

LAKERS LETHARGIC

Buckaroos receive a gift

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Vernon Lakers gave Summerland Buckaroos an early Christmas present Tuesday night, allowing the visitors to bus home with a 9-7 victory in B.C. Junior Hockey League action.

Nobody, least of all Head Coach Don Moores, was impressed with undisciplined, lethargic display by the Vernon hockey club. Lakers are now looking over their shoulders to see how close Buckaroos are getting to their own third-place standing in the BCJHL Interior Division.

Buckaroos improved their position from fifth to fourth place with the victory, their second in as many meetings against Lakers and their fifth of six possible points against Vernon in their last three contests.

Epitomizing Lakers' attitude Tuesday night was the fact that the club actually overcame a five-goal deficit early in the third period only to stand idly by while Buckaroos salvaged the victory from the ruins. In a span of slightly more than three minutes, the Vernon team pulled out of a 7-2 hole to even the score 7-7.

But the worst goal of the night against Vernon proved to be the winner a short while later. A weak backhand shot across the crease from a near impossible angle went in off goaltender Blu Smith's skate to give Bucks an 8-7 lead. An empty net goal in the dying seconds of the game put the icing on the cake for the visiting hockey

club, which evened its record at 12-12-1 with the win.

"They (Lakers) might have been looking forward to an early Christmas holiday but they won't be looking forward to January," hissed a visibly angry Moores. "There are definitely some changes going to be made."

Following the club's loss in Summerland last Saturday night, an equally dissatisfied Moores made his players travel home on the bus without changing out of their uniforms. He would have made them practice when they got home had there been ice-time available.

Tuesday night he would have liked to have done the same thing... only he might not have allowed them the luxury of riding in the bus.

"Some players may find themselves without a job after Christmas so they had better do some soul-searching," he suggested.

Lakers play the toughest portion of their season in the new year, playing all their games against teams within their own division... and the club has difficulty with every Interior team.

Lakers, ironically, opened the scoring on a power-play tally at 9:28 of the first frame when Doug Spooner connected on a play set up by Al Young and Frank Dutoff. Their second goal came at 15:48 of the opening period and was scored by Dennis Holland but between those two goals and thereafter, it was Buckaroos' game all the way.

Bucks led 3-2 at the end of the first period and opened a 6-2 lead after 40 minutes. It could have been much worse, however. The Pohl brothers, Troy and Trevor, put on a hot-headed display of poor

discipline late in the period that cost Lakers a total of nine minutes in penalties.

Bucks' sixth goal, at 12:16 of the second frame, chased starting netminder Darryl Dickens from the net in favor of Smith. While Smith turned in a passable performance in the second half, Dickens was the victim of one bad goal after another. Dickens, who has shown sporadic bursts of competence between the pipes, did nothing right during his tenure in goal, Tuesday. He didn't challenge any of Bucks' shooters, didn't cover up anything around his crease, and gave up numerous rebounds to the eager visitors.

The two combined to make 30 saves on the night while Tyler Findlater made 38 saves for Summerland.

Craig Bedard led the visitors with a pair of goals while singles came off the sticks of Robb Ouchack, Andy Pokupiec, Cliff Furnace, Lorn Knauff, Ed Tuckwood, Randy Olson, and Kirk Fynn.

Holland had a pair for Lakers, as did Spooner and Wes Gentles while Murray Baron notched a single.

Lakers have a three-week layoff now, with their next league game scheduled for Jan. 4. The club plans to utilize some of that time by playing exhibition games against teams in the Peace Cariboo Junior Hockey League.

In other BCJHL action Tuesday night, Penticton Knights edged Kelowna Packers 4-3 in a fight-filled affair in Penticton, while on the Coast it was Abbotsford over Sidney 6-2 and Richmond Sockeyes over Langley Eagles 8-2.



SUMMERLAND defenceman Lorn Knauff prepares to throw a hit on Vernon Lakers' forward Wes Gentles during action between the two clubs Tuesday night at Vernon Civic arena. Knauff, who made life

miserable for Lakers all night, along with the rest of the Bucks, escaped with a 9-7 victory to take over fourth place in the BCJHL Interior Division.

(Daily News Photo)

Vernon
Daily
News

sports

Editor—DON KENDALL

JUDD'S JOURNAL

Cariboo trip
a waste of time

by
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I definitely don't agree with Vernon Lakers way of thinking! They plan to play exhibition games against Peace-Cariboo Junior Hockey League clubs during their Christmas break this season.

Lakers, who closed out the pre-season portion of their regular season in the B.C. Junior Hockey League, Tuesday night, on a losing note, have a three-week layoff until they resume their schedule Jan. 4.

The lengthy layoff could be a blessing, or hindrance, to the local club depending on how they utilize the time and how the individual team members take it upon themselves to stay in condition during the Christmas holiday. Naturally there's always some concern that being away from a game situation that long could hurt a club.

To my way of thinking, the team could make good use of the time, or at least a good portion of it, by scheduling daily practice sessions at the Civic Arena where they have staged some less than impressive games during the early going this season. A few valuable lessons learned on the ice, particularly in the area of specialty teams, could give them the edge they need to overtake Kelowna Packers and finish the season in first place in the tough BCJHL Interior Division.

There's simply no doubt in my mind that the club's special teams need attention. While their penalty-killing has been good at times, and excellent at other times, it has faltered often during key situations.

Lakers' power-play has also sputtered often and looks to be in total confusion at times. The opportunity to work on these areas should come as a welcome gift at this time of the year.

But most of all, perhaps the club could use a good deal of this practice time to learn to hit the net with their shots. Lakers have consistently out-shot their opposition this season though they haven't been nearly as consistent on the scoreboard. The difference between a good club and a championship club is scoring ability. It would be a welcome change to substitute quality for quantity where shots on net are concerned.

What Lakers' management has up its sleeve for the layoff, however, are exhibition games against Prince George Spruce Kings and Quesnel Millionaires, of the PCJHL. They'll also travel to those distant locations to play the games.

Just exactly what President Carl Enemark and his club hope to gain from such a venture is a mystery to me and probably to a lot of his players. If there are, indeed, any benefits to be gained from such a safari into the unknown, the drawbacks outweigh them heavily.

To start with, the PCJHL is more than just a step behind the BCJHL in terms of calibre. If that weren't true, why would the better players from that region travel south to play for BCJHL teams. Vernon, in particular, draws heavily from the northern regions in stocking its roster since Enemark took possession of the club.

There may be a few quality players remaining, but they are few and far between. The bulk of the players on Quesnel and Prince George, neither of which are even powerhouses in the PCJHL, by the way, are rejects from the BCJHL. For instance, Vernon native Derek Webb, who was cut from three different BCJHL teams, including Merritt Warriors earlier this season, is now enjoying a banner year as a member of the Millionaires.

In short, there's simply nothing Vernon Lakers can learn by playing such teams... other than how to avoid injuries, that is.

Show me a team of misfits and rejects from other leagues, and I'll show you a team of players with chips on their shoulders. Get them in a game situation with a rival league club and they are likely to want to take runs at the Lakers with their sticks at eye-level as they are to play good hockey.

Why in heaven's name would Lakers want to risk injuries to their best players by playing these teams? Or worse yet, risk having a player suspended.

For one thing, it's possibly something of a Christmas present to players on the local club who have a vested interest in these centres. Shawn Lofroth and Campbell Blair hail from Prince George while Greg Guest and Wes Gentles are from Quesnel. In addition, the Pohl brothers have a member of their family playing for the Millionaires as well... brother Terry Pohl who was trimmed from Lakers' roster prior to regular season play.

If this is the way of thinking, why doesn't the club play Cariboo College, of Kamloops, instead. At least the calibre of play would be somewhere near the area where the club could benefit from the game. Three players and their head coach are from the Kamloops area so they would be killing two birds with one stone.

With Lakers nursing their position in the Interior and the toughest portion of the season ahead of them yet, the last thing they need is to have someone like Dennis Holland out with a serious injury.

They have to be healthy and ready, both mentally and physically, to resume play in January. All but two of their games are against teams within their own division after the new year and their present record against Interior Division teams is only 12-8-1.

Take my advice, Vernon Lakers... save the time and the money and get to work on things that need to be done. You don't owe the PCJHL any favors.

Panthers to tackle
best teams in B.C.

Many of British Columbia's best senior boys' AA basketball teams will be playing in the Okanagan-Shuswap this weekend.

Vernon Panthers' Coach Dave Jackson said a lot will be decided by Saturday night.

"We'll have a good idea what teams deserve to be ranked in the top 10 after this week," Jackson said. "It should be an interesting weekend."

Panthers, currently ranked fourth in the province, host Windsor of North Vancouver, ranked sixth, on Thursday

at 8 p.m. Windsor boasts a 7-0 record and Vernon is 6-0.

Jackson said, "We know Windsor has a solid, well-coached club."

The North Vancouver squad is coached by Phil Langley, who also coaches the B.C. Under 17 Team. One of Langley's key players is point guard Craig Morgan, who also plays for the provincial squad.

On Friday, play gets under way in the annual Salmon Arm Golds Tournament.

Vernon meets number-seven ranked Maple Ridge in opening round play,

Friday at 7 p.m. Winner of that contest takes on number-one rated Kelowna Owls in the semi-finals.

Other teams in the tourney include Terrace, Windsor, Salmon Arm, Penticton, and Montana. Penticton received honorable mention in the provincial poll.

Jackson said, "The key for us is balance... we have to get production from all five men on the court. We don't have a big guy like Kelowna (6'8" Mike Clarke) so we have to rely on our depth and quickness."

Shuswap
hammers
Armstrong

Shuswap Lakers hammered Armstrong Molsons 100-55 in Vernon Major Men's Basketball League action, Monday, at the Priest Valley Gymnasium.

In other games, Scenic Valley Garden Centre dumped Nor Kor Ploymboys 80-60 and Apple Lane Restaurant nipped winless Waddy's Restaurant 56-53.

Scenic Valley leads the loop with 12 points, two more than Lakers.

Glynn Green led the Shuswap attack with 29 points. Don Jameson added 20 points while Gary Davis sunk 15 for Lakers.

Stu Fitzpatrick, with 12 points, and Duncan McDonald, with 10, replied for Armstrong.

Scenic Valley broke open a close game with 12 consecutive points late in the second half.

Otis Haley led the Gardeners with 25 points while Rene Dolcetti dropped in 13.

Morris Vardabasso countered with 19 points for Ploymboys, including 17 in the first half. Randy Matheson, with 14 points, and Kelly Olson, with 13, also hit double figures for Nor Kor.

Apple Lane never trailed after opening a 17-8 lead early in the game.

Dwayne Schultz led the Apple Lane attack with 17 points while Wilf Hank added 15.



WALLYBALL CHAMPS

Creamers recently won the Wallyball League championship at Village Racquetball Centre. Team members are from left: Paul Geier and Ray Korbett; Laurie Geier, Julie Vardabasso, and Marie Korbett.

PIN POINTS

POLSON BOWLING CENTRE
NOV. 30
TUESDAY 7-9
Women's High Single: Willie
Wendel, 283; High Triple: Willie
Wendel, 756; High Average: May
Turek, 218.

Simpson, 621; High Average: Tillie
Bruce, 186.
Men's High Single: Gordon
Young, 249; High Triple: Norm
Crimmon, 656; High Average: Art
Bar, 265.

Team High Single: Paul
Big O Tire... 419.0
Aristocats... 411.5
Alley Oops... 388.5
Luffy Pythians... 377.5
The Clan... 373.0
Berry Dickson...