

Lakers hammer Warriors



RON BEREZOWSKI, left, of Merritt Warriors, is checked in Lakers' net area by Vernon defenceman Shawn Hartnell while goaltender Blu Smith covers the corner of the net during an exhibition

game Tuesday night at the Civic Arena. Berezowski played two years for Lakers before heading for the Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League last season. Lakers stomped on Merritt 13-3

in their last exhibition game before regular season begins Friday. Vernon plays its first five games of the season on the road beginning in Kelowna, Friday night. (Daily News Photo)

New Vancouver coach looking for tough centre

VANCOUVER (CP) — The rebuilding Vancouver Canucks are looking for a rugged centreman in the mold of Laurie Boschman or Dave Hunter, new head coach Tom Watt of the National Hockey League

team said Tuesday.

Watt watched 32 rookies skate through two practices and a scrimmage and today the veterans join training camp sessions while Watt searches for strength down the middle.

"We need a snarly centre, a mean, nasty type of player," said Watt. "Lots of teams in our division have that type of player."

"We need someone in the middle who plays with a lot of intensity, a player other teams don't like to

play against."

Watt said Boschman of Winnipeg Jets and Hunter of Quebec Nordiques are good examples of the type of player the Canucks need to compliment centreman Thomas Gradin and Patrik Sundstrom, the Swedish smoothies.

The new coach, who took over from Harry Neale during the offseason, said he expects

"If there's one ingredient we'd like to build on, it's speed," Watt said. "Speed gives you a great dimension on offence and the ability to compensate for mistakes on defence."

SANDLAK SHARP

No. 1 draft pick Jim Sandlak, a right winger from London Knights of the Ontario Hockey League, impressed during an afternoon

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers' Head Coach Don Moores aptly predicted the power-play would become a major factor in the B.C. Junior Hockey League this season under the new guidelines set forward by the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association on use of sticks in junior hockey.

Moores' thoughts on the subject were definitely well-founded. Lakers scored 11 goals while enjoying the man advantage Tuesday night, en route to a convincing 13-3 thrashing of visiting Merritt Warriors.

The exhibition encounter was the local squad's last before the BCJHL regular season begins. Lakers open the season with five games on the road ... the first in Kelowna, Friday night, against Coach Wayne Naka and his Packers.

"Power-play is going to be a big thing in this league obviously," observed Moores at the game's conclusion Tuesday. "The way the league will be run, you have to be fast but you can't use the stick ... it'll be a good brand of hockey."

Some of the 250 fans on hand may not have been so quick to agree with Moores' conclusion about the style of hockey being re-introduced at the local junior level. There were few occasions during which the two clubs faced off against one another at full strength Tuesday.

Any misgivings about the length of the game, or the number of penalties being assessed, were overlooked due to another show going on on the ice though.

Local sensations Dennis Holland and Troy Mick, both just 16, were busy putting on a goal-scoring clinic for hockey fans at Civic Arena. Holland scored five times during the course of the evening, including the first four of the game, all during the first period. The local youngster added his fifth marker early in the third period. Holland also set up a goal by Stacey Hartnell in the second frame to give him six points on the night.

Mick, meanwhile, scored three goals, all from the slot area, including two during the second period when Lakers scored four unanswered tallies to stretch their lead to 8-2 over Warriors.

Shannon Pohl, the grizzled, three-year veteran on the club, scored once and assisted on six others. He also looked confident wearing the captaincy for Lakers and could earn that honor full-time this season.

Other Lakers' goals came from Rick Rozecki, Ted Pohl, and Wes Gentles. Allan Wall, Mark Greyyes and Brad Smiley replied for Warriors.

In spite of his team's productive output on the power-play Tuesday, Moores indicated he felt it would be a weak area of Lakers' game until they had time to work on it more.

"I'm concerned about our power-play," he said. "We got a lot of goals tonight but we need a lot of work yet. We haven't had a chance to work on our power-play but Shawn Lofroth makes a big difference."

Lofroth, the speedy sophomore who divides his playing time between defence (power-play) and centre, set up five goals, all of them during man-advantage situations.

The overall impression of such a lopsided victory was one of content for Moores who wanted just such a win to carry his team into the start of the regular season.

"I was really happy with the play of everyone," Moores offered.

Goaltending was a strong suit for Lakers, Tuesday, as Frank Romeo and local minor hockey product Blu Smith combined to make 27 saves.

Szestapalow wins

Terrific twosome



By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

My knowledge isn't all that vast, my experience is somewhat limited and my memory, though it serves me well, doesn't dip too much farther back than the hoola-hoop days and brown orange Crush bottles.

However, I have been a somewhat keen observer of junior hockey in Western Canada for more than two decades and during that time I've had the good fortune to have seen some of the very best the game had to offer.

With this in mind, I feel I'm as qualified as the next hockey fan to compare and contrast top quality players from different eras of the sport.

With this in mind, I'm putting forth an invitation of Vernon hockey fans to make this season the one they return to the arena in the center of town to witness a pair of youngsters who are truly a couple of classics in the making. Every game you miss for the next several seasons could be just another one in which you could have seen them, or so you'll say to yourself in years to come when the two are making names for themselves at some higher level.

The pair in question are Dennis Holland and Troy Mick, two names that have become synonymous with hockey excellence throughout their careers in the Vernon Minor Hockey Association.

NAMES CROP UP

In the short time I've been with this newspaper, covering minor sports, I can safely say that no two names have cropped up more often, now with more consistency when talking about good hockey. In fact, though no fault of their own, the two names have appeared so often in this newspaper that disgruntled parents of minor hockey athletes often queried the editor as to whether he felt they were the only two players in the system.

They weren't, naturally, but admittedly it must have seemed that way at times. Their minor hockey days are over and a pair of junior hockey careers have now been officially launched.

Anyone who caught Lakers' last exhibition game against visiting Merritt Warriors, Tuesday night, knows of what I speak. Holland scored five goals and Mick, suffering from the blu bug, still managed to rifle in three loose pucks from the slot area.

One other time a pair of local players have had the potential to make such an impact on the game was back in the mid-60's in the Manitoba Junior Hockey League. The two I'm referring to were Bobby Clarke and Reg Leach.

The similarities between the two pairs are incredible. For one thing, Holland and Mick, much like Clarke and Leach, will make an immediate impact on the game despite their tender years. Holland and Mick are both 16, as were the other two when they began their illustrious junior hockey careers.

UNCANNY INSTINCT

Mick's three goals Tuesday came as a result of his uncanny instinct for the game of hockey. Being in the right place at the right time and when a loose puck is on his stick when he's in scoring position, it's in the net. Time and a bit of work could even develop young Mick's slapshot to Leach's calibre (although we didn't call him Reggie The Rifle for nothing).

Holland emulates Clarke like no other player I've seen since "Clanky's" heyday in junior. His puck sense is incredible, the disc appears to follow him around the ice and his control is cool and calculated at all times. Scoring goals seems to come so naturally for him, simply because he knows where to be on the ice to allow him the opportunities, that it almost seems like magic.

Like Clarke, his steadiness and talent provides an inspiration to his team-mates: Also like Clarke, his game is like poetry in motion on the ice surface.

Believe me, these two are worth the price of admission any time the team plays. Make a point of getting out and seeing them before they pass on to bigger and better things.