

LAKERS MEET PACKERS

Playoff dates announced

B.C. Junior Hockey League has announced the playoff dates for the Interior Division semi-final series between Vernon Lakers and Kelowna Packers.

Packers, who will finish second in the division, have home ice advantage for four games in the best-of-seven series.

Packers host Lakers on March 4, 7, 9, and 12. Vernon will play at home March 5, 8, and 11.

There will be a playoff preview Friday night when Packers entertain third place Lakers. Vernon plays its final two regular season home games Saturday, against Salmon Arm, and Sunday, against first place Penticton Knights.

In BCJHL action Tuesday, Lance Momotani and Rich Stentiford each scored three goals and assisted on one to lead Delta Flyers to an 8-6 win over Abbotsford Flyers.

In other games, Richmond Sockeyes bombed Nanaimo Clippers 13-3 and Penticton doubled Summerland Buckaroos 8-4.

FLYERS 8 FALCONS 6

Todd Decker added one goal and had five assists for the Flyers — second in the Coast Division — who outshot the fifth-place Falcons 50-28 in Delta.

Rob Steele got the other Delta goal, as the Flyers went ahead 6-4 in the second period after the first had ended at 2-2.

For the Falcons, Trevor Tigar and Mike Dutton each scored twice, and singles came from Joe Sobotin and Ian Alger.

The game included a record-setting performance by Delta's Gary Douville, who took 17 minutes in penalties to put his season's total to 462 — breaking the previous BCJHL single-season record of 446.

"He likes to fight — if there's a problem, he likes to get involved," Delta coach Willie Young said of Douville, but disputed any description of the 18-year-old, five-foot-11, 190-pound defenceman as a goon.

"He can put the puck in the net, and he's got a few points up there, for a defenceman — he's a

playmaker also. But unfortunately he gets involved in the rough stuff."

Douville's older brother, Randy, had a 140-point season for Abbotsford two seasons ago, but now is out of hockey.

KNIGHTS 8 BUCKAROOS 4

The Interior-Division-leading Knights got two goals each from Rod Summers and Scott Rawson in the home-ice victory over the fifth-place Buckaroos.

The Knights trailed 2-1 after the opening period but came back to take a 5-4 edge into the third and added three unanswered goals.

Penticton outshot Summerland 61-26.

The Knights also got goals from Lee Davidson, Kevin Therrien, Laine Jeannotte and Aaron Scott.

Summerland scorers were Karl Goebel, Craig Bedard, Ed Tuckwood and Randy Olson.

The game was a make-up contest to fill a postponement from Nov. 22, when the Knights were touring Czechoslovakia.

Lakers hope to avoid token playoff appearance

With the team having won its last two games on the road, Vernon Lakers' fans have received some encouragement. But, with the last days of the regular season winding down, a giant question mark hangs ominously over the team.

Will they get it together by playoff time or will they fold their tents after only a token playoff appearance... much as the past three Lakers' teams have done before them?

With five games remaining in regular season, the next week will tell a lot about the fate of the local club. The most important date among these final contests is Feb. 21 when the team takes on Kelowna Packers, in the Orchard City.

This represents the final meeting between these two clubs prior to playoffs. Assuming that they can avert total disaster in the next two weeks, Lakers will finish the season in third place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division while Packers will finish second. Those placings will match the two in the opening round of playoffs in the Interior.

Of course, Packers still have a mathematical chance of overtaking Penticton Knights for the division pennant, but that possibility exists only on paper.

Similarly, Merritt Warriors could overtake Lakers for third place but that possibility is even more remote. For this to happen, Lakers would have to lose all five of their remaining games while Warriors would have to win at least five of theirs.

I think we can safely assume that all the cards have been dealt at this point.

However, Lakers must prove that they are not only capable of beating Packers, which they have done on various occasions already this season, but they must also prove they can beat Packers in their own building.

The last time the two teams met, at Civic Arena, Lakers earned a 9-3 decision. As mentioned previously, the game this Friday will tell us all a lot about what we can, or can't, expect from these two teams in the quarter-final playoff series.

If I wanted to take a more negative approach, which I don't plan to do, I might suggest that the local club has played the worst hockey of these four playoff-bound teams during the second half of the season.

Since Dec. 1, roughly half the season, Lakers have managed a mediocre 8-9-2 record. The last two victories shored up this pathetic statistic somewhat, but one must keep in mind that the two teams they beat last weekend were the two teams which won't make the playoffs in the Interior Division.

By contrast, Kelowna Packers have amassed an impressive 14-6 record in roughly the same span of time. Penticton Knights, who lead the league, have gone 21-3 since Dec. 1. Even Merritt Warriors, who will face Knights in the quarter-final round, have played winning hockey since then with a 10-9-1 record.

At the same time, Lakers have just



by
Jim Judd

Daily News
Sports Writer

recently gone through a somewhat traumatic coaching change with Mike Enemark coming in to replace Don Moores. This may work out for the best. Through my observations, I can tell fans the club played more consistently under Enemark in days gone by. And, if he wasn't always the most knowledgeable coach he was at least the most predictable... the players knew with whom they would play and also what position they were going to play.

Unfortunately, Enemark lacks playoff experience. Also, his record in post season play to date is two wins and four losses which was good enough only to have the team ousted in the first round back in March of 1984.

In the same light, Enemark played in the league for a full season and he knows the ins and outs of all the various arenas in the Interior. The last opposing coach he faced in a playoff situation, ironically, was Wayne Naka who was mentor of Summerland Buckaroos during the 1983-84 season. Naka is head coach of Kelowna Packers this season and

though he's a tough guy to coach against, Enemark has a personal score to settle with junior hockey's nice guy.

It would help things also if some other stressful situations within the club were rectified in the next few weeks. One of these is the question of Dennis Holland.

Holland, who led the team through some foggy times in the earlier part of the season, has been wrestling with the question of whether he should accept an offer from Portland Winter Hawks, of the Western Hockey League, or if he should opt for another season in the BCJHL and take what comes his way in the matter of scholarships.

Even though he's a mature youngster at 17, the weight of the decision is obviously taking its toll on Holland and he's very obviously been off his game lately... scoring-wise anyway.

A return to form would greatly enhance Lakers' chances in the playoffs.

Enemark has talked lately of gaining some momentum heading into the playoffs and that's important too. If the club can win three or four of its remaining five games, it may supply the necessary key ingredient.

One big plus the team has going for it at this time is that in view of the recent coaching situation nobody on the team quit and staying together means a lot more than one might think.

Everyone knows that quitters never win and winners never quit.