Blades Host Kelowna In Effort To Win One

Controversy Continues, Club Denies All Rumors

All hockey fans' attention will be in the Vernon Civic Arena Saturday night when the Vernon Blades host league leading Kelowna Buckaroos.

While controversy over the club is still rampant in Vernon hockey circles, the Blades are preparing to give their utmost against the Buckaroos, according to club officials.

The management of the club reported their squad a bit miffed at an article appearing in Monday's Vernon News regarding the 15-1 loss (following a 9-2 drubbing the night before) to Penticton here last Saturday. Of that game the management said "We just tried too hard."

Blades gave Kelowna their toughest battles of the campaign up until the Buckaroos lost last weekend. They are out to improve on their record, if they can.

Regarding reports of dissention on the club — club management emphatically denied the rumors. Other officials in local hockey reaffirm however, that some players have indicated the could stand a change in club management.

Coach Hap Schaffer said last night that there are a lot of people talking around town — but that's all they are doing. He said nobody seems to want to do anything constructive to help the club.

William "Bill" Brown, president and holder of other executive posts with the club, said last evening in an interview that all items in Monday's story were false.

He maintained that the whole issue was simply a manoeuvre to remove him (Brown) from the management of the club.

"We can't get any cooperation from people in this town," Brown said, regarding the search for jobs for imported players.

Schaffer pointed out that there were players in town earlier this year (the Phillips brothers and Red Inkster of Williams Lake) who left for home when jobs did not materialize. Jobs are still needed for the 12 now in play.

Brown maintained that Vernon is the only club in the league where all the money made goes back into the hockey club—for equipment, etc. He said other teams have sponsors to help with finances.

He said that regarding the Penticton manager's comment about the Blades drawing poorly in other cities that the Vernon team drew 1,000 the last time they were in Penticton.

Schaffer maintained that the whole aim of Junior Hockey would be to provide a chance for graduates of minor hockey to continue playing hockey.

"If we don't want to go back into the old rat race of importing paid players we must use local talent," Schaffer said.

He pointed out that another team in the league uses players from the prairies but pays room and board and other fringe benefits.

"We can't afford to do this and we don't think it's right, he said. We feel that we can win with the boys we've got (Vernon at present has a record of 12 losses and one tie.)

Brown stated that playing with 11 men was common. He pointed out that the minimum stated by the league was 12 men —which Vernon had. Other interested hockey fans pointed out that a minimum number of players on the ice isn't always the best way to win.

Brown said that the team could bring players in from the prairies any time up until February 28 and still be within league rulings. He was denying a report that prairie players weren't able to be signed after the middle of this month. Reports are that prairie leagues have a different signing date.

Schaffer said he has other boys who are not up to the calibre of Junior hockey yet — which is why they aren't played.

When asked what would have happened if imports Gil Morrow and Ivan Melanoski hadn't arrived he said the other boys would have had to play — thereby lowering the calibre of the team.

Schaffer said he felt the team was unjustly crucified for one bad game after playing well throughout the rest of the season. He said if there had been 1,000 or so fans in the Vernon arena, as there were in other arenas in the valley, then the Blades might have won some of the games they dropped by a goal or two.

Meanwhile, the Arena Commission has held two meetings and is planning a meeting with the executive of the hockey club.

They released that "A meeting will be held to approach the Junior Hockey Executive to see what steps could be taken to improve junior hockey in Vernon."

The Vernon Minor Hockey Association has also held meetings this week to discuss the matter.

Meanwhile, the Blades will play here Saturday.

Clinics For Tracksters

Funds have been made available by the Provincial and Federal governments to improve the standard of coaching in B.C.

The coaching award plan, a Royal Canadian Legion project supported by the B.C. Track and Field Association, is now underway.

The major portion of the budget will set up clinics to produce enough quality coaches to retain the interest of the ever increasing numbers of track and field buffs.

To date five or six coaching clinics have been proposed at Vancouver, Victoria, Nanaimo, Kamloops, Powell River and Fort St. John.

It is expected embryo

Peewees Lose In Inter-City Hockey Play

Vernon PeeWees were bombed 12-4 in intercity action this week.

Though seemingly far ahead—in goals anyway—

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