Now Blades Have Their Backs Against The Wall

Bucks Rally With Two Wins To Grab Lead In Playoffs

Kelowna 7, 5 Vernon 4, 1

The pendulum of Fortune took a sharp swing from Vernon Blades to Kelowna Buckaroos in Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League playoff action this week.

It started its inexorable swing towards Kelowna Monday night at Vernon Civic Arena. To be exact, at 17 minutes and 48 seconds of the third period.

That's when the all-star Kelowna winger Terry Kasubuchi raced in with a blueline pass to beat Blade goalie Norm Schiman and send what had seemed a surefire 4-3 Vernon win into 4-4 overtime.

The rest is history. The Buckaroos, as every agonized Vernon fan knows by now, picked up momenum in the 10-minute bonus sesson, scoring three unanswered goals to win 7-4 and square the best of seven semi-final series at two games apiece.

That, it appears, was all they needed to hit their stride in the playoffs because Wednesday night back in Kelowna they swept to a no-nonsense 5-1 win and an important 3-2 lead in the OJHL semis.

Now it's the Blades who have their backs to the wall as the series returns to Vernon Sunday afternoon for the sixth game. It's either win this one or it's bye-bye until next October.

The same swing may be occuring in the other semi-final playoff between Kamloops Rockets and Penticton-Summerland Broncos. Wednesday night the Broncos carried a 3-2 series lead into Kamloops but the ever dangerous Kamloops Rockets faced up to the challenge as they have faced other challenges in the past, winning 5-1 to even accounts and force a seventh and deciding game on their home ice Saturday.

If the Blades are, indeed, destined to lose their series with the Buckaroos they may very well have lost it in the final 10 minutes of Monday's game at the Civic Arena.

And when we say final 10 minutes, we mean the final 10 minutes of regulation time. What happened in overtime was almost anti-climactic.



RALPH LITZENBERGER
. . . his effort in vain.

At about the midway point of the period in question the Blades owned a comfortable 4-2 lead.

All they had to do was hold it, or part of it, and victory and a 3-2 stranglehold on the semi-final series would have been theirs.

The Buckaroos had other ideas. They had staged a comeback once before in the game when they nullified a 1-0 Vernon lead with two fast goals in the second period.

So why couldn't they do it again? Well, they did, beginning at 11:18 of the third period when defenceman Dave Cousins tipped in a pass from Don Hebert and Kasubuchi to narrow Vernon's edge to 4-3. Then Kasubuchi gathered in a relay from Cousins and Marcello Verna with three minutes remaining, picked a corner and guess what!

Yes, the Buckaroos had their precious 10 minute grace and they wasted little time making use of it. Exactly 54 seconds into overtime a small but deceptive winger called Dave Couves fired a screen shot that Schiman never even saw to put Kelowna ahead 5-4. And, with two minutes remaining, Verna struck for insurance. Garth Rizzuto fired in a third marker over a sprawling Schiman at 9:04 but it was only piling insult on injury.

Couves had earlier tied the game at 1-1 with a goal halfway through the second period with Lynton Swanson adding a go-ahead counter.

Ralph Litzenberger was all or most of Vernon's scoring punch Monday, collecting three goals, one in the second and two in the third. Bobby Stein sniped the remaining single to help build up the Blades temporary 4-2 lead in the final frame.

The first period was tight, close checking and scoreless. Both sides had some good chances but failed to capitalize on them.

Vernon outshot Kelowna 31-24. Thirteen penalties were called, eight to the Kelownians.

The Buckaroos had been foiled twice before in their own corral but Wednesday wasn't goint to be one of those nights. For the first time in the playoffs they gave their hometown supporters something to cheer about as they outhustled and outgunned the Blades 5-1.

They made their intentions known from the opening faceoff, grabbing a 3-0 lead in the first period and stretching the count to 4-0 after two frames.

Garth Rizzuto, a rather quarrelsome youngster but mighty handy around the net, paced Kelowna with two goals and one assist. Dave Couves, Terry Kasubuchi and Lynton Swanson each tallied once.

Allan Rogan fired in a shot unassisted at the 15-minute mark of the third period to finally foil the Buckaroos' seemingly impregnable Mike Gaal.

On several previous occasions Gaal literally robbed the Blades of sure goals on clear-cut breakaways from the blueline in. In all, he stopped 27 shots.

Schiman was no less fabulous in the Vernon nets, barricading the door to 38 Buckaroo drives but with a makeshift and tired defence to depend on he couldn't handle them all.

Referee Dale Cassell handed out 15 penalties in the game, nine to Kelowna. Vernon's Dale Sorochuk incurred a a misconduct in the third period for protesting a roughing call involving himself and Kelowna's Rizzuto.

The Blades had 11 players for both games which, for them, was good. Coach Hap Schaefer is hopeful that utilityman Gary Koski will be back in time for Sunday's contest.

Gme time Sunday will be 2:30 p.m. Programs will be on sale at the door as usual.

BILL HAUTALA
Sports Editor

NORTH SPORTS OKANAGAN

Panthers Drop Weekend Pair

Well, it was another losing weekend for Jim Webster and his Vernon Panthers as they dropped a pair of games to Salmon Arm Golds and Kamloops Red Devils in senior boys'

Kim Fulton, despite an ailing back, led the way for Vernon with 16 points. Jones came up with another solid game, hooping 15, Sugden netted 14 and Grant

Rockets' Sandyke OJHL's Most Valuable Player

Star right winger Dale Sandyke of the Kamloops Rockets has been named the Okanagan Junior "A" Hockey League's Most Valuable Player for the 1964-65 season.

League president Len Miller of Vernon announced Sandyke's selection Wednesday. He was chosen as MVP by coaches in the league.

Sandyke was instumental in helping the Rockets to a first place finish in regular OJHL play. He was runner-up in the scoring race with a league leading 36 goals and 20 assists for 56 points.

Besides being voted Most Valuable Player Sandyke was a unanimous choice for the first all-star team. Team mate Eric Shishido, who won the league scoring title, was another unanimous pick for centre. Named to the left wing spot was Kelowna Buckaroos' Terry Kasubucki.

On defence, Jim Stephen of the Venon Blades was chosen for one position and Kamloops' Terry Shishido, brother of Eric, for the other. Stephen's selection was unanimous.

Mike Gaal of Kelowna made the all-star squad as goaltender. During the regular season he allowed 88 goals in 28 games for a 3.14 average.

Ken Stewart of Kamloops and Jack Taggart of Penticton-Summerland Broncos were tied in votes for all-star coach.

The second team consisted of the following: Goal, Ernie Pushkarenko, Penticton-Summerland; defence, Blaine Pollock, Penticton-Summerland and Ken Rodgers, Kamloops and Don Hebert, Kelowna (a tie); centre, Marcello Verna, Kelowna; left wing, Larry Palanio, Penticton-Summerland; right wing, John Strong, Kelowna; coach, Don Culley, Kelowna.

Kelowna Girl Wins 20-Game Marathon

Carol Koga of Kelowna won the annual 20-game Bowling Marathon held Sunday at Lincoln Lanes.

Miss Koga bowled a high 5,692 in the 20 games to take first prize honors. Second was Marvin Krantz of Salmon Arm with 5,553 and third Shig Tabata of Vernon with 5,481.

Tabata also bowled the Marathon's high single 378 and high triple 1,003 to go along with his third place