

Holland signs with Portland

Portland Winter Hawks dipped into the gold mine of North Okanagan hockey talent to pluck another gem last week.

Centre Dennis Holland signed an affiliation agreement with the Western Hockey League club. Holland, who has accumulated 103 points in his rookie season with Vernon Lakers, will remain with the B.C. Junior Hockey League team for the remainder of the regular season and playoffs. He then becomes eligible to join Winter Hawks for the WHL playoffs and Memorial Cup, which Portland is hosting.

In case you haven't been keeping track, Winter Hawks now have four Vernon minor hockey graduates on their roster.

Defenceman Jeff Finley, who was selected by New York Islanders in last spring's amateur draft, is in his second season with the Winter Hawks. Another rearguard, Jay Stark, joined Portland this year in a trade with Spokane, of the WHL. Stark is eligible for the draft this June.

Winger Troy Mick was also acquired by Portland, from Spokane, earlier this season. Mick, who has scored more than 40 goals for Merritt Warriors, of the BCJHL, has already been called up for two games by the Winter Hawks. Like Holland, Mick will also be eligible for WHL playoffs and the Memorial Cup.

However, the powerful Winter Hawks aren't counting on Mick and Holland to help them this season. Next year is a different story.

Wayne Meier, director of player personnel for Portland, expects big things from the talented Vernon duo. "I'm confident Troy and Dennis will be stars in the WHL," Meier said. "If they progress like we expect them to, they should both be drafted in the second round (of the NHL draft) next year."

Portland Head Coach Ken Hodge recently stated he'd like to play Mick and Holland on the same line during the 1986-87 season. "They seem to have a sixth sense for each other when they are on the ice together," Hodge said.

After spending seven years together on the same team, and usually the same line, Mick and Holland were broken up last fall when Lakers' Head Coach Don Moores (who was fired two weeks ago) refused to give Mick a regular shift. Vernon President Carl Enemark agreed to give Mick his release and he has since become Merritt's prime offensive weapon.

Meier said, "Dennis and Troy are excellent hockey players ... together we feel they are even more effective."

Winter Hawks obviously believe what they say. They went to great lengths to sign the two forwards. They sent defenceman Rick Herbert to Spokane for Mick. Herbert was drafted last spring by Chicago Black



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Hawks. And they talked Holland out of accepting a U.S. college scholarship by guaranteeing to pay for his post-secondary education.

Here are a few excerpts from Daily News sports pages that show why Portland has so much faith in the two youngsters.

JAN. 2, 1980 (pup rep): Troy Mick scored five goals against the Hotelmen while Dennis Holland added three. Mick had another big game against Hotelmen with four goals while Holland added two goals and two assists. Holland was the offensive star against Baron with five goals while Mick added a pair.

JAN. 16, 1980 (pup rep): The Vernon squad has been led by the high scoring exploits of Troy Mick and Dennis Holland, two players who recently hit the 100-goal plateau. Holland counted the century mark in only his 26th game while Mick followed up with the magic number in his 29th contest.

FEB. 16, 1981 (pee wee rep): On Saturday, Vernon blasted Burnaby Winter Club 12-2. Dennis Holland led Vernon past Burnaby with four goals while Troy Mick and Jay Stark added two apiece.

FEB. 12, 1982 (pee wee): In an earlier game (against Sherwood Park, Alta.), Mick scored five goals while Holland added four goals and two assists.

FEB. 1, 1984 (bantam): Vernon Acutruss Flyers moved into first place in the Okanagan-Mainline Bantam Hockey League with a pair of victories on the weekend.

Acutruss trounced Penticton 10-2, Sunday, while shading Penticton 8-5, Saturday. Dennis Holland led the way with four goals and two assists, Sunday, while Troy Mick added two goals and three assists.

Meanwhile, Saturday, Holland scored twice and set up three others while Mick had a single and four helpers.

SEPT. 18, 1985 (junior A): Local sensations Dennis Holland and Troy Mick, both just 16, were busy putting on a goal-scoring clinic for hockey fans at the Civic Arena. Holland scored five times during the course of the evening, including the first four of the game, all during the first period. Holland also set up a goal by Stacey Hartnell to give him six points for the night.

Mick, meanwhile, scored three goals, all from the slot area, including two during the second period.