Blades Versus Bucks In OJHL Season Finish

Double Weekend Wins Could Thwart Kelowna's Title Bid

Vernon Blades, presently hung with the loser's label, could come up with a new and better deal for themselves this weekend with some forced shuffling.

They, together with coach Hap Schaefer, know the stakes are higher now. In their final two games of the regular season Friday and Saturday they could conceivably alter Okanagan Junior Hockey League standings and draw a new and easier playoff partner as a result.

The Blades meet the Kelowna Buckaroos in these two games. The powerful Buckaroos are at the moment atop the OJHL standings, two games and four points ahead of the second-running Kamloops Rockets.

If, therefore, they can knock off the Bucks twice while Kamloops takes two from the weak Penticton Junior Vees a first-place tie would recur.

Kamloops Faster

And if, in a sudden death game to decide the league title, Kamloops emerged victorious, Vernon as the third-place finisher would play them instead of Kelowna in the semi-final playoffs, a more desirable and much easier option.

But these are mighty big "if's." So far this year the Blades have been unable to gain a single win from Kelowna although they have come close enough on a number of occasions.

Therefore, beating them twice in a row just to avoid them in the semi-finals does not shape up as an easy task.

And doubtless Kamloops wouldn't get great odds over Kelowna in a sudden death decider as they have lost twice successively to them already.

The game in which Kelowna can possibly clinch the league title takes place Friday against Vernon on their home ice. Then Saturday the Blades are return hosts at the Civic Arena with action starting at 9:00 p.m.

If Schaefer and Co. can't thwart Kelowna on the weekend they will at least be giving their very best and honing themselves sharp for the inevitable encounter in the semis.

Near Upset

Last year the Vernon Juniors turned their collective back on their poor season record and almost upset Kelowna in the semi-finals, extending the best-out-of-five series to the limit.

It's a best-out-of-seven affair this year and if Vernon can stage a repeat playoff performance some exciting hockey will certainly be assured Civic Arena fans as well as Winter Carnival visitors.

Dates for the semi-finals and the finals will be arranged this Sunday by the OJHL executive, action probably starting Tuesday, February 5.

Between periods of Saturday's game the Ballard Girls Drill Team from Seattle, billed as one of the best in the Northwest, will be on hand at the arena to entertain fans.

Grindrod Upsets Cougars