The Lakers are hot by George!

By AL PATERSON
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George Fargher may be the best kept secret in the B.C. Junior Hockey League.

In two seasons he has yet to taste defeat while behind the bench of the Vernon Lakers.

Sunday night, in Enderby, the Salmon Arm Tigers almost did it but the Lakers overcame both a deficit and a spirited effort by the Tigers to eek out a 6-5 victory.

The win came on the heels of a 10-2 whipping Vernon laid on the Kelowna Packers Saturday night at Civic Arena. It means Fargher is unbeaten in three exhibition tilts this year and he also won three times last season.

A modest man, Fargher gave credit to his players following Sunday's outing that looked more like a regular season game than an exhibition contest.

"Salmon Arm played 10 veterans tonight and it showed, especially in the first period," said Fargher. "I thought they took it to us pretty good in that period.

"We got caught sitting back on our heels and watching them," he added. "But, in the third period we started to come on. I thought all three of our goalies played well, especially Randy McGrew in the third period, he kept the lead for us.

"Curtis Head turned in a strong game on defence for us," Fargher continued. "He was one of the few guys who took the body consistently. He has a good low shot from the point."

That good low shot that Fargher mentioned resulted in the margin of victory. Head clicked twice in a nine-second span to erase a 5-4 Tiger lead in the third period and give Vernon the lead for the first time in the game. After that, the Lakers went into a tight-checking mode and, with McGrew shining in goal, shutout Salmon Arm the rest of the way.



VERNON LAKER GOALIE SCOTT BAILEY THWARTS SALMON ARM TIGER WARREN CARTER (16)

Warren Carter and Terry Klapstein scored in the first period to stake the Tigers to a 2-0 lead before Vernon fought back and knotted the count on goals by veterans Adrian Markin and Shawn Hendry.

Joe Snyder fashioned a pair of goals while Darren Brkic added a single to give Salmon Arm a 5-3 lead after 40 minutes of action. The lone Vernon goal of the period was credited to Lorne Kanigan.

Rob Shypitka's marker at the 4:56 mark of the final frame brought Vernon to within a single goal. Curtis Head took over from there scoring a powerplay marker at 7:03 and again at 7:12 for the game winning goal.

Head gained first-star status, Terry Klapstein was second star and Sypitka was chosen the third star.

Saturday night Vernon never trailed the Kelowna Packers, leading 3-1 and 5-2 en route to the 10-2 win. Shypitka and Duane Dennis led the Vernon attack with a pair of goals apiece while single markers came off the sticks of Aaron Damani, Cam Sylven, Neil Eastman, Aaron Asp, Scott Kowalski and Dave Oliver. Dave Lipscomb and Chris Abraham replied for Kelowna.

The next action for the Lakers is Thursday night in Osoyoos when they take on the Portland Winter hawks of the Western Hockey League. The same two teams will also meet in Vernon at 8 p.m. Saturday.

Two local products expected to suit up again for the Oregonians this winter, Troy Mick and Dennis Holland, may not be with the junior club this trip because Mick is at the Pittsburgh Penguins' training camp while Holland is busy trying to secure employment with the Detroit Red Wings.