Hopes end tonight for some

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports Editor

The dream ends tonight for a lot of anxious young hockey players.

The Vernon Lakers rookie camp concludes this evening with an inter-squad game which will pit half of the 37 youngsters left against the other half.

When the dust settles, about one half from each squad will be invited to the club's main camp which gets underway Tuesday.

The 37 players remaining are all that's left of more than 70 youngsters who answered the bell at the beginning of the week at Priest Valley Arena.

And, though it's only a small consolation, Lakers' Head Coach Ernie Gare believes perhaps as many as three of the lucky ones chosen for the main camp will actually skate for the club this winter.

"I've been happy with the calibre overall," explained Gare. "We're looking at taking 15-18 players to the main camp and maybe three of those will make the team."

Last year just two players from the early rookie session ended up wearing the Vernon colors during the regular season. Among these were local favorite Duane Dennis and centre Greg Parnell. Parnell managed to secure himself a scholarship to an NCAA institute in the United States while Dennis is back with the club again this season.

In fact, Dennis is one of two regular members of the club who are helping the Lakers' coaching staff with the rookie camp. Defenceman/forward Greg Olsen is the other.

Olsen, who was sidelined for the majority of last season after he underwent surgery on his ankles early in the year, is expected to be a regular with the club this year.

Although he was vague about the idea, Gare even suggested that more than three players could skate with the team this year if they perform well next week in the main camp.

"There could be a couple more even who make it," he said.

One of the few players to impress Gare, though it comes as no surprise to the Vernon coach, is goaltender Randy McGrew. McGrew, 19, played high school hockey in St. Paul, Minn. where the game is taken very seriously.

"He (McGrew) has got good size and he stands up well," said Gare of his goaltending prospect.

"We had him pegged for main camp actually but we wanted him to get some extra ice time at the rookie camp," Gare continued.

When main camp opens next week McGrew will have his job cut out for him however. Gare is expecting several experienced junior netminders to show up and make a concerted bid for a starting position.

"We've got a couple of guys coming to main camp that can give him (McGrew) a run for his money," said Gare.

Among the early favorites for the starting position is Brian Langlot. Langlot was the top goaltender in the West Coast Junior B Hockey League last season while playing for the Seattle Americans.

One area that Gare could use some surprises in would be defence. So far nobody has stood out of the crowd at the rookie operation but at least a few have earned the right for a more serious stab at the team next week.

"Actually the best prospects have been 16-year olds as it turns out," he remarked.

Meanwhile, among the locals who've impressed Gare this week are forward Scott Kowalski and defenceman Jim Anderson. Both will be in the main camp and if all goes well they could see regular duty this season.



STEVE BURTON, a 19-year old, moves out to cut down the angle during the Vernon Lakers rookie camp Thursday at Priest Valley Arena. (Daily News Photo)

THE VIEW FROM HERE . . .

BCJHL rule just won't stand up



by
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I don't think it would stand up in court.

The B.C. Junior Hockey League has adopted a rule that limits the number of 20-year olds eligible to play in the league this season, provided they play in the Western Hockey League the same season. That smacks of discrimination to me.

The intent of the rule is to prevent teams from buying contenders as the Richmond Sockeyes did a couple of years ago. Yes, I know the team also consisted of a lot of 18-year olds the year the Sockeyes won the Centennial Cup in Humboldt, Sask. But take a look at the key players and you'll see they were largely 20-year olds with previous WHL experience.

Matt Hervey anchored the defence. Hervey played in the WHL with Moose Jaw and briefly in Seattle before joining Richmond. He was big and strong and a fine defenceman. Without Hervey, I doubt Richmond would have won the Junior "A" national championship.

Jason Phillips toiled in the Wheat City, Brandon, Man. just prior to joining Richmond and he was the guy who scored the key goals, in the championship playoff drive.

It's a fact of life in junior "A" hockey that you don't win with 16 or even 17-year olds. You need those 19 and 20-year olds to provide leadership and to offer valuable experience to the teams who reach the highest levels.

I don't see how a team can deny a guy at least a tryout based strictly on his age and where he happened to play part of a season.

If the hockey club is a private entity, okay. The owner can tryout anybody he so chooses. After all, it's the owner's money that is on the line should any losses occur.

What I don't get is the league telling teams which guys they can or can not give tryouts to. It won't wash in court, just like Ken Linseman proved about 10 years ago when he took on the NHL in court over age discrimination and won.

If I was a 20-year old, I might just challenge the BCJHL ruling in court.

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Vicki Keith will have a fantastic story to tell when the teacher asks her how she spent her summer. Keith can honestly say she spent it swimming. As in five Great Lakes in less than two months.

As far as I'm concerned, it was a monumental accomplishment. And it never got the press coverage, at least out West, that it deserved.

Here we have a woman who broke a world record in fantastic fashion during the final leg of her incredible journey. Keith swam 38 kilometres using only the butterfly stroke — the most physically demanding stroke in all of swimming. That broke the record Keith herself set in 1984.

I can't go more than half a length of the pool doing it and here we have a woman who did it for 38 kilometres. That's roughly 22 miles.

Her entire summer was, to my way of thinking, phenomenal. I give the gal credit for even thinking up the project. Consider the scope of it: Beginning July 1, Keith swam 19 km across Lake Erie. Later that month she made it across Lake Huron and Lake Michigan. A couple of weeks ago she conquered Lake Superior, a 34 km jaunt that was, before tackling all 51 km of Lake Ontario for the grande finale.

The marathon raised about $200,000 for a swimming pool for the disabled in Toronto.

I hope Keith gets a medal, something like the Order of Canada in recognition of her outstanding accomplishment. She certainly deserves one.