

The following is from Craig at Cougars Hockey Project. <https://www.cougarshockeyproject.ca>

I never planned on writing a blog about the Esquimalt Buccaneers. But I became intrigued as I looked through old papers and archives. Unique characters, wild games and crazy events surrounded a BCJHL team that never completed one season. So, enjoy this deep dive into the history of the 1982/83 Esquimalt Buccaneers.

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**BUCCANEERS**

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RESERVE YOUR SEASON TICKET AT  
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The Esquimalt Buccaneers made their debut in September 1982. Over the next six months, they attracted small crowds, gave their owner a heart attack and left town before the season was over. The story of the Buccaneers proves the grass is not necessarily greener on the other side of the fence. Or, in this case, the other side of the Malahat.

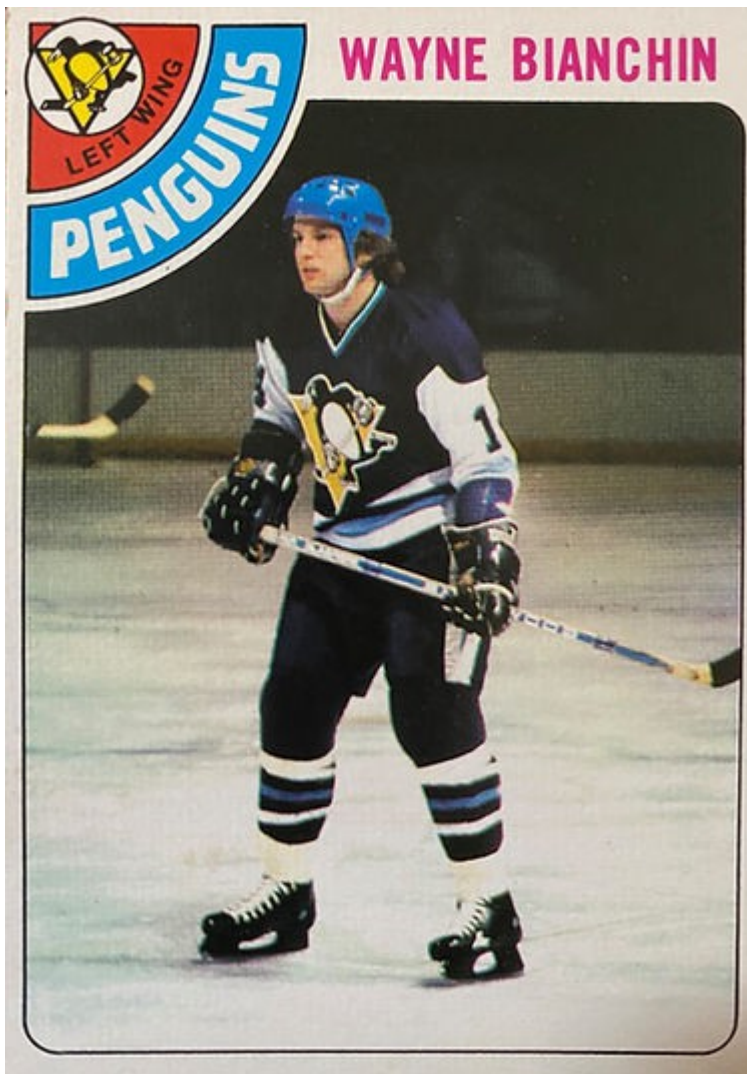
In April 1982, Chicago businessman Bill Zeitlin, part-owner of the Chicago White Sox, and Real Turcotte purchased the Billings Bighorns of the Western Hockey League (WHL). This set off a chain of events leading to the British Columbia Junior Hockey League (BCJHL/BCHL) coming to Esquimalt. Shortly after acquiring the Bighorns, the new owners transferred the franchise to Nanaimo, British Columbia. This forced the BCJHL's Nanaimo Clippers, who played out of [Frank Crane Arena](#) since it opened in 1975, to find a new home.

The original plan had the Clippers moving to Nanaimo's [Civic Arena](#). In the end, owners [Reg Midgley](#) and Gordon Rendle decided to relocate the franchise 100 kilometres south to Esquimalt. This upset many fans in Nanaimo as the Clippers were very popular and one of the most successful teams in the BCJHL. Ownership cited the failing economy of the Hub City and felt Nanaimo lacked the population to support two junior clubs. With the move to Greater Victoria, they now occupied the same market as the Victoria Cougars of the WHL. The new team played out the 1,700 seat [Esquimalt Sports Centre](#), located five kilometres from the Cougars home at [Victoria Memorial Arena](#).



At a July 1982 press conference, Midgley announced the team would be known as the Esquimalt Buccaneers. It marked the return of the BCJHL to Greater Victoria after an eleven-year absence. The Victoria Cougars entered the BCJHL in 1967, winning the league championship in 1969. In 1971, the Cougars left the BCJHL and joined the WCHL/WHL.

At the same press conference, [Wayne Bianchin](#) was introduced as the new head coach. He replaced Larry McNabb, who coached the Clippers for seven years, winning three consecutive championships from 1976-78.



Bianchin is from Nanaimo and played in the WCHL for Victoria, Calgary and Flin Flon. In 1973, the Pittsburgh Penguins selected Bianchin in the second round of the NHL entry draft. After a solid rookie season with Pittsburgh, he broke his neck while surfing in Hawaii. Bianchin went through a long rehab but returned to the Penguins lineup one year later. He appeared in 363 career NHL games and retired in 1982 after two seasons with the Italian National Team.

*“I’ve had quite a bit of European experience and hope to blend a little bit of European and Canadian styles this year to produce a blend of hockey that is entertaining to watch” - Wayne Bianchin (1)*

In addition to Bianchin, the Buccaneers put together a strong hockey operations team. Victoria Cougars scout Jim Dawes assumed the same role with the Buccaneers. He was a key figure responsible for assembling the powerful Victoria Cougars teams in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Ron Opheim, who coached with McNabb, continued as an assistant to Bianchin. Co-owner Gordon Rendle took over as director of player personnel and Shaen McRae, another former Cougar, named team trainer.

Going into training camp, there were only five holdovers from the previous year's Clippers team: defensemen [Rob Kivell](#), [Garry Matson](#) and forwards [Len Evans](#), [Dwaine Jurreit](#) and [Darrell Pederson](#). Bianchin had high praise for Rob Kivell, calling him the most impressive player in camp. The Lethbridge Broncos held his WHL rights and tried to persuade Kivell to join their team. The imposing six-foot-two, 205-pound blueliner remained with the Bucs because he was trying to earn a college scholarship. He already received letters of inquiry from seven U.S. universities. The Victoria Cougars also showed strong interest in Kivell and pursued him throughout the season.

*“Kivell is the top player outside of the Western Hockey League and potentially a very good draft pick. He would have really helped us, and we tried hard to get him.” Dave Andrews - Victoria Cougars Head Coach (2)*

Esquimalt signed an affiliation agreement with the Victoria Cougars. The WHL club provided the Bucs with a few prospects to be called up in case of injuries. One of those players was forward Dale Brisco. He enjoyed a strong training camp with the Bucs and considered one of the Cougars' top prospects. The previous season, Brisco won the Air Canada Cup (held at Victoria Memorial Arena) with the Burnaby Winter Club Travellers. The Burnaby Winter Club is the only midget team from British Columbia to win a national title.

OPENING DAY

The Buccaneers made their debut at the Esquimalt Sports Centre on September 26th against the Burnaby Bluehawks. The few hundred in attendance witnessed a wild game with Burnaby dropping the Bucs 9-8 in double overtime. Bluehawks forward [Paul Bifano](#) was the star of the game with three goals. At the end of the season, the Toronto Maple Leafs drafted Bifano and he joined the Victoria Cougars for the 1983/84 campaign.

Although Burnaby won, the game ended in controversy. The Times-Colonist describes the events that took place:

The final score was 9-8 for Burnaby after double overtime, but there is some doubt as to the legality of the result. With the score tied 7 after regulation time, referee Jim Bayliss ordered a straight overtime period. Midgley protested that it should be sudden death but was overruled by the official. Esquimalt scored first in extra time, then Burnaby tied it up to force another overtime period. This one, the official ruled, would be sudden-death. Burnaby scored at 6:34 and the game was over. (3)

Afterwards, Reg Midgley filed an appeal with the league. A month later, President Fred Page ruled the official was in error and overturned the result. Page ordered the overtime period to be replayed on January 9th, just before their scheduled game that day.

## OCTOBER to DECEMBER

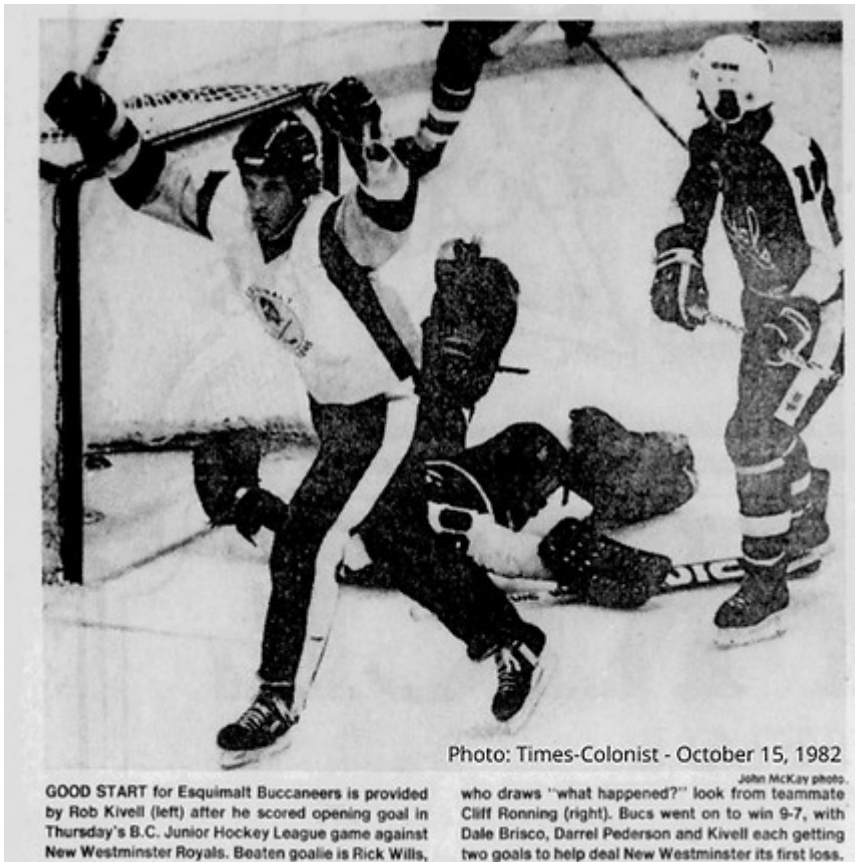
The season got off to a rocky start with three straight losses. The Bucs picked up their first victory with a 5-4 triumph over the Cowichan Valley Capitals in Duncan. The Buccaneers took a 5-2 lead with three goals in the third period - two in the span of six seconds by Len Evans and Darrell Pederson. Rob Kivell followed up with the winner before Cowichan closed out the

game with two late tallies.

The Buccaneers' first victory at home came October 3rd in an 8-2 triumph over Merritt. [Randy Taylor](#) and [Dale Brisco](#) paced Esquimalt with two goals each. Taylor had the most experience on the team with 121 WHL games over the past three years with Seattle and Winnipeg.

Darrel Pederson only managed seven goals in forty-two games the previous season but began the year on a hot streak with five goals in five games. Pederson almost quit hockey during the summer as he agreed to take a full-time job in Prince George. When that position fell through, he returned to the BCJHL for another season. He is the cousin of ex-Victoria Cougars captain [Barry Pederson](#).

Len Evans enjoyed a break-out season in 1982-83, establishing himself as one of the top forwards in the BCJHL. Two years prior, the Powell River native was selected as one of the top four midget players in BC and entered the Olympic development program. After fourteen games, Evans was second in BCJHL scoring with 33 points.



On October 14th, The Buccaneers faced [Cliff Ronning](#) and the undefeated New Westminster Royals. In one of the most exciting games of the year, the Bucs fired home three goals in the last three minutes to shock the Royals 9-7. Brisco, Pederson and Kivell led the Esquimalt attack with two goals each.

Even though the Buccaneers had an exciting team, there was a glaring problem with the lack of fans at the Esquimalt Sports Centre. The win over the Royals only drew about 300.

*"The crowds here have been disappointing. The public just doesn't know the calibre of the product. It just hasn't sunk into the public that this is junior "A". – Reg Midgley (4)*

Esquimalt needed 800 fans per game to break even. (most BCJHL teams averaged around 500-800) To emphasize how poor the turnouts have been, Midgley pointed out the 300 who



watched the win over New Westminster was the largest crowd of the season.

The next weekend, the Bucs enjoyed a successful road trip to the interior with back-to-back wins. The trip began in Revelstoke with Len Evans scoring five times in a 9-6 victory. [Carey Corey](#) followed with a hat-trick the next day as Esquimalt thumped Merritt 10-6.

ESQUIMALT  
BUCCANEERS  
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BUCCANEERS  
*'Welcome Back, Jack!'*  
ESQUIMALT  
BUCCANEERS vs JACK SHUPE'S  
LANGLEY EAGLES  
**SUNDAY 2 P.M.**  
ESQUIMALT SPORTS CENTRE  
The B.C. Junior Hockey League  
welcomes Jack Shupe!  
\*YOU CAN JOIN JACK FOLLOWING THE  
GAME FOR A "WELCOME BACK JACK"  
PARTY. PLUS SPECIAL PRIZES FOR THE  
BEST  
"HALLOWEEN COSTUMES"  
ALL THIS AND "JR. A" HOCKEY ONLY  
Gen. Adm. \$3.50 Child/O.A.P. \$2.00

On Halloween, Esquimalt hosted the Langley Eagles. The game was promoted as "Welcome

Back, Jack!" with former Victoria Cougars coach/GM Jack Shupe now guiding the Eagles. Shupe coached the Cougars the previous five seasons and led them to the 1980/81 WHL Championship. In one of the worst moves in Cougars' history, Shupe was fired in the middle of their 1982 playoff series against Seattle. The Eagles iced a young inexperienced squad that featured Shupe's son, Jerry Shupe, on defence.

The return of Jack Shupe boosted attendance, with the Buccaneers drawing 784 fans - their largest crowd of the season. Unfortunately for Shupe, his new club suffered an 11-6 beatdown. Rob Kivell led the scoring parade with two goals and three assists. With the win, Esquimalt moved into a second-place tie in the Coastal Division with a record of 10-5.

In spite of the small crowds, the high-scoring Buccaneers went on a tear, reeling off eight straight home victories between October and November. The winning streak ended on Nov 21st when the last place Richmond Sockeyes surprised the Bucs 6-3. Randy Taylor, [Alton Davis](#) and Dale Brisco countered for Esquimalt as their record fell to 15 wins and 9 losses.

The Bucs bounced back a few days later in Duncan with [Randy Horswell](#) scoring in sudden death overtime to give Esquimalt a 5-4 win over Cowichan Valley.

Shupe's Langley Eagles returned to Esquimalt in November with similar results to their first meeting. The line of Dale Brisco, Randy Taylor and Darrell Pederson dominated the game as they combined for 13 points. Brisco and Taylor each scored three times while Pederson notched five assists on their way to an 8-6 victory in front of 400 fans.

In early December, Wayne Bianchin shot down rumours that he was going to leave the team to coach the Nanaimo Islanders. Nanaimo got off to a good start, but the first-year WHL franchise was going through major problems on and off the ice. Former Cowichan Valley Capitals coach Doug Harding was eventually hired by the Islanders.

On December 13th, New Westminster defeated Esquimalt 6-2 in a bizarre contest that saw seven players kicked out of the game for standing in the wrong place. Late in the third period, a minor scuffle ensued with the referee ordering players back to their benches. When seven Esquimalt players only moved to the blue line near their bench, the referee issued them all game misconducts. Bianchin was kicked out minutes later when he tried to send his backup goalkeeper, [Karl Landry](#), to serve the bench minor. After the game, the Times-Colonist described Midgley as “steaming mad”. A frustrated Midgley said the referee “did an incompetent job” and asked BCJHL President Fred Page for an official review of the game.

(5)

Just before Christmas, the Buccaneers announced two upcoming home games at the end of the month have been shifted to Nanaimo. The Buccaneers said the change had nothing to do with the poor attendance in Esquimalt. The reason for the first change is to allow players time off for Christmas and the second game was moved to avoid a conflict with the Cougars who were playing that night.

After Christmas, the Victoria Cougars called up forwards Dale Brisco, [Chris Crossman](#), and defenseman [Rick Hunt](#). The Cougars needed reinforcements with Mark Morrison and Paul Cyr at the World Juniors and Stu Kulak with the Vancouver Canucks. Brisco and Hunt returned to the Bucs in early January with Brisco coming back in mid-January.

The small crowds continued at the Esquimalt Sports Centre and Reg Midgley openly discussed the team’s financial problems.

*“Yeh, we’re taking a bath. We were ready to just throw up our arms and look for alternative sites, but some hockey enthusiasts and close friends had a meeting and decided we’d work hard to promote the team. I think we’ll be back next year. We’re about \$100,000 in the hole. People just don’t know about the calibre of our hockey. A lot of these kids have shunned Tier One junior because they want to go on to the NCAA in the US. The top four BCJHL teams could beat half the teams in the Western League” (6)*

Next - [The History of the Esquimalt Buccaneers - Part 2](#): The Resurrection of the Clippers - Kivell joins the Cougars, Brett Hull comes to town and the return to Nanaimo

Notes:

(1) "Bianchin Named Coach" Max Low, July 14, 1982 (Page 12 of 44). Times Colonist (1980-2010) 1982 Jul 14(181):12.

(2) "Bucs' top pro prospect has sights on College" Cleve Dheensaw, November 26, 1982 (Page 18 of 70) Publication info: Times Colonist (1980-2010); Victoria, British Columbia [Victoria, British Columbia]26 Nov 1982: 18.

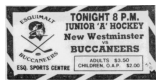
(3) "Bucs win; appeal loss to Burnaby" September 29, 1982 (Page 17 of 62) Times Colonist (1980-2010); Victoria, British Columbia [Victoria, British Columbia]29 Sep 1982: 17.

(4) "Tier two calibre great but attendance dismal" Cleve Dheensaw October 15, 1982 (Page 10 of 57). Times Colonist (1980-2010) 1982 Oct 15(261):10.

(5) "Midgley Steaming" December 14, 1982 (Page 18 of 57). Times Colonist (1980-2010) 1982 Dec 14(3):18.

(6) Cleve Dheensaw, December 8, 1982 (Page 13 of 68) Publication info: Times Colonist (1980-2010); Victoria, British Columbia [Victoria, British Columbia]08 Dec 1982: 13.

# The History of the Esquimalt Buccaneers – Part Two: The Clippers Return



In [Part One](#), we outlined the sequence of events in 1982 leading to the Nanaimo Clippers moving to Esquimalt. Going into the season, the Buccaneers assembled a strong team led by former NHL player Wayne Bianchin as head coach. The craziness began in their first game when the final score was overturned by the BCJHL president. Throughout the first half of the season, the high-scoring Bucs battled for third place in the Coastal Division. Although they enjoyed a winning record, the Bucs played in front of small crowds at the Esquimalt Sports Centre. The team faced serious financial problems at the start of 1983. Owner Reg Midgley sounded the alarm before Christmas announcing the Buccaneers had already accumulated \$100,000 in debt.

In Part Two we chronicle the Buccaneer's demise, the rebirth of the Nanaimo Clippers and the legacy of the BCJHL in Esquimalt.

## **JANUARY 1983**

The Buccaneers began the new year in third place with a 20-15 record, behind New Westminster and the league-leading Abbotsford Flyers. On January 7th, Esquimalt stayed two points ahead of fourth-place Burnaby with a 9-6 victory over Cowichan. Randy Taylor and Len Evans each notched a pair for the Bucs. It was

the first game for **Ken Clement** who joined the club after brief stops earlier in the season with the Victoria Cougars and Nanaimo Islanders. Clement is the only player to suit up for the Cougars, Islanders and Buccaneers.

On January 9th, two games took place at the Esquimalt Sports Centre with Burnaby picking up three points out of a possible four. The Blue Hawks defeated Esquimalt 8-5 in their regularly scheduled game and played through a scoreless overtime period of a game that originally took place on opening day in September.

The replay of the overtime resulted from a protest filed by Esquimalt over a game between the two clubs on September 26th. That contest wound up as a 7-7 tie at the end of regulation. When the Bucs scored in overtime, they thought they had won the game. To their amazement, the referee ruled the overtime is a 10-minute period and the game continued. The Blue Hawks came back with two more goals for the victory. BCJHL rules, however, state that overtime is to be sudden death. Commissioner Fred Page upheld Esquimalt's protest and ruled the overtime be replayed on January 9th. After the scoreless overtime, the two teams played their regularly scheduled game.



The Bucs suffered a major loss on January 10th when their best defenseman, Rob Kivell, left the team to join the Victoria Cougars. He declined previous offers to join the WHL, since playing for a major junior league team would jeopardize any hope of a U.S. college scholarship. Victoria pursued Kivell since the beginning of the season and recently acquired his WHL rights from Lethbridge. Kivell decided

to leave Esquimalt when Cougars co-owner Jim Hartsborne offered an assured education package at the University of Victoria. (1)

The circumstances surrounding Kivell's departure did not sit well with owner Reg Midgley who accused the Cougars of tampering on January 9th, just before Kivell left the Buccaneers.

*"The Cougars have been talking to Kivell without our permission. They've had him down at their office without us knowing. We're really mad and annoyed with them after we've cooperated with them all year. As far I'm concerned, they're not doing him (Kivell) any favors. They're making him all these rainbow promises." (2)*

The first place Abbotsford Flyers came to town on January 24th and defeated Esquimalt 6-2. The Bucs potent offence was stymied by outstanding goaltending from Abbotsford's **Scott Bradley**. That season, Bradley also played one game for the Victoria Cougars. He went on to a long career with the Boston Bruins as their Director of Player Personnel/Assistant General Manager. The win boosted the Flyers' record to 37 wins, 5 losses and 1 tie. With the loss, Esquimalt fell four points behind third-place Burnaby.



**Brett Hull** made his only Victoria appearance on January 16 when his Penticton Knights defeated Esquimalt 8-5. Hull put on a show with two goals and three assists. After the game, Midgley commented on Hull's performance by saying "It's good to see they're still producing real hockey players" (3). Hull would go on to score 104 points for Penticton but was not selected in the 1983 NHL draft. The

next season he set a BCJHL scoring record with 188 points and was drafted by the Calgary Flames.

After Rob Kivell's departure, Garry Matson stepped up as a leader on defence. He averaged over a point a game and provided muscle on the back end. In 1980-81, Matson attended the Victoria Cougars training camp and previously played for the Kerry Park Islanders of the South Vancouver Island Hockey League.

In January, Garry Matson, Darrell Pederson, and Len Evans were named to the BCJHL Coastal Division All-Star team. The annual All-Star game took place in Kelowna with the Coastal Division winning 5-3 over the Interior All-Stars



The heavily weighted schedule saw the Bucs facing the Cowichan Capitals more than any other team. The Island rivalry was lopsided in favour of Esquimalt. The Bucs downed the Capitals 6-2 on January 26th for their 11th victory in a row over Cowichan. **Brian Silversen** scored a pair, with **Al Loring** turning aside 42 shots.

**Darryl Reaugh** made 31 saves in net for the Capitals. The next season, Reaugh joined the Kamloops Blazers and was selected by the Edmonton Oilers in the second round of the NHL entry draft.

At the end of January, Reg Midgley was hospitalized after suffering a heart attack. He made a full recovery, but in the meantime, Stu Lawrie stepped in and took over the day-to-day operations.



## **THE FINAL GAME IN ESQUIMALT**

On January 30th, Gerry Matson and Dale Brisco each had three goals and three assists as the Bucs trounced the Shushwap Totems 8-3. Karl Landry turned in an outstanding performance between the pipes with 34 saves. It turned out to be the Buccaneers' last game in Esquimalt, with only about 200 fans attending. Lawrie admitted afterwards that playing opposite of the NFL Super Bowl was “poor timing”

## **RETURNING TO NANAIMO**

On February 1, 1983, the Bucs announced a decision that seemed inevitable – they’re returning to Nanaimo. The only surprising part is the move was effective immediately. After struggling with poor crowds all year, they returned to Nanaimo with five games left in the season. The club abandoned the Buccaneers' name and immediately reverted back to the Nanaimo Clippers.

Esquimalt was scheduled to play New Westminster the next night at the Sports Centre, but that game shifted to [\*\*Nanaimo’s Civic Arena\*\*](#). Lawrie said the next few games have been moved to Nanaimo, and the return becomes permanent “when we can a release of our contract” with the Esquimalt Sports Centre. The team remained headquartered in Esquimalt for the rest of the season. They continued to practice in Esquimalt and took the bus to Nanaimo for home games. (4)

The Buccaneers' final record in Esquimalt – 26 wins, 20 losses and one tie in forty-seven games.



## 1982/83 BCJHL PLAYOFFS

The resurrected Nanaimo Clippers went 4-5 in their last nine games to finish third in the Coastal Division (30-25-1), one point ahead of Burnaby. In the opening round of the playoffs, Nanaimo faced the second-place New Westminster Royals. In the first game, the Clippers jumped out to the early advantage with a 5-3 victory over New Westminster at Queens Park Arena. The Bruins came back the next night and tied the series with a 5-4 win. The Royals held a 5-1 lead after two periods, but the Clippers stormed back with markers by Dale Brisco and a pair by [Al Johnston](#) to make it close.

The series moved to Nanaimo for games three and four with each team picking up a win. The two clubs returned to the mainland for pivotal game five. New Westminster came out strong as they overpowered Nanaimo for an 11-6 victory to take a commanding three games to two lead. Former Fuller Lake Flyer [Len Meyers](#) was the star of the game with five goals for New Westminster.

In game six, the Royals came from behind to defeat Nanaimo 6-5 in overtime. The Clippers jumped out to a 3-0 lead after the first period, with the teams tied 5-5 after the second and a scoreless third. Len Meyers and Cliff Ronning each scored twice for the Royals. Darrel Pederson, with two, Ken Clement, Randy Taylor and Gary Matson counted Nanaimo's goals. The loss eliminated the Clippers from the playoffs with New Westminster taking the best-of-seven series 4-2.

New Westminster advanced to the Coastal Division final, where they lost to the Abbotsford Flyers in six games. The first-place Flyers went on to capture the BCJHL championship.

## **AFTERMATH**

The next season, the Clippers did not have to worry about competition. The Nanaimo Islanders were sold and left town after only one year in the Hub City. The franchise transferred to the Lower Mainland and became the second incarnation of the New Westminster Bruins. Al Patterson, who coached the New Westminster Royals, took over as GM/coach for the Bruins. After two years in New Westminster, Patterson became head coach of the Victoria Cougars in 1985. He remained with the team as their GM until 1989.

The Nanaimo Clippers went back to [\*\*Frank Crane Arena\*\*](#) in 1984/85 but returned to their original home at the Nanaimo Civic Arena in 1985/86. They remained there for eight years before moving permanently to Frank Crane for the 1993/94 campaign. Since returning to Nanaimo in 1983, the Clippers have consistently been one of the top BCHL franchises in terms of attendance and victories. They captured the BCHL championship (Fred Page Cup) in 2004 and 2007.



After leaving the Buccaneers, **Rob Kivell** spent the next two and a half seasons with the Victoria Cougars. The defenseman emerged as a team leader putting up huge numbers with 162 points in 144 games. In 1983, the Calgary Flames selected Kivell in the 7th round of the NHL entry draft. Rob Kivell is the only member of the Esquimalt Buccaneers drafted by an NHL team.

As a sixteen-year-old rookie defenseman, **Rod Summers** picked up 8 points in 41 games for the Buccaneers-Clippers. In 1985/86, Summers joined the Penticton Knights for his final year in the BCJHL. The Knights became the first BCJHL team to win the Centennial Cup (Junior A National Championship) and later inducted into the **BC Hockey Hall of Fame**. Summers went on to four years at the University of Denver, where he is second in school history in all-time games played.

Two Buccaneers coached in the BCHL. **Kent Lewis** played three games for the Buccaneers and 91 games for the Victoria Cougars between 1984 and 1987. After his playing career, he began a long tenure as the GM/Coach of the Powell River Kings.

Forward **Bill Hardy** scored 24 points in 50 games for Buccaneers/Clippers in 1982/83 and spent the next three seasons with the Clippers. He ended his BCJHL career helping the Richmond Sockeyes capture the Centennial Cup in 1987. He later went on to coach the Nanaimo Clippers in the mid-1990s. His son, Owen Hardy, played with the Clippers and spent five years in the WHL with the Vancouver Giants and Moose Jaw Warriors.

**Wayne Bianchin** coached the Clippers in 1983/84 finishing with a 30-19-1 record. After that season, he moved into the financial sector but continued coaching youth hockey in Nanaimo. In 2015, Bianchin was inducted into the **Nanaimo Sports**

**Hall of Fame.** His son, Jordan Bianchin, played for the Clippers in 1998/99.



**Alton Davis** was a two-sport athlete in hockey and lacrosse. Before joining the Buccaneers, he spent the summer playing lacrosse for the Victoria-Esquimalt Legion (now the Victoria Junior Shamrocks). Davis had a strong season and won the team's Rookie of the Year award. The Legion captured the 1982 Western Canada Junior "A" Championship and played for the Minto Cup (the Canadian championship) at the Esquimalt Sports Centre. After the Minto Cup, he laced up his skates and joined the Buccaneers. As a forward, Davis scored 35 points in 49 games. He went on to a long career with the Victoria Shamrocks spanning three decades, winning multiple Mann Cup Championships.

**Len Evans** was the top scorer for the 1982/83 Buccaneers-Clippers with 87 points. The next year he attended the Victoria Cougars training camp and returned to the Clippers for his third season. He only appeared in 38 games in 1983/84 but finished second in team scoring with 87 points. Tragically, Evans died in May 1984 when his car went out of control on the Island Highway and struck a power pole. Teammates Dale Brisco and Stacey Nickel were in the car but escaped serious injury. The Nanaimo Clippers retired Evans jersey number twelve, and the Powell River Minor Hockey Association set up a scholarship in his name.

## **CONCLUSION**

Reg Midgley put together an exciting high scoring Buccaneers team and had a

strong passion for junior hockey.

*I do a lot of things in sports (Bucs, Shamrock lacrosse general manager and Western Speedway manager) but my strongest feelings are for these (junior hockey) kids because you get a chance to watch them develop and grow on and off the ice. You get so involved with them. Every junior operator does. It's more of a family atmosphere than any of my other sports involvements. (5)*

Unfortunately for Midgley, fans were only interested in the Cougars. Ownership misread the Victoria market. They could not find a way to generate any excitement for Junior A hockey. The Buccaneers also scheduled most of their games on Sunday afternoons, which has never been a big draw for hockey in Victoria. By December 1982, it seemed like ownership had given up on Esquimalt. The Buccaneers placed regularly newspaper advertisements when the season began, but everything stopped after a few months.

The two Buccaneer games that shifted from Esquimalt to Nanaimo in December served as a test before making the permanent move. Those two Nanaimo games received higher attendance than any previous home game in Esquimalt.

In 1984, Midgley and Gordon Rendle sold the Nanaimo Clippers for an estimated price of \$45,000. The new owner, Doug Harding, previously coached the Nanaimo Islanders for half a season in 1982/83.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the BCJHL made numerous attempts to establish a team in Greater Victoria. The Buccaneers were followed by the Sidney Capitals (1984-1986), Juan de Fuca Whalers (1986-1988) and the Victoria Warriors (1990-1993). Unlike the Buccaneers, the Capitals, Whalers and Warriors never had a winning season.

The hockey landscape changed in 1994 when the Victoria Cougars moved to Prince George. The Victoria Salsa were founded shortly after the Cougars left and have been a part of the Greater Victoria hockey scene ever since.

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### **NOTES**

(1) "Cougars go after Kivell" January 9, 1983 (Page 9 of 52) Publication info: Times Colonist (1980-2010); Victoria, British Columbia [Victoria, British Columbia]09 Jan 1983: 9.

(2) "Now and 'future' look good for Cougars" Ernie Fedoruk, January 11, 1983 (Page 11 of 36). Times Colonist (1980-2010) 1983 Jan 11(24):11.

(3) "Young Hull performs well to help defeat Buccaneers" (1) January 17, 1983 (Page 13 of 42). Times Colonist (1980-2010) 1983 Jan 17(29):13.

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