

Lakers and Warriors renew rivalry tonight

One of the hottest rivalries in the B.C. Junior Hockey League will resume tonight when Vernon Lakers host Merritt Warriors, at 8 p.m.

Lakers currently occupy second place in the Interior Division with 39 points, 14 more than fourth place Merritt. However, the Warriors and Lakers have split four games this season.

The rivalry heated up when Chuck Tapp, who was fired as coach of Lakers early in the 1983-84 season, took over as head coach of Warriors. Since going to Merritt, Tapp has recruited players extensively in the North Okanagan and currently has four Vernon minor hockey graduates on his roster. Among these is Troy Mick, who has scored 21 goals this season.

"Winning in Vernon always means something special to me," Tapp said. "There is no love lost between (Lakers' President Carl) Enemark and myself."

For the second consecutive game, Lakers will be without speedy defenceman Shawn Lofroth, who is suffering from a charleyhorse.

"Shawn's injury is worse than we thought it was," said Lakers' General Manager Vern Dye. "He probably won't be ready to play for another week."

Anyone bringing a can of food to tonight's game to be donated to the Salvation Army Food Bank, will receive \$1 off their admission price. Also, the shot on goal program prize now stands at \$2,000.

The one who got away

A curious lot these college hockey scouts that frequent hockey arenas.

For the most part they are an unenviable type person, especially for their apparent workaholic attitudes when it comes to scouting the current flock of players who will hopefully fill the ranks in their respective colleges in the next year or so. Most that you meet have only enough time to offer their name and to thrust their business card in your face. A few, however, such as Grant Standbrook, will spend as much time as they possibly can talking to local hockey fans in the area. In fact, Standbrook, who is an assistant coach with the Wisconsin Badgers out of University of Wisconsin, adds considerably to his workaholic day's schedule because he knows the importance of carrying on a rapport with local fans.

It's difficult to say what motivates these men to spend as much time as they do at their task, but in the case of Standbrook there is one motivational factor that keeps him working longer and harder than most in his field.

He calls it the "Phil Sykes Syndrome," but that's just his personal accolade for a syndrome most of us would refer to as "the one that got away."

Each season, college scouts such as Standbrook have as many as 20 college scholarships to fulfill. The players have to meet a number of stringent criteria in order to qualify for his scholarships, not the least of these is the fact that they must be quality hockey players as well as well-rounded individuals with good, likeable personalities and the scholastic abilities to maintain at least a B average at college.

Naturally, with 36 colleges in four conferences in the National College Athletic Association division I hockey program all looking for top calibre talent, it gets more than a bit tight trying to find the amount of quality players a college scout needs each season.

For this reason, college scouts, possibly more than any other kind of scouts, have to scrutinize each and every junior A, junior B, high school and juvenile hockey league in both Canada and the United States to flush out the talent.

Things are compounded by the sheer competition of college scouts vying for the attention of the top individual players.

With such an abundance of talent within the BCJHL, however, it's sometimes not necessary for these scouts to forage into the unknown



by
Jim Judd

Daily News
Sports Writer

hockey regions of the country to find talented individuals. They could probably find what they're looking for without having to waste any further amounts of their precious time in leagues such as the Peace-Cariboo Junior Hockey League.

They could, but guys like Standbrook don't ... because they are driven by the "Phil Sykes Syndrome."

Phil Sykes, by the way, is a native of Dawson Creek and toiled for Dawson Creek Kodiaks of the PC-JHL. These days he's enjoying a professional hockey career with Los Angeles Kings. He got there by way of the NCAA but it wasn't with the Wisconsin Badgers.

For that fact, Standbrook blames himself. He first got wind of Sykes' playing ability, through word-of-mouth when he picked up a hitchhiker in Saskatchewan one day a number of years ago. The hitchhiker related the skills of Sykes to Standbrook who could do nothing but listen since he had already filled his scholarships that year. The name stuck with him, even haunted him during that summer. In the ensuing years, the name would haunt him even more as Sykes became one of the most outstanding college players in the NCAA first division. There were occasions when Sykes single-handedly defeated Standbrook's Badgers.

Standbrook never forgot the valuable lesson. He hadn't scouted the lowly PCJHL and one of the top college hockey prospects got away from him as a result.

As far as Standbrook is concerned, it's a lesson he never wants repeated. So he, and hundreds of college scouts just like him, spend their hours in cold hockey arenas from one end of this country to the other, from one end of this continent to the other.

The odd college-quality player may still slip through their fingers, of course but more likely, because he was a late bloomer.

It won't be because guys like Standbrook never gave him a look.