Rockets Outlast Newly-Led Blades

Blues Get Opening Goals, But Hot Pace Fizzles Out

VERNON 8, PENTICTON 2
KAMLOOPS 4, VERNON 3

At first examination last week it was hard to tell whether a change of coaches spelled a change in fortune and fettle for the Vernon Blades.

In two games played Friday and Saturday under the guidance of Hap Schaefer, they appeared to be the same junior hockey club—no better or no worse.

Still exhibiting deadly weaknesses, the Blades gave frustrating evidence of an as yet unfulfilled and powerful potential — a potential that could make them the match of any club in the Okanagan Junior Hockey League if totally unleashed.

Only time, the forthcoming playoffs, and the earnest determination of new coach Schaefer will answer conclusively whether the Blades can make Class 'A' this year.

Friday night in Penticton they passed their first test—an easy one—with flying colors. They beat their only weak rival, the Junior Vees, 8-2 for their eighth win this season.

Same Story

But then Saturday here in Vernon against the Kamloops Rockets it was the same time-worn tale, the one with the spirited beginning and the lacklustre ending.

This time it read a disappointing 4-3 in favor of the visiting Rockets, who badly needed the decision to keep within reach of the Kelowna Buckaroos now leading the league.

As they have done on a number of occasions this season, the Blades jumped into a comfortable lead in the first period only to have their opponents catch and pass them in the later stages. They once had a 2-0 bulge, saw it reverse to 3-2 and end up 4-3.

Buck Sherk shared scoring honors with linemate Bob Stein to lead the Vernon attack while it lasted. They each got a goal and traded assists. Gary Roland, returned to the club last week, notched the other.

Sandyke Win It

Rookie winger for the Rockets, Dale Sandyke, tipped the scales of victory for Kamloops, utilizing his great speed and puckhandling ability to beat Gary Holland on two successive breakaways. Glen "Cowboy" Richards added a single as did Lloyd Wright, another rookie.

Though getting many golden opportunities to blitz Rocket netminder Roy Hart, the Blades were outshot 35 to 27 in the game. Their worst showing was in the second period when Kamloops fired 16 and collected three goals to their scoreless eight-shot barrage.

Penalties, though not figuring in Rocket scoring, did not help things either. Vernon was assessed four minors and a fighting major, Kamloops major and a minor.

If the Blades had played sixty minutes of the hockey they played for 20 minutes in the first period there is little doubt they could have routed Kamloops. But they burned hemselves out getting a 2-0 lead, then had no poop to hold it.

Scored Early

Stein opened scoring hastily and hopefully, breaking away with Sherk from a faceoff in the Vernon zone and dumping the puck past Hart with 13 seconds elapsed on the clock.

Another rush two minutes later saw Roland pick up a deft pass on the point from Gordie Kineshanko and find Hart's open side at close range.

There were more rushes by Vernon throughout the period but none successful. They outshot Kamloops 12 to 8.

Kamloops were fully alive and kicking when the second period opened and after 13 minutes of almost incessant bombardment, Richards tallied from the left side with help from Glen Madsen. Seconds later Wright got the equalizer on an unassisted play, the puck slipping past Holland's outstretched glove.

Then came Sandyke's first breakaway, a hard lesson in how not to position your defence while attacking in the enemy zone. With nobody back the fleet winger stole a rebounded slapshot off partner Ron Pilkey and shot in on Holland with number three.

Sherk Ties It

With Wright in the box for holding, the Blades managed to tie it, Sherk rifling in a Stein pass during a goalmouth scramble. Sandyke squirted loose shortly afterward to close the count at 4-3 decking Holland perfectly with plenty of room and time to spare.

Gord Nuyens got a hat trick to pace the locals in Penticton Friday and also assisted once. Second in scoring was Dale Sorochuk with two, and singles were racked up by Howie McNeil, Jim Stephen, and Gary Roland.

Penticton got the first and last counters of the game thanks to C. Cutler and Harvey Wish respectively. Fourteen penalties including four fighting majors were levied.

Vernon meets Penticton again this week, playing host tomorrow night at the Civic Arena. Game time is 8:00 p.m. With the regular schedule shortened to February 2 the Blades have four games left.



Monday, January 21

7 p.m.: Business Girls. 1. Lewers vs Skobalski; 2. Hall vs Hunter; 3. Grant vs Macdonald; 4. Sigalet vs Wilson; 5. Marsland vs Watson.

9 p.m.: 1. Foord vs McWilliams; 2. Kurbis vs Cail; 3. Dobie vs Scott; 4. Corner vs Ogasawara; 5. Adams vs Stephen.

Tuesday, January 22

Ladies Afternoon Curling. 1. Thorarinson vs Henschke; 2. LeBlond vs Maynard; 3. Fee vs Nolan; 4. Rehill vs Davis; 5. Ryall vs Forsythe. Bye (Wells-Munk).

7 p.m.: 1. McCulloch vs Brisco; 2. Hall vs Adams; 3. Briggs vs Shockey; 4. Tinkham vs Marsland; 5. Coley vs Cail.

9 p.m.: 1. Clark vs Schell; 2. Bertelson vs Jenner; 3. Mills vs Bishop; 4. Selody vs Churchill; 5. Green vs Wetherill.

Wednesday, January 23

Ladies Afternoon Curling. 1. Davis vs LeBlond; 2. Nolan vs Ryall; 3. Thorarinson vs Forsythe; 4. Fee vs Munk; Wells vs Henschke. Bye (Rehill-Maynard).

7 p.m.: 1. Kurbis vs Stephen; 2. Corner vs McWilliams; 3. Mills vs Ogasawara; 4. Adams vs Schell; 5. Dobie vs Marsland.

9 p.m.: 1. Schmidt vs Berry; 2. Kurbis vs Foord; 3. Little vs Ferguson; 4. French vs Kinnard; 5. Bertelson vs LeBlond.

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