

Key stretch for Lakers

By DON KENDALL
Daily News Sports Editor

In eight days Vernon Lakers will find out if they are pretenders or contenders in the race for first place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League's Interior Division.

Lakers play six games in the next eight days and to seriously take a run at top spot in the division, they must win at least five of those contests.

Penticton Knights lead the division with 36 points, four more than Kelowna Packers. Lakers, who are on a four-game win streak, have 26 points.

Vernon Coach Don Moores admits this is a crucial week for his club. "We have to go into each game prepared to work hard," Moores said. "We can't afford to have an off night."

Lakers play five of their next six games in the friendly confines of the Vernon Civic Arena. The homestand starts tonight with Langley Eagles in town. Lakers host Merritt Warriors on Saturday before travelling to Salmon Arm to tangle with the Totems, Sunday.

After one day of rest, Lakers entertain Summerland Buckaroos, Tuesday. Then, Salmon Arm and Penticton visit Vernon next Friday and Saturday, respectively.

Moores said he expects a tough game from Eagles, who his club defeated 7-5 last weekend in Langley.

"Langley may not have as much talent as a few of the teams in the Interior, but they work extremely hard," Moores said. "They have excellent goaltending and a couple very good forwards."

Vernon outshot Eagles 62-30, but needed an empty net goal in the final minute to build its two-goal margin.

Merritt, which plays here Saturday, has the only unblemished record against Lakers in the league. Warriors have won both prior meetings between the two clubs.

The 'Shot on Goal' program draw will be worth \$1,500 tonight. Both weekend games get under way at 8 p.m.

In the lone BCJHL game Thursday, Allan Wall and Kevin Cheveldave scored three goals each to lead Merritt

to an 11-7 win over Langley.

Jeff Leyer scored a pair while Tim Roux, John King, and Brad Smiley added singles for Merritt which led 4-1 after the first period and 7-5 after the second.

Rob Kujala and Elliot Kagna had two goals each for Eagles.

Knights unbeaten in Europe

PENTICTON, B.C. (CP) — Penticton Knights of the British Columbia Junior Hockey League got goals from four different players Thursday as they remained undefeated in their exhibition tour of Czechoslovakia with a 4-2 victory over the national 17-and-under team at Slaney.

David Shields and Lee Davidson of Calgary, John DePourcq of Penticton and Kevin Melrose of Red Deer, Alta., scored for the Knights during their fourth straight win.

The Knights play the national 20-and-under team twice this weekend, the same team which will represent Czechoslovakia at the world junior championships later this year in southern Ontario.

Penticton had been scheduled to play in a junior-age club tournament in Czechoslovakia, but the event was cancelled at the last moment after the Knights arrived in Europe late last week.

Bill Colbourne of Burnaby, B.C., representing the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, said the tournament was called off by the Czechoslovakia Ice Hockey Federation when financial support was withdrawn by sponsors.

Colbourne told Penticton team officials there was a breakdown in communication between the CIHF and the CAHA and that the federation had given proper notice of cancellation to the CAHA.

JUDD'S JOURNAL

Win streak prompts beard

Those who recognize me on the street may find there's a subtle, but very noticeable, change creeping over my face these days.

It's not a drastic change, mind you, and I can rectify it with a few quick flicks of my wrist at any time I choose but for now this creeping change will remain where it is.

You see I come from a superstitious Irish family and we believe, or at least I've always assumed that we believed, that we could alter the natural course of destiny if we simply followed some long laid-down traditions of action-interaction.

In short, I'm growing the whiskers on my face. I'm not necessarily doing it because I want to, I'm offering it as an assurance that Vernon Lakers' current win streak, which already stands at four, will flourish and continue in the weeks and possibly months to come.

No need to pour out your gratitude on me guys. Really, it's the very least I can do.

There have been times over the years when Lakers and I haven't seen eye-to-eye. We remained on friendly terms during those interim periods, I might add, but basically the guys have felt at times that guys like myself sit in their ivory towers, waiting for something bad to happen and then splash it all over the papers for all to read. Sometimes it may seem that way, but it's actually not how it goes at all.

However, the bottom line is that the way I look at it, I'm going to show my support for these guys in a manner that is not altogether too flattering to my personal appearance, which I hold in great revery, I might add. I'm absolutely not going to shave my face again until Lakers lose their next hockey game.

I began this somewhat unorthodox support when the team knocked off Penticton Knights just before they embarked on their three-game road trip to the Coast where they stretched the win streak to four with three consecutive wins over their BCJHL Coastal Division counterparts.

Now I happen to know through first hand experience that most hockey players harbor superstitions of some sort so they can possibly identify with what I'm doing for them.

In my playing days, we had a superstition that most every guy on the team would uphold . . . never wash your underwear when you're on a winning streak. I suppose we felt that we'd wash out all those luck-enriched sweat that had been shed in order to bring us those victories, or something like that. However, this is



by
Jim Judd

Daily News
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what we did and at times it was a bit hairy sitting around in a dressing room between periods. In the same light, we didn't have too many hassles around our players box when we were on the road.

Now I weighed out the possibility of not washing my underwear while Lakers win streak was alive but with my job and all I felt maybe it wasn't exactly the best idea in the world . . . editor felt the same way.

The beard thing is great as far as I'm concerned. Just how bad I look in the near and distant future depends on how well the club can play in the next while. I could end up looking like Dusty Hill, of ZZ Top, or I could just look like my plain old choirboy-faced self.

The odds-on favorite around here right now is that I could save a lot of money on Bic disposables between now and Christmas.

Lakers have a terrific advantage in this situation because they play eight of the next 10 games at Civic Arena between now and the Christmas break. During that time there are basically four occasions when the old face could meet with razor. Once when the club faces off against Kelowna Packers, currently nursing a 10-game winning streak and riding the crest of a wave around the BCJHL these days.

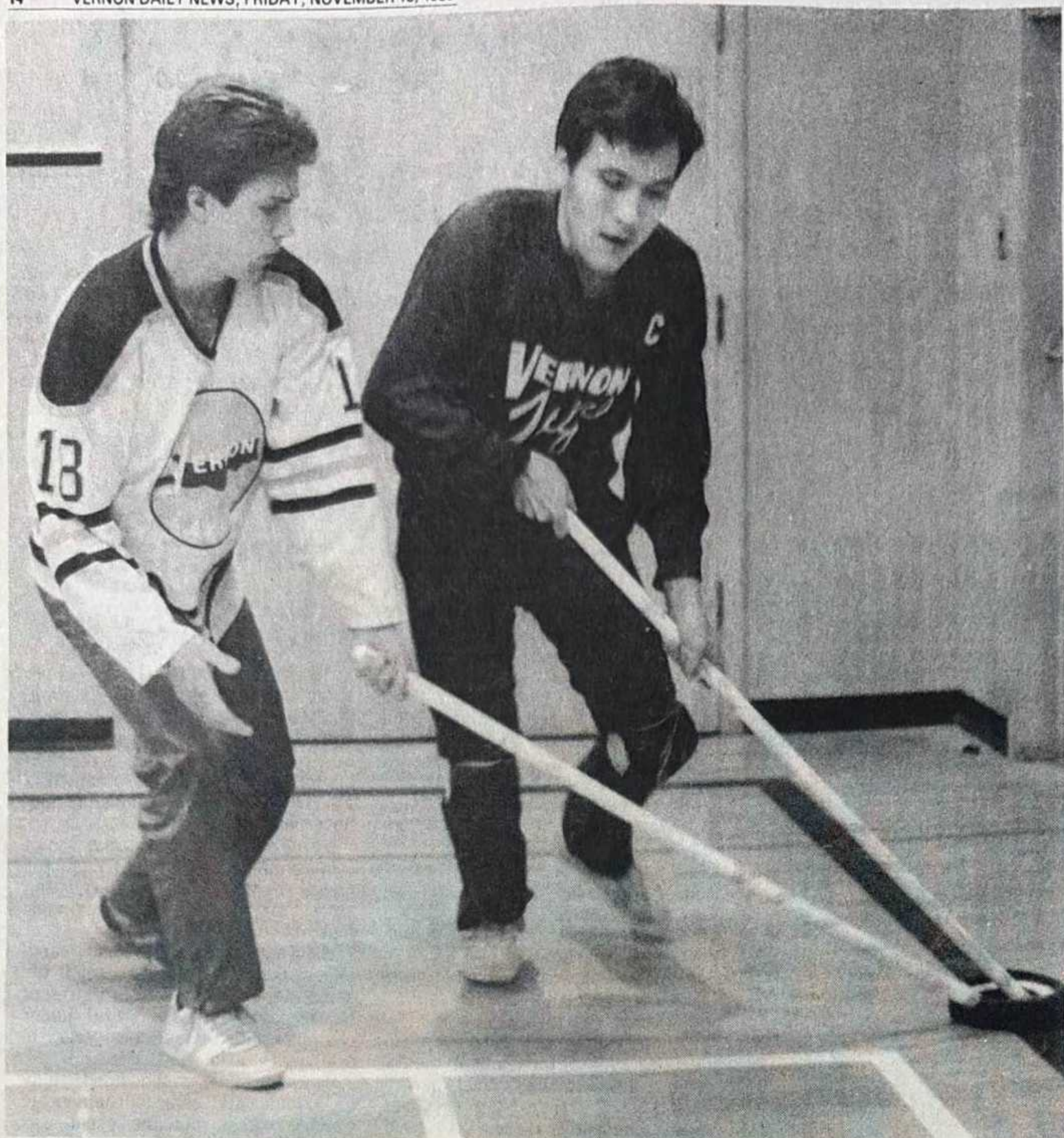
Another occasion could present itself when they take on the Knights here once more.

There are two more occasions in the next 10 games when Merritt Warriors, who seem to have Lakers' number, will be in town looking to continue their domination over the local club.

The rest of the games, though none will be easy, should be playground stuff for Lakers if they continue to play like they have since the winning streak began Nov. 3 with the victory over Knights.

So this is an open invitation to all the former hockey fans in this community who haven't seen a junior game in years . . . come on out, see the guys perform like champions, and see how my beard is progressing.

You'll know me when you see me. I'll be the one scratching his face.



LAKERS' DEFENCEMAN Shawn Lofroth checks Robert Penning of the Vernon Special Olympics Floor Hockey Team during an exhibition game Tuesday at West Vernon School. The game was the second annual contest between the two teams and like last

year's version, ended in a tie. The score was 13-13 when the final whistle blew and Lofroth didn't do much of a job on Penning as the Special Olympics' captain scored five times. (Daily News Photo)

Special Olympics Team earns tie with Lakers

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers were in action again Tuesday night but instead of winning the game, as they've been doing quite a lot of lately, the junior hockey squad had to settle for a tie.

The action didn't take place on ice either. It was the second, annual Vernon Lakers versus Vernon Special Olympics Athletes Floor Hockey Challenge.

The game ended in a 13-13 draw, the second time in as many years the two teams have battled to a standstill at West Vernon School. In 1984 the two teams ended the game deadlocked at 15-15.

This time around, the action was just as heavy from both ends of the floor but Lakers' spokesman Stacey Hartnell, a veteran of both games, feels the Special Olympics squad has improved a great deal since last season.

"They've improved 100 per cent over last year," suggested Hartnell, who along with twin brother Sean, joined eight other members of the Vernon Junior "A" team at West Vernon School for the match. "They (Special Olympics team) will do well in the provincial competition if they can play like this all the time."

The faces were familiar on both sides of the floor Tuesday night with Lakers' Shawn Lofroth and Wes Gentles, also veterans of last year's match, joining the Hartnells in Tuesday's game. Other members of Vernon Lakers included center Dennis "Magic" Holland, Al Young, Doug Spooner, Campbell Blair, and Steve Humphries.

Forward Robert Penning, a leader with the Special Olympics, led the team with a five-goal performance

while Bruce Bailey, John Braun, and Tom Wilde had two goals apiece. Peter Olsen and Mike Riglioni added singles for the Special Olympics team who needed two quick goals in the dying seconds of the game to salvage the tie.

Blair paced Lakers' attack with four goals while Holland contributed three. Sean Hartnell, Young, and Gentles had two goals each.

The game has become immensely popular with the Special Olympics athletes in Vernon with dozens of the locals turning out to play or watch. The game is also a popular item among the Lakers who have little trouble fielding a squad.

"We didn't have any trouble at all getting the guys for a team," explained Lofroth. "Everyone was really up for it."

Lakers also offer the Special Olympics squad an opportunity to learn new skills at the game which helps the floor hockey coaches do their job more easily.

The gesture by Lakers doesn't go unnoticed among the Vernon Special Olympics co-ordinators, such as Willie Wendel.

"It was a very kindly gesture on their behalf to come and play with us again," said Wendel, who is a Vernon area coordinator. "I think they really made our players work hard."

TOUGH HOLE

Pro golfers rate the 456-yard 18th hole at the Bay Hill Course in Orlando as one of the toughest on the PGA tour. A water trap lies alongside the right side of the fairway and the green is long and narrow.

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