKERS' Head Coach Ernie Gare watches his troops during a workout, Monday, at the Max Bell Arena, in Calgary. The best-of-seven interprovincial series gets under way tonight.
(Daily News Photo)

Armstrong team earns top spot

An Armstrong team won the 'A' division in the third annual Labatts Big Blue Bowl-a-spiel, held over the weekend, at the Polson Bowling Centre.

Forty-eight teams competed in the three-day tournament.

The Armstrong quartet was comprised of Jolyne Sulz, Cheryl Webb, Len Sulz, and Brian Nitchie.

The Blue Hawaiians, from Vernon, won the 'B' division and the Blue Aristocats, also from Vernon, captured the 'C' division.

High singles were rolled by Lorne Moe of Williams Lake, with 373, and Vivian Teare from Kamloops, with 348.

The high triple winners were Mark Friebe from Enderby, with 930, and Sandra Edwards of Vernon, with 777.

There were a total of 35, 300-plus games including two each by Barry Koenig, Bill Dennis, Marshall Pesch, Gord Conway, Sandra Edwards, and Friebe.

The top four teams in each division were:

'A' division: Armstrong; second, Blue Mites of Vernon, Len Chahley, Bev Selin, Elsie Chahley, Don Selin; third, Blue Heelers from Enderby, Don Vigue, Marge Leboux, Gilbert Black, Connie Black; fourth, Hesse from Salmon Arm, Richard Hesse, Fred Batchelor, Bernie Favell, Marie Halecz.

'B' division: Blue Hawaiians; second, Blue Crew from Salmon Arm, Marshal Pesch, Myla Bouchard, Audrey Safranski, Bill Dennis; third, Gerry O's from Vernon, Gordon Bischop, Barry Scheidt, Elmer Scheidt, Stan Walker; fourth, Colonel Blue Balls from Vernon, Bill Blair, John Podger, Diana Falconer, Larry Falconer.

'C' division: Blue Aristocats; second, Big Blue Balls of Vernon, Ed Meyer, Kelly Meyer, Marcel Gallon, Rose Gallon; third, Blue Bummers of Vernon, Paul Wendel, Ginny Makarewich, Pierre Labbe, Marie MacKenzie; fourth, Polson Blues, Wayne and Nonie Price, Jerry and Jan Skog.

Swimming standards relaxed

TORONTO (CP) — Canada's national swim team has eased its Olympic standards in a bid to diffuse opposition to tight selection criteria for the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, new national coach Dave Johnson said Monday.

"It was an attempt to diffuse the nonsense that was going on about the issue," Johnson said in a telephone interview from Edmonton. "We decided to take a step back."

To qualify for the Olympic team, swimmers must now place first or second at the Olympic trials in Montreal in May and record a time ranking them in the top 16 in the world.

Under the previous selection criteria, a top 12 ranking was mandatory for Olympic selection.

"To make the team will still be tough," said Johnson.

Vernon runners victorious

Three Vernon runners won their age categories in the recent Barriere 10-kilometre Run.

The run was the third event in the Canadian Tire Interior Road Race Series.

Martin Kovacs was the fastest runner in the men's 16-19 age group with a clocking of 39 minutes, 46 seconds.

Heidi Muckle was the first woman in the 50 and over class to finish, in 46:29, and Paul Purin won the men's 15 and under group, in 47:21.

The overall winner was Ray Steinke of Penticton in 33:51. The first woman to finish the hilly course was Linda Stenseth, also from Penticton, in 38:37.

The fastest Vernon runner was George Geldart, who was third in the men's 35-39 class, in 36:42.

The other Vernon runners and their times were: Jim Smiley, 38:10; Juanita Purin, 42:26; Ron Noble, 44:05; Tom Reed, 44:17; Wayne Steward, 44:56; Karen Siemens, 49:33; and Cameron Reed, 53:09.

Tennis lessons on Vernon courts

The Greater Vernon Parks and Recreation District has scheduled a series of beginners' tennis lessons this

The instructors will be Kerry Bourdon, Ralph Stevens, and Lesley Cole, who are all certified by the B.C. Tennis Association

JUDDS JOURNAL

On the road with the Lakers



by Jim Judd
Daily News Sports Writer

Mel Lis' emotional cycle runs between mountain peaks and deep canyons at this time of the year but unfortunately the peaks are few and far between.

In spite of the success of his hockey club there always seems to be one more bridge to cross and as a result the jovial general manager spends a great deal of time deeply concerned about what lies ahead. As a result, he has slept sporadically in the past month or so and it is fairly obvious from the bags around the eyes that he hasn't seen much sleep since the club hit Calgary, Sunday.

Lis had at least a brief while to savor the Lakers' Mowat Cup victory in Grande Prairie last weekend but, as Head Coach Ernie Gare pointed out to his charges, it was expected of them to begin with.

The Lakers got off to a shaky start in that series, but still had little difficulty forging 6-1 and 7-2 victories to sweep the best-of-three contest in two straight games. In doing so they increased the Peace-Cariboo Junior Hockey League's measure of ineptitude against BCJHL champs to 12 games without a victory. That, however, is the least of anyone's concern within the Vernon organization.

As quickly and as quietly as they had breezed into town the Lakers slipped out of Grande Prairie Sunday morning and headed for Calgary. The sight of the big city on the horizon was a relief to the bus-load after spending unmemorable nights in such spots as Edson and Grande Prairie, with whistle stops in Blue River, B.C., and Stoney Plain, Alta.

Though they have been on the road for less than a week now, the bus has logged more than 1600 miles and there is still more than 300 to go before they'll see home again.

Meanwhile, the innoccuous beginning to this road trip has lapsed into Brother Mel's Travelling Salvation Show and the club seems to have picked up a lot of momentum as the wheels ate up the miles on the pavement. If their first practice was any indication, energy levels are high and the anticipation of a tough, grinding series seems to appeal to the team more than ever. In fact, energy is so abundant that immediately after steppingonto the ice at the Max Bell Arena Monday morning, defenceman Darcy Martini put a puck right through the glass behind the net with one of his cannon-like slapshots. It was a fairly good indicator of the kind of practice the club enjoyed that morning as the layoff-weary legs seemed to be back in high gear.

To keep their minds off the game for a while the club has a few excursions planned including a trip to the Calgary Zoo.

The series is anxiously anticipated by defenceman Shawn Hendry and forward Jamie Steer, both of whom reside in this Alberta city. Hendry actually played with the Canucks last season which makes his meeting tonight with his former teammates somewhat ironic.

Steer played with, and against, a handful of the Canucks last season while tolling in the Calgary Buffalo Midget Hockey League. Both players are looking forward to playing against their old colleagues and both are pleased about playing in front of family and friends for the first time this season.

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Eddie Johnstone, an assistant coach with the Lakers, had drawn a lot of media attention along the way on this road trip but what he hasn't drawn is any sympathy for his bad habits. Johnstone is the only member of the bus entourage who smokes.

Being such a tiny minority, of course, means that little or no concessions are made in his honor and absolutely no smoke breaks were made — scheduled or otherwise. Ernie Gare did offer to let him stand at the door of the bus and blow the smoke out the crack if he absolutely had to. He didn't bother. Can't blame him really.

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Defenceman Keith Chase, a five-year junior hockey veteran and a two-year member of the club, sees only limited ice time but leads the club by leaps and bounds in other areas. For instance, he has, by far, the biggest appetite and can disguise his voice in many more ways than anyone else on the team.

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In a lighter vein even yet, Mark Greyeyes is by far the worst cribbage player on the club. In fact, he always seems to lose which makes him a popular choice to play against.