

NORTH SPORTS OKANAGAN

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PENTICTON — If Broncos coach Jack Taggart was scratching his head following the first game of the 1966-67 B.C. finals, its probably because he had counted Vernon out of the picture over a month ago when the Okanagan Junior Hockey League Blades bowed from the Memorial Cup picture in five straight games.

Little did he know that the Vernon Minor Hockey Association would come tramping back in the provincial playdowns to put some type of Muldoon's curse of their own upon him and his team. Little did he know that a 19 year old graduate of the VMHA

punch and grab style of hockey.

Share the billing, yes, but not take a back seat. Watson set up the first Royal goal with a 20-foot lead pass and then side-stepped aggressive Larry Palanio of Broncos to tie the game at 2-2 early in the third period to start the canners on the way back.

The game was probably some of the best hockey he has played all year, even before he started producing the points. As one press box observer put it, "Keep your eye on number 11, he came here to play."

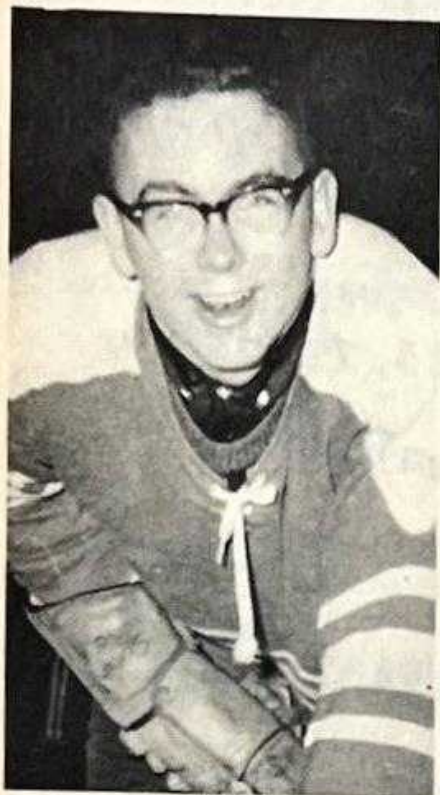
George is in his second year with the Royals. As a member of the Vernon All Stars who won the B.C. Juvenile championship in the 1964-65 season, he is exactly the kind of player Blades coach Odie Lowe points to as one of the reasons Vernon doesn't cart home any Junior flags.

But as a young man who left the valley to seek higher education, (he is presently on the second year of a B.A. in English at Simon Fraser University) he choose the Royals for what he terms, "the only outlet I have from my studies."

When he returned to Vernon at Christmas he was still packing the 175 pounds, a more than 10-pound increase over his usual due to weight lifting during the summer, but this past weekend he appeared in better shape than ever.

The difference? A schedule in two leagues that means a total of 73 games. As a Royal he played in the regular 24 against Vancouver Haidas in order to make the Royal City eligible for the Memorial Cup; the eight games with the Okanagan league; and the rest of the "exhibitions" in the tough Western Amateur Hockey League, an Intermediate loop, which New Westminster won handily.

And it wasn't hard to tell that the Vernon native thrives on such work. When coach Bob Fenton needed good goaltending, he knew he had one of the best in the province in Wallis. When he started to doubt his defense, he would turn to captain Gallagher and be reassured. But when he wanted something done, not now, but RIGHT NOW... he let George do it!



GEORGE WATSON

could toss so much sand into the gears of his well conditioned machine.

But George did!

When the New Westminster Royals are down two goals and they need a power play that can assure them of production; or they need a penalty to kill; or somebody to work more than an extra shift, they know who to call on too.

They let George do it!

And that is exactly what George did Saturday night.

George, of course, is "the" George Watson, who played all of his minor hockey in Vernon before joining the Royals two years ago. And Saturday evening he did all these things and, at the same time, produced with one goal and four assists.

He was in a receptive mood Saturday evening. And the goal and four assists might have had something to do with it. He had to share billing with goalie Don Wallis, who subs occasionally for the professional Vancouver Canucks of the Western Hockey League, and captain Gerry Gallagher who, although he did not make the scoresheet, kept the potent Penticton offense honest around the net. Although the Broncos managed to outshoot visitors 49-36, they were shots taken one at a time, chiefly through Gallagher's