

Lakers lose playoff preview

Vernon Lakers pushed the panic button when Kelowna Packers challenged their lead late in the game and the local club fell victim to a 7-5 defeat at the hands of Packers Friday night in B.C. Junior Hockey League action in the Orchard City.

The loss leaves the status of the two teams unchanged in the BCJHL In-

terior Division standings. Packers are in second place while Lakers hold down third.

Elsewhere, Penticton Knights clinched first place in the Interior with a 14-5 route of visiting Shuswap Blazers Friday night, Nanaimo outbattled Merritt 5-3 and Langley won 6-4 over Sidney.

Lakers' coach Mike Enemark said his team let down after the second Kelowna goal in the third period which erased a Vernon lead and put Packers ahead.

"Defensively in our own zone we started to panic a bit," Enemark said. "We've been doing that a lot, panicking as soon as something goes wrong." Shawn Swail scored twice during the

third frame for Kelowna who trailed Lakers 3-2 and 4-3 at the intermissions before scoring four in a row in the final stanza.

"I guess a few people realized we had to pull up our socks or we were going to lose this one," Swail said of the rally. "I didn't think Vernon played like they wanted to win."

The game was only the first of three Lakers will have to play this weekend as the local club hosts Shuswap Blazers tonight and League-leading Penticton Sunday night.

Blazers, currently holding down last place in the league, have never beaten Lakers this season and will be a welcome sight to the struggling Vernon team who are looking for winning momentum to help carry them through the playoffs.

Meanwhile, in other BCJHL action Friday night, Laine Jeanotte scored three goals and assisted on a pair as the Knights took their 42nd victory against seven losses. Scott Rawson and David Shields added two goals each for Penticton which led 6-4 and 9-5 by periods.

Warriors lived up to their name with a late game brawl against Clippers which resulted in eight game misconducts and a match penalty for hair-pulling for Merritt, while Nanaimo took seven game misconducts and a gross misconduct.

Before the fighting began, Clippers, who led 2-0 and 3-1 by periods, had scored two short-handed goals to put the game away.

And, Wayne Stripp scored twice to lead Eagles past the Capitals.

Langley goalie Rob Bruni faced 38 shots while his teammates took 29 at the Capitals' net.

In the BCJHL today, Merritt is at Abbotsford, Richmond in Nanaimo, Sidney at Delta, and Kelowna is at Summerland.



WALLYBALL WINNERS

Oyama-Kelowna Connection captured top spot in the Annual Carnival Wallyball Tournament held at Vernon Racquet Centre recently. Team members in-

clude, from left; Chris Graham, Frankie Minchella, Tracy Cushing, and Manny Casola.

(Daily News Photo)