

My coaching debut at inter-squad game



By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

You have to hand it to a coach like Don Moores for being big-hearted enough to let all his junior hopefuls have a chance to show their stuff in a game situation before he makes any cuts from Vernon Lakers' training camp.

Most coaches would allow the players to skate around for a practice session or two and start paring the roster almost immediately. Moores' philosophy is such that everyone deserves a fair shake. For that reason he believes it takes most youngsters a little more than a day or two to get over the jitters of being in their first training camp. He knows that some players don't immediately show their wares while others, who seem to be naturals, fall off their own pace after a short while.

So Saturday night at Priest Valley arena, every young player hoping to become a new addition to Lakers' team roster this year will have a chance to show Moores' what they can do as the camp divides into two teams for the first inter-squad game.

ENTERTAINMENT

Now inter-squad games aren't the most exciting bit of entertainment a sports fan can imagine, at least

not unless you're the parent of one of the young men out on the ice.

In the case of this particular inter-squad contest, however, things might be just a bit different. . . in fact I can guarantee you they'll be far removed from the ordinary. The reason for this is that myself and CJIB Sports Director Craig Jeffers will be the opposing coaches behind the two Lakers squads.

The idea, I'm led to believe, is that the two of us are supposed to try and ut-coach the other and so win the game. . . perhaps with a small wager on the side.

In actuality, I assume the reason actually is that Moores would like to sit back with his entire coaching staff and assess all the players in a game situation. Naturally he feels that how they respond under virtually no coaching or at the very most, a limited amount, will give him a rough idea of how they will behave when they have excellent coaching working in their favor.

LOT OF FUN

For whatever reasons, it sounds like a lot of fun to me and obviously to my worthy opponent who seems to be relishing in this opportunity to make little of my talents on the AM airwaves in the Vernon area.

What he doesn't know is that although he may be a good eight inches taller than myself, my skin is a good deal thicker than his. Besides his extreme height is nothing that a well-placed whack in the knee-caps with a hockey stick wouldn't straighten out.

But just as a matter of pure principle, I'm willing to put my knowledge and junior hockey experience to the test against the big guy. The way I look at it, if I can manage to get the whole team to lace up their skates properly I'm probably a jump ahead of him in the coaching department.

Having reminated this endeavour about in my mind over the past 24 hours I'm also willing to get a bit cocky when it comes to a side wager. Not only will the team I coach beat that coached by Craig Jeffers but if, for some reason, my team loses the game, I'm willing to donate \$5 per goal difference in the scores towards Vernon Minor Hockey Association.

At the very least I'll be the most well-dressed coach in the business and of that you can be certain.

The game gets underway Saturday night at 6 p.m. in Priest Valley arena and promises to be a bit of fun for anyone interested in attending. If it's a no-show on Jeffers' behalf, I'll understand.