

Struggling Lakers hold off Clippers

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

It might have been billed as the "battle of the also-rans" Friday night at Vernon Civic Arena as Lakers defeated visiting Nanaimo Clippers 10-7 in B.C. Junior Hockey League action.

The victory leaves Lakers (9-6) in third place in the BCJHL Interior Division trailing Kelowna Packers who were 8-5 winners over Langley Friday night, and division-leading Penticton Knights, 6-3 winners against Merritt.

For the first period Friday night, Lakers showed local hockey fans why they should be making a serious bid for first place in the Interior Division. The local club jumped in front of the visitors 6-0.

However, during the next two periods, Lakers showed the same onlookers why they deserve to be in third place in their division.

The same was true of Clippers...third place holders in the Coastal Division. After being hammered in the opening frame, Nanaimo fought back to make it a close game by winning the last two periods of hockey.

Meanwhile, Lakers' Head Coach Don Moores was satisfied with the two points for the win but was quick to offer the obvious conclusion about his team...they are playing an inconsistent style of hockey and changes will have to be made.

"What's going on in our own end is what's the problem," suggested Moores, who was given a vote of confidence earlier in the week to continue as coach of the Vernon Junior A hockey club. "They (Clippers) got four goals on our give-aways in our own end.

"Instead of being smart with the puck in our own end we're panicking," he added. "We're going to have to make some changes...some players aren't responding so we'll have to go with the ones who are."

Moores got excellent response from at least one line Friday night. Dennis Holland, centering Troy and Trevor Pohl, provided the thrust for Lakers' offensive attack. Troy Pohl scored four goals and Holland had three assists while Trevor Pohl balanced the attack with hard work down the right side.

Goaltender Darryl Dickens, who appeared unbeatable in the opening stanza, dissolved into mediocrity in the

final two periods though he snapped back into form in the dying minutes when Clippers' swarmed over the hometown club in their own end. Dickens faced 48 drives during the night, kicking out 41 of them. The Vernon goaltending helped the club squander their big lead by giving up big rebounds which Clippers were quick to pounce on.

Pohl scored three of his goals in the first period while Doug Spooner, Stacey Hartnell and Ben Beagoni added singles.

Defenceman Kevin Horn scored once for Lakers in the second frame which Vernon lost 3-1 to the visitors.

Steve Humphries, Shannon Pohl, who missed at least three other golden opportunities during the night, and Troy Pohl with his fourth, into an empty net, tallied in the third period.

Todd Jennings, with two, Darren Biggs, Lawrence Amy, Corky Parkes, Jamie Cayford, and Zuonko Malenica replied for Clippers who are in Shuswap tonight. Goaltenders Kelly Merideth and Dan Mattice combined to face 50 shots from Lakers' shooters.

Lakers travel to Merritt tonight to take on the stubborn Warriors who are currently chasing the Vernon squad for third place in the Interior. Warriors were 6-3 losers to Penticton Friday night in the Peach City.

Sunday night Lakers host Penticton Knights at Civic Arena. Game time is 7 p.m.

Elsewhere in the BCJHL Friday night, league-leading scorer Ward Carlson netted three goals for Kelowna in their 8-5 victory over Langley. In addition to Carlson's hat trick, Packers got two goals each from Shawn Harrison and Kerry Russell while Darren Schwartz added a single.

Richard Sloan scored twice for Delta with singles from Wayne Stripp, Dan Walton, and Scott Fearn.

David Shields and Jerry Dineen scored two goals each for Knights. Neil Eisenhut and Chris Anderson added goals for Penticton now with 16 victories against one loss.

Jeff Leyer scored twice for Merritt while Rob Revell added a single.

Today's BCJHL schedule includes Kelowna at Delta, Penticton at Summerland and also Sidney at Abbotsford.