

FIRST INTER-SQUAD GAME TONIGHT

Lakers coach employing different camp method

While it's not exactly unorthodox by any stretch of the imagination, Vernon Lakers' training camp is definitely different this season and its because Head Coach Don Moores prefers it that way.

The players are scrimmaging constantly during these early days of camp and that's generally considered an event that is introduced later on, after many of the initial cuts are made.

Moores, however, has a different understanding of the practice.

"They're been scrimmaging all the time," he explained. "That way you can see who does what."

"It gets tough mentally after a few days so you can see who has the stamina too," he added.

Moores will look closely at all of the 60 some odd hopefuls he has in camp, including more than a dozen players returned from last years' squad, for the rest of the weekend before he makes

his first cuts Sunday. However, rumour has it that a healthy number will feel the bite of the axe when it falls for the first time.

In the meantime, the Lakers' coach is satisfied with what he has in his camp and is expecting good things to happen.

"A lot of kids have come to camp in very good shape," he said. "We've also got a lot of good forwards and I'm quite excited about it."

Among the newcomers looking for a job with the local team are a number of good sized players but besides that Moores sees a quality about some others that he feels is even more important in a player.

"We've got guys are are spirited and aggressive and that's what really counts," he suggested. "The veteran players look good too and they're really keen."

It may be fortunate that the Vernon coach has a solid nucleus around which he can fashion a

team. He needs a formidable squad right off the bat due to an unfortunate bit of scheduling. Lakers will play their first five games of the new season on the road including a trip to Vancouver Island to play Sidney and Nanaimo, then a game against Delta which is the old Abbotsford Flyers' franchise. The swing will also include games in Kelowna and Summerland along the way.

It could interpret as a trial by fire for Moores who came into the organization in mid-November of last season after then-coach Mike Enemark had resigned his position as Head Coach.

"We've got to get off to a good start because our first five games are on the road," said Moores.

Meanwhile, Lakers have five returning defencemen along with veteran goaltender Frank Romeo maning they have a solid defensive system

right off. With a number of very promising defensive players in camp, Moores is hoping to find a replacement for one of his speedy blueliners so that he can find other duties for him.

"We're hoping to find someone to fill in nicely so we can move Lofroth up front," he explained.

In addition, Moores is pleased with his goaltending hopefuls including 20-year-old Terry Forsythe who played for Estevan Bruins of the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League last season.

"He (Forsythe) has got good poise and he challenges well," Moores said.

Lakers play an inter-squad game tonight at

Lakers play in inter-squad game tonight at 6 p.m. in Priest Valley arena with the opposing teams to be coached by Vernon News sportswriter Jim Judd and CJIB Sports Director Craig Jeffers.

ASK AL

Pezzin shafted!



By **AL PATERSON**
Daily News Sports

Now Marc Pezzin knows how Kelowna Wings hockey fans felt — shafted.

In the same way that I felt sorry for the fans when the team fled to Spokane, I now feel a twinge of sorrow for Pezzin. The guy deserves a better break.

Sometimes in hockey you have to realize that you're dealing with a bunch of liars and thieves. Pezzin was neither. He was one of the few coaches or general managers I've dealt with over the past 12 years who would give you a straight answer to a straight question.

PINK SLIP

Al Rollins, GM of the new Spokane Chiefs (formerly the Kelowna Wings) was the guy who gave Pezzin the pink slip. He said it wasn't a case of Pezzin's being fired. More of a long-standing dispute over a terms of Pezzin's contract. I don't buy that for one moment.

First of all, I have known Pezzin long enough to take the man at his word. If he says he was fired that's good enough for me.

Secondly, take a look at who Rollins picked to succeed Pezzin. Ernie Gare. Long-time pal of Rollins. It strikes me as slightly odd that a guy like Gare should get such a plum coaching job despite a serious lack of previous coaching experience.

Gare is in a great spot to begin his major junior coaching career. He has a lot of excellent prospects to work with. Western Hockey League insiders tell me the Spokane 50-man player list is one of the best in the league. Credit Pezzin and Dave Deimling for that, not Ernie Gare.

IMPROVED

The Wings last year were a vastly improved club from the one that literally staggered through its first two seasons under Pezzin. This is very likely the year the Chiefs will challenge seriously for the West Division crown. But, like Kelowna fans, Pezzin will be on the outside looking in. I, for one think it's a crying shame that the ones who suffered so long won't be there to reap the rewards.

In fairness to Gare, let's give the guy a few months before passing judgment on him. Maybe he will be a super coach. Who knows? He deserves a decent chance to show what he can do.

Under Pezzin's leadership the club improved. Gare now stands to collect the fruits of those labors. And that's just not right, to my way of thinking.