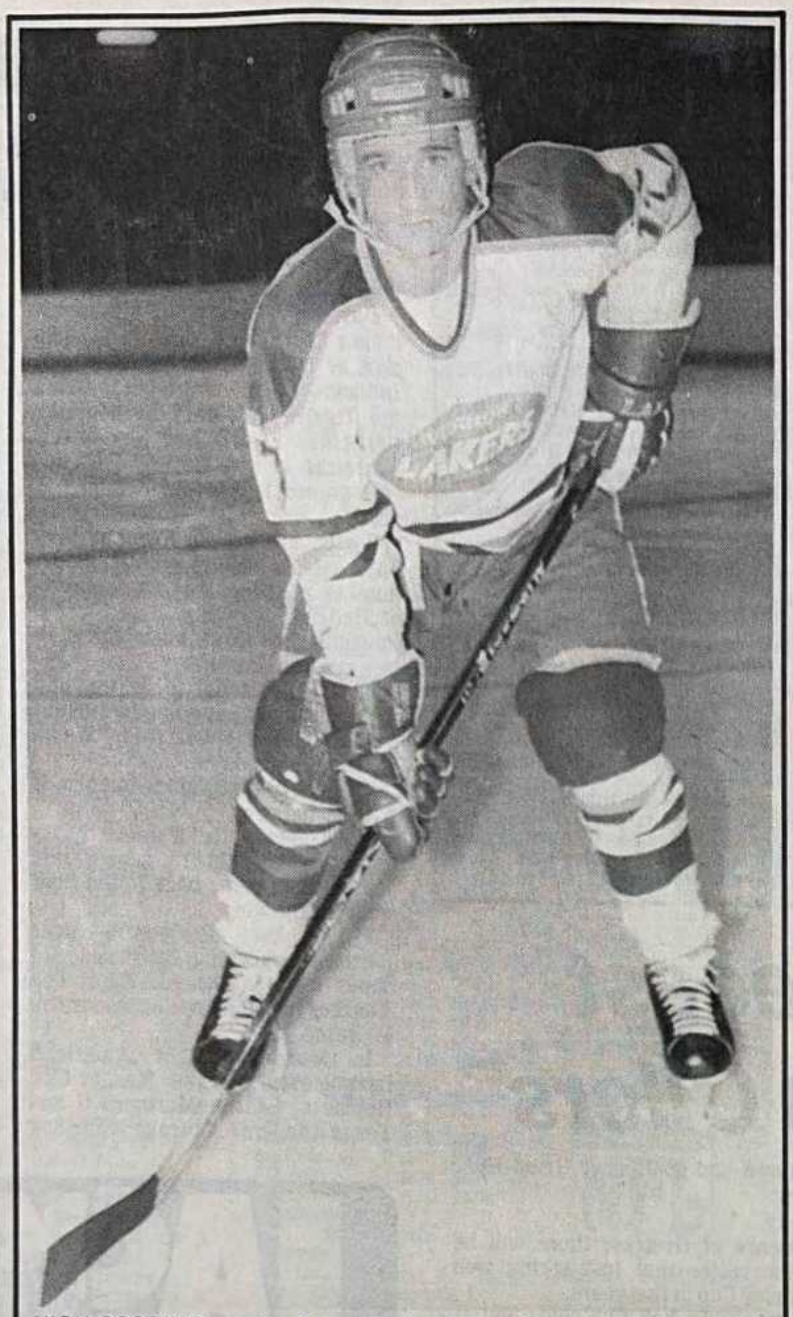


HIGH-SCORING centre Tony Szabo is a sniper of the first order this season for the Vernon Lakers. The 20 year old student at Okanagan College leads the team in scoring with seven points, five of them goals, in his first two games of the B.C. Junior Hockey League season. Szabo will be in action tonight, wearing number 17, as the Lakers host the Penticton Knights for the first time this season. Game time is 8 p.m. (Daily News Photo)

American centre early season hero

By AL PATERSON
Daily News Sports

Sight unseen. That's how the Vernon Lakers got Tony Szabo.

If early indications prove accurate, Szabo's will prove to be a major acquisition. In his first two B.C. Junior Hockey League regular-season games, the 20 year old from Flint, Michigan has five goals and two assists for seven points.

Thus far Szabo's introduction to the BCJHL has proven to be an eye opener.

"This league is quite a bit rougher than the United States Hockey League where I played with the Rochester, Michigan Mustangs last year," said Szabo. "The hockey is about equivalent but I find the Canadians are dirtier. There are a lot more fights in Canada than in the States. The stickwork is about the same. The rough stuff doesn't bother me, though. I will go (fight) if a guy two hands me over the head or something like that but I prefer to get my satisfaction if a guy rails me by putting the puck in his net."

Szabo led the USHL in scoring last season with 86 points in 50 games. He had four scholarship offers but had trouble passing his SAT. When Ferris State found that out they withdrew their offer. So Szabo immediately phoned Walt Kyle at Northern Michigan and he got on the blower to Laker owner Mel Lis. That's how Szabo became Vernon Laker property.

"I love it here, especially the mountains which you guys call hills," said Szabo. "I've never been to B.C. before and it is beautiful. Quite a change from Michigan, it's so flat there."

The 5'9", 165-pound Szabo can play either the wing or at centre. "I played wing all my life until the last couple of years when they made me a centreman," he said. "Right now I have Cam Sylven on right wing but my regular left-winger hasn't been settled yet."

Szabo says he sees great potential in this year's Lakers. "There's a lot of character on this team," he noted. "Take that game the other night against Salmon Arm. They got three quick goals on us and a lot of teams would have folded. But we kept battling back and made a game of it. We were very nervous before that game but we'll come around. We'll be ready for Penticton tonight. I hear they plan on coming into Vernon and running us out of our own rink. We'll show them."

That strength of character is what Szabo feels will stand the Lakers in good stead come playoff time.

"I think that character will carry us a long ways," he said. "Through the playoffs and possibly even the Centennial Cup this year."

The best part of Szabo's game, according to him, is passing the puck, setting up plays, and scoring goals. He admits he needs work at driving to the net.

"When I came here I set as my goals having a good year, taking it one game at a time, one shift at a time, helping the Lakers repeat as Mowat Cup winners (B.C. champions) and the long-term goal is the Centennial Cup."

His adjustment to Vernon has been made easier by having "a great family to live with," Rick and Bonnie Carlson.

Sabo is currently attending classes at Okanagan College and says his hobbies inlcude playing a little tennis, a little bit of basketball and computer games.

"I'm really enjoying Vernon," he says. "The team is a good one and I can see good things in our future if we come together as a team and work hard for each other."

No gold!

IOC STRIPS MEDAL FROM JOHNSON

SEOUL (CP) — The race of the century has become the sham of the century.

Ben Johnson was on his way home after being stripped of his gold medal upon testing positive for anabolic steroids — in this case Stanozolol, which builds muscle tissue and speeds healing.

Johnson and his coach, Charlie Francis, deny the use of steroids and Larry Heidebrecht, Johnson's manager, says the banned substance might have been in a water bottle given to Johnson by an unknown party before the 100-metres final.

"We do not know what happened and how it happened but, apparently, somebody has sabotaged Ben and we will find out who it was and how it was done," Heidebrecht said.

The International Olympic Committee was not buying the alibi. It excluded all possibilities of a drug being administered by a third party.

"The steroid profile in Johnson's sample was not consistent with such a claim," said IOC member Prince Alexandre de Merode.

"The medical commission of the International Olympic Committee also told us there was evidence of steroid use for an extended period of time," said Roger Jackson, president of the Canadian Olympic Association.

"This is a blow for the Olympic Games and the Olympic movement," IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch said after the committee announced Johnson was being disqualified from the Games and that Carl Lewis of the United States declared the official winner of the Saturday race.

Lewis, in a statement today, said: "I feel sorry for Ben and for the Canadian people. Ben is a great competitor and I hope he is able to straighten out his life and return to competition."

IN AGONY

Canada's pride has turned to agony.

"We are acutely aware of how devastating this news will be to millions of people," said Canadian chef de mission Carol Anne Letheren.

When Johnson was informed of the results of the doping test he was "completely in shock," she said. "He was not comprehending the information we were giving him."

While the IOC was announcing the disqualification, Johnson was heading to the airport and a flight to New York, unable or unwilling to explain himself, after handing the gold medal to Richard Pound of Montreal, an IOC vice-president. The International Amateur Athletics Federation, the world governing body of track and field, announced later that the medal would be given to Lewis.

Jackson apologized for the embarrassment Canada had caused the Games. He said he was perplexed after speaking with Johnson and Francis and listening to their suggestions that third-party sabotage brought them down.

Vernon Daily News | **sports**

Editor — JIM JUDD

Lakers entertain the Knights tonight

The coaches expect a far different game when the Vernon Lakers and Penticton Knights square off tonight at Vernon Civic Arena.

Game time is 8 p.m.

"I expect they'll try and slow us down by playing a physical game," said Lakers Head Coach Ernie Gare. "I don't think they're as quick as we are so I expect it will be a hard-hitting, physical game. Our plan will be to try and establish ourselves early, get the lead and go from there."

Penticton Head Coach Chuck Tapp says it will probably be a skating contest.

"No, I don't think it will be a physical game at all," said Tapp in an interview from Penticton. "I expect a skating game — not that physical at all."

Tapp wouldn't say which goaltender was going to start but Gare had no hesitation.

"We're going with Brian Langlot," said Gare. "He played well in Merritt the other night (a 5-1 Laker win) and he deserves to start."

Tapp said Laker cut Scott Austin may play with Todd Jones, one of only six Penticton returnees, injured. "I haven't decided if it will be Austin or Wade Parker."

The other returnees in Penticton are Kevin Caputo and Darryl Mitchell, both defencemen, and forwards Shane Green, Curt Brennan, and Lance West. When asked if the Penticton lineup was set, Tapp said it wasn't.

"No, we're looking for a few holes to fill," he said. "It's early in the year and I expect there'll be a few moves made around the league yet."

Penticton dropped its first two regular season games, against Merritt and Salmon Arm. Tonight's 8 p.m. start will be the third game of the season for both teams. The Lakers lost to Salmon Arm in overtime before bouncing back to drub Merritt.

Coach Gare says there have been a few pleasant surprises thus far this season.

"Defensively, Adrian Markin and Shawn Hendry have played well for us, they're carrying much of the load, and Wes Elliot played well his first game back from Portland. And Curtis Head coming right from rookie camp, he's been a pleasant surprise. Ryan Loxam, he's another pleasant surprise for us. What I like about him is his work ethic. He's a 100 per cent guy in practice and in games he's willing to listen and learn. He's a strong kid and he's not afraid to use his size to his advantage," said Gare.

Vernon Pony Club holds final meet

It's all over for another season.

The Vernon and District Pony Club recently held its final com-

Ryan Ingersoll, first; Erin Cuthbert, second; Dallas Fitchett, third.

D. Advanced Cross Country