

High-flying blueliner provides the difference

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers' sputtering offense got some unexpected help from the latest member of the club's blueline corps Friday night as they defeated visiting Merritt Warriors 7-5 in B.C. Junior Hockey League action at Civic arena.



CAMPBELL BLAIR

Campbell Blair scored four goals, including the game winner and an empty net marker to put the icing on the cake late in the third period, as Lakers earned their 20th victory of the season. The victory keeps Lakers in second place in the BCJHL Interior Division, three points behind Kelowna Packers and one ahead of third-place Penticton Knights, both of whom were winners Friday night as well.

Blair, the stocky native of Prince George who came to Lakers via Summerland Buckaroos early in November, scored three of his four tallies with his devastatingly accurate shot from the point.

"I beat him (Merritt goaltender Lucien Carrigan) up top twice and once on the short side because he's not very big," explained the burly defenceman.

Blair also set up a goal by forward Steve Humphrey in the first period to pick up five points on the night. Added to his rapidly growing total, Blair now has 42 points and is on the verge of being the only defenceman in the BCJHL to crack the top 10 individual scoring list.

"I get them (points) in spurts but that's the most I've had in one game," offered Blair of his productive evening. "It's starting to come together for us as a team too."

While Blair was having an easy time finding the goal, the same could not be said of the rest of the Lakers. The club held a distinct advantage in shots on goal against their competitors, but for the most part couldn't finish things off around the net. It wasn't the first time the club has held a clear edge in play but narrowly won the game and Head Coach Don Moores has a pretty good idea what's wrong with his team.

"We're getting uptight in front of the net instead of relaxing and firing the puck... the intensity is there though," he suggested.

Friday night the local forwards missed a number of golden opportunities in every period but especially in the opening frame when even Dennis Holland missed on a clear break after he had Carrigan sprawled in the crease.

Merritt opened the scoring at 1:06 of the first period when Kevin Cheveldave, scoring his first of three for the night in a losing cause, deflected a shot from the point past Vernon starter Darryl Dickens. Dickens was later yanked after Warriors' third goal, and replaced with Blu Smith.

Blair and Humphrey connected before the period ended to put Vernon in the lead. Both tallies came on power-play situations.

Warriors took the lead with a pair of goals in the second frame. Cheveldave notched his second of the night while Vernon Minor Hockey product Troy Mick beat Dickens with a perfectly-timed screened shot from the top of the circle.

Greg Guest evened the game 3-3 before the second period had elapsed and it was the last time Warriors would have the lead during the game.

Lakers opened the third period with three goals in the first five minutes. Blair scored two of them while Wes Gentles, who turned in a strong performance for the night, had the other.

Rob Revell, and Cheveldave, with

number three, closed the gap to 6-5 but the empty netter by Blair sealed their fate at 19:55.

As is usually the case when these two clubs meet, hard hitting was the order of the evening though the game may have toned down somewhat due to a pre-game brawl saw five players from each club ejected before the opening puck had been dropped. Fortunately it was an even trade talent-wise.

Meanwhile, in other BCJHL action Friday night, Kelowna Packers spotted Summerland Buckaroos two early goals but roared back to swamp the visitors 14-5. In Penticton, Knights trimmed Shuswap Blazers 9-5 while in a Coastal Division game Sidney Capitals downed Langley Eagles 5-2.

Pat Mangold and Rick Viens each had three goals for Packers who lead the Interior Division with 22 wins. Randy Olson scored twice for Buckaroos. Lee Davidson and Aaron Scott each scored two for Knights while Murray Yewchuck had pair for Blazers who are last in the division.

Lakers are in Summerland tonight.

ASK AL

Young could spin an interesting tale

If you asked the average hockey fan who he'd most like to meet you'd probably get Wayne Gretzky for an answer.

Not me. If I had a chance to meet one guy, and maybe go for a brew or two with, I'd select Howie Young. Because I think he'd be the most interesting hockey player to listen to.

At 48-years-old, Young is making a comeback. Not at the NHL level, mind you. He's already seen that movie during a much-travelled career with Detroit, California Seals and L.A. Kings, to mention a few big-league cities he's played in. No, our man Howie is suiting up this year for the (I kid you not) New York Slapshots. The very same Slapshots of the Atlantic Coast Hockey League, coached by the ever-affable Dave Schultz. Anybody remember him?

Young's last professional hockey team was the 1976-77 version of the Phoenix Roadrunners, of the World Hockey Association. Since then Young has become an accomplished cowboy. Earned his living at it in Oklahoma until the urge to lace up the blades again struck.

Young and Schultz are the two guys who should have been signed to star in the Paul Newman movie Slap



by
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Daily News
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Shot. They have plenty in common. Both set NHL single-season penalty-minute records.

Young boozed his way through the NHL — literally. But now that's all changed. He hasn't had a drink in 20 years now and has admittedly mellowed considerably since the time when he'd go on a bender and wake up not knowing which city he was in. Fact is, sometimes Howie would guess which town he was in and be dead wrong. There was no controlling the guy. He was his own worst enemy.

Just getting this far with his comeback is a major accomplishment for Young. And he's not kidding himself about how long it's going to last either. He's taking it one day at a time. Take each day as it comes and

sports

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Editor — DON KENDALL

Fisheries project slated for local lake

An experimental fisheries improvement project to control coarse fish populations by introducing predatory sport fish into selected lakes with coarse fish problems will include, among others, Postill Lake in the Winfield-Oyama area near Vernon.

The project is currently under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment department of the Province of British Columbia.

During the spring and fall of 1985, overyearling brook trout were set free in Postill Lake, located a few miles East of Winfield. Other lakes which will be part of the project include Idabel (Caribou) Lake, and Headwaters Lake No. 1.

Previous experience indicates that these brook trout can grow and prey on

coarse fish in one or two years. However, a substantial number of these fish must survive past the first year in order to effectively harvest coarse fish.

Consequently, the Ministry of Environment has closed fishing on these lakes from Dec. 1, 1985 until April 30, 1986 to prevent brook trout mortality due to sport fishing. This will likely result in almost twice the survival of brook trout that would occur if angling were allowed during this time period.

These lakes will be monitored over the next several years to see if this is a Viable alternative to expensive lake rehabilitation projects.

For further information contact the Fisheries Section, Ministry of Environment in Penticton at 493-8261.

don't lose any sleep over it.

Yep, that's the guy I'd most like to meet. He wouldn't have to tell me any lies. I probably wouldn't believe the truth.

Vancouver Canucks are the same team with the same personnel they were a few weeks back so what's wrong? Nothing. Up until recently, teams haven't been mentally prepared to play against the Canucks so they took a few teams by surprise. Coach Tom Watt was hailed as a genius. Now the rest of the NHL has woke up and realized there are no free lunches anymore. As a result, the Canucks have to work for everything they get.

An especially sad note was contained in the latest edition of the Hockey News. Don Murdoch was traded from Muskegon to Indianapolis for somebody named Gord Paddock. Murdoch, who played one year (1973) for Vernon Vikings of the BCJHL, was the best junior prospect I'd ever seen. But after a drug bust and subsequent banishment from New York Rangers, "Murder" never really got it together. Too bad.

Cross country skiers can race under lights

Cross-country skiers now have an opportunity to race under the lights!

Silver Star Nordic Centre has scheduled an eight week recreational race series.

The series, which is scheduled on Tuesday nights, gets under way Jan. 14. It will consist of four individual pursuits and four team relays. Skiers are invited to form a team for the relays and compete as individuals in the pursuit events.

Silver Star Nordic Co-ordinator Lyle Grisdale said the series will give Nordic skiers an opportunity to race with and against their friends. "Relays and pursuits are scheduled on alternating weeks," Grisdale said. "A handicapping system will be introduced on the

first night of racing."

Silver Star Nordic Centre includes four km. of lit trails, adjacent to the mountain village.

Grisdale said demo skis will be available on race nights and prizes will be donated by participating ski companies.

There are categories for both men and women as follows: under 29, 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60 and over. Entry fee is \$50 for all eight events, or \$8 per person, per race.

Registrations are available at Fresh Air Experience, in Kelowna; Stussi Sport, in Vernon; Salmon Valley Sports, in Salmon Arm; and at Silver Star's Customer Service desk.