Showdown Duels End OJHL Season

Rockets, Bucks Vie For 1st; Blades, Broncs Gun For 3rd

Two fierce down-to-the-wire battles will be taking place this weekend as the Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League winds up regular season play.

On the home front the Vernon Blades will be enmeshed in a struggle with rival Penticton - Summerland Broncos to see who finishes third in the OJHL and on a higher level Kamloops Rockets and Kelowna Buckaroos will be similarly occupied in deciding who will wear first place laurels this year.

The outcome of these two series will, of course, fix league standings once and for all and at the same time determine who meets who in the semi-final playoffs which are set to get underway in another week.

And it's this last factor that, in the long run, could prove to be most important in affecting the success or failure of a given club in the playoffs.

As is the usual procedure the fitst place club plays the third place finisher while the runner-up team meets the tail-enders.

With this fact in mind there is no doubt that both the Blades and the Broncos will be trying to jockey into a position where they'll be aligned against the Rockets in the semi-finals.

To want to face the defending B.C champions in the first round of the playoffs may seem like madness to the uninformed but to anyone who has followed the course of OJHL play through the regular season it is unquestionably "the thing to do," if possible.

Both the Blades and Broncos, particularly the Broncos, enjoyed a high degree of success playing the Rockets. The Blades split with Kamloops in 10 games, winning five and losing five and the Broncos did likewise (two of their wins coming on Kamloops ice).

The same couldn't be said for their record against the Buckaroos. The Blades failed to pick up a single win over Kelowna, their only points coming on three ties. The Broncos fared better, winning three and tying a pair, but even they had a tough time of it against the rougher, heavier Cowboys.

So there you have it. The Blades, if they finish last, will be hoping the Rockets come second and if the Kamloopsers should emerge in first they'll want to end up in third. Ditto for the Broncs.

Going into this weekend's action Kamloops and Kelowna are locked in a tie for first place with 33 points apiece but the Rockets have the dge in the series. To finish on top the Bucks must either win both games or tie and win whereas the Rockets can afford to split the series because they have more victories on the season.

The Broncs hold an even bigger advantage over the Blades. They're two points up on the cellar dwelling locals and need only one victory or a pair of ties to retain third spot. The Blades must sweep the two-game series or else.

The Blades open against the Broncs Friday night in Penticton with the return match set for the Civic Arena Saturday at 8:30 p.m.

Kamloops visits Kelowna Friday and the Buckaroos return the favor Saturday.

The Blades will be hale and healthy for their wind-up series, something of which the Broncs certainly can't boast. Their first-string goalie Ernie Pushkarenko is still out with an eye injury, one of their regular defencemen Mike Laughlin broke an arm last weekend and is out for the season and a number of other players are reportedly either sick or on the limp.

However, the scrappy Broncs have to be considered definite contenders any time they step on the ice so the Blades will be hard-pressed trying for a twin killing.

League Standings

	W	L	T	GF	GA	P
Kam.	16	11	1	143	137	33
Kel.	14	9	5	128	88	33
P-S.	10	14	4	99	109	24
Ver.	9	15	4	93	129	22

League Scoring

	G	A	P
Shishido, Kam.	27	47	74
Sandyke, Kam.	34	18	52
Verna, Kel.	21	24	45
E. Begg, Kam.	24	12	36
J. Strong, Kel.	18	18	36
Sorochuk, Ver.	18	16	34
Meridew, Kam.	15	16	31
MacInnes, P-S.	11	20	31
Rodgers, Kam.	4	26	30
Stein, Ver.	12	16	28
Kasubuchi, Kel.	16	11	27
Picco, P-S.	16	8	24
Biagioni, P-S.	15	9	24
Rogan, Ver.	15	9	24
Sherk, Ver.	11	13	24
Evans, Kel.	10	14	24

Goalkeeper Averages

	GP	GA	Ave
Gaal, Kel.	28	88	3.14
Pushkarenko, P-S.	19.6	79	4.03
Schiman, Ver.	29	121	4.65
Budarick, Kam.	25.3	119	4.70

At Civic Arena

Luckies, Chiefs Knock Noggins Again Sunday

Vernon Luckies take nother important step long the road leading to he Coy Cup intermediate ockey playoffs this week-nd. Sunday afternoon at the ivic Arena the refurbish-d Luckies host Kamloops hiefs in another of a eries of exhibition games he two clubs have been laying this season in pre-aration for the annual Coy up competition.

Game time is 2 p.m. nd manager Vern Dye rges all die-hard hockey pes to make it out to the

Bulach and Joe Fisher, all of which figured largely in the Luckies' previous victory. Goalie Boris Kabatoff will more than likely start in the nets with local Don Bock-Phillips available for back-up duty.

The Coy Cup playoffs are scheduled to get underway sometime in February and Dye is attempting to arrange further exhibition games before they start.