

Tough weekend for local squad

Vernon Lakers are going into a weekend that would scare any junior hockey team.

Lakers host Burnaby Bluehawks tonight, then travel to Vancouver Island for games against Nanaimo Clippers, Saturday, and Sidney Capitals, Sunday.

"I can't believe this schedule," said Lakers' President Carl Enemark. "This is going to be quite a weekend."

Bluehawks lead the B.C. Junior Hockey

League's Coastal Division with 55 points, nine more than second place Langley Eagles. Burnaby has lost only eight times in 36 games including a 6-5 setback to Lakers last October.

Bluehawks are led by league leading scorer Bob Ginetti who has 115 points, including 85 assists. Burnaby's Mike O'Brien ranks ninth in scoring statistics with 78 points, including 46 assists.

Enemark said, "We have to watch ourselves this weekend. If we win two or three games, we'll be in pretty good shape. But if we lose two or three, we'd open the door for Summerland to catch us."

Vernon, which is second in the Interior Division, has 48 points, 10 more than third place Summerland.

Lakers expect to have slick forward Hason Phillips back in the lineup this weekend. Phillips, who joined Vernon in December after being released by Kamloops Blazers, has been sidelined more than three weeks

with pneumonia.

"Jason isn't too strong after being off skates for three weeks, but we hope to give him a few shifts tonight," Enemark said. "By the time we get to Sidney, he might be ready to take a regular shift."

Phillips, who scored six goals in his first three games with Lakers, will supply some much-needed offensive punch for the local squad. Vernon ranks eighth in scoring in the 12-team BCJHL.

Face-off tonight is at 8 p.m.

In BCJHL action Thursday, Burnaby whipped Sidney 11-6 and Merritt Centennials bombed Salmon Arm Totems 17-4.

Despite the loss, Signey goaltender Tim Renton drew praise from Burnaby Coach Muzz McPherson. Renton, who stopped 58 shots, "kept the game close," McPherson said.

Ginetti scored two goals and added three assists.

In Princeton, Merritt's Pay Ryan scored six goals. Cents led 8-1 after the first period and 16-2 after the second.

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