

SKILL AND AGGRESSION

Pohl brothers pool talent

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Move over Rich and Ron Sutter, the Pohl brothers, Trevor and Troy, want to be the next twins in the NHL.

Like those Sutter lookalikes, the Pohls combine speed, high skill levels, guts and determination in their game along with a heaping helping of good old fashioned aggression.

Unlike the Sutter siblings, however, Trevor and Troy are the identical two-thirds of a set of triplets and are two of the three Pohl brothers (there are four in all) who toil for Vernon Lakers of the B.C. Junior Hockey League.

Shannon Pohl, the eldest of the four at 20, is two years senior to his triplet brothers yet all four are currently in their third season of junior A hockey. The third member of the triplets, Terry, plays for Quesnel Millionaires, of the Peace-Cariboo Junior Hockey League, though all four brothers were in the Vernon camp last autumn.

Shannon, oddly enough, began his hockey career in the Senior A Western International Hockey League, playing for Elk Valley Blazers, who chose the youngest as their rookie of the year that season.

In the past three seasons, except for a brief stint with Salmon Arm and Revelstoke of the BCJHL, the eldest Pohl has been with Lakers.

It wasn't until this season that he was able to unite himself and his brothers on the same team, though with the departure of Terry to the PC-JHL early in the season, that got together was short-lived.

In past years it wasn't by accident, but by choice, that the four never combined on the same team since they didn't always get along that well playing together.

Patrons of the local club might argue

that the three don't complement each other that well even yet since Shannon's goal-scoring ability sharply dropped off this season with the arrival of his twin brothers.

But the presence of the younger duo has left Vernon hockey fans with little time to think about the slump Shannon is having. Troy leads the team in goal scoring with 45 this season and has added 36 assists. Trevor has 24 goals and 30 assists. Between them they have accumulated more than 600 penalty minutes... 279 for Troy and 322 for Trevor.

By comparison, Shannon, a virtual living legend in the BCJHL for his concrete fists, has amassed just 140 minutes in penalties this season. Systematically, his goal production has fallen off from 35 last season to just 19 so far this campaign. While he doesn't attempt to defend his own inability, he is adamant that his younger brothers are capable of playing professional hockey.

"I think they have good enough skills and they (Troy and Trevor) are good positional players and they are aggressive," suggested the eldest Pohl. "They have to mature more in the aspect of their tempers but I think good coaching would do wonders for them."

The twins echo Shannon's analysis of their own game.

"We try to play a complete game but there's always room for improvement," said Troy. "We have to improve our back-checking but Trev and I love to forecheck... we love the corners too."

Together they are the spark of this junior team which currently occupies third place in the highly competitive Interior Division of the BCJHL.

Though they command a great deal of respect because of their leathery



THE POHL brothers, from left, Trevor, Shannon and Troy, have provided a great deal of excitement this season for Vernon hockey fans. Trevor and Troy are

identical twins in a set of triplets. The third triplet, Terry, plays for Quesnel Millionaires of the Peace-Cariboo Junior Hockey League. (Daily News Photo)

toughness, they are just as capable of astounding onlookers with their exceptional playing abilities. Earlier in the season they combined with centre Dennis Holland, one of the brightest 16-year-olds to ever play in the league, for an unbelievable 25 points in a single game which the club won 13-3. Troy had five goals and three assists while Trevor, playing with a fibreglass cast on his right arm, scored twice and set up seven other goals with his linemates.

Holland, by the way, leads the team in personal statistics and is among the top five scorers in the Interior Division.

"We play with intensity and drive," explained Troy. "I feel we have the ability to lead a team but that hasn't been our role this year."

"We (Troy and Trevor) are on the same wave-length... it seems we've always been that way," he added. "We even feel each other's pain... we really do."

Unfortunately, while that characteristic often provides some thrilling moments on the ice for hockey fans, it is also the weakest point of the twin's game. When one gets involved in an infraction, it usually triggers a similar response in the other.

With constant pressure from coaches and teammates, the two have struggled to control themselves during these situations. Able to follow instructions from their coaching staff, the two have even gone long periods without their fiery tempers going off... a tribute to their willingness to succeed through disciplined play.

The bottom line, however, is that the pair are highly entertaining and are among the favorites of the hometown crowd... not to mention most of the crowds in everyone else's rink.

Though they aren't the biggest players in the sport they aren't the smallest either at 5'11" and 175 pounds each. One can expect they'll fill out at near 190 pounds by maturity.

Now in their draft year the twins aren't likely to be selected highly in the NHL amateur draft and without the benefit of major junior hockey exposure, may be completely overlooked.

But if a needy team were to choose the twin sparkplugs in the bargain bin later rounds of the June draft, they could find a highly valuable commodity in the two. Their style closely resembles that of the high profile Sutter twins of the Philadelphia Flyers.

"We've had a lot of chances to go major junior but we'd really like to try and get scholarships," explained Trevor. "I'd like to play in the NHL."

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Editor—DON KENDALL

some day but if it doesn't happen I'll just move on... if it happens it happens."

Their appearance is deceiving, too. Outside observers might guess the brothers were male models rather than a trio of pucksters. The angular jaws, high cheek bones and aquiline noses, combined with their style of dress further enhances this deception.

On ice the three seem to relish the opportunity to have those fine facial features re-arranged. But, anyone short of a middleweight contender would have a tough time getting close enough to do so.

The latter is most especially true with Shannon who picks his opponents apart so cleanly and with such blinding speed that he could be ranked in North America among middleweight fighters.

The general analogy around the league is that your chances against one of the Pohls are roughly the same as starting a chainsaw and holding it to your face.

On a videotape replay, which never fails to delight teammates who count the punches in slow motion, the eldest Pohl tied up one aggressive opponent and landed more than 50 punches, all on target, inside of a minute.

Those who fall for the twin's deception get an almost equally swift lesson in fisticuffs for their trouble.

However, taking part in such endeavours on ice isn't nearly as tough as being a part of a brotherly quarrel around the Pohl household according to Trevor.

"When we (brothers) used to fight at home everyone came out on their porches to watch," he said.

"Previous to our first year of junior hockey we spent the whole summer dryland training and working on the speed bag and heavy bag," explained Shannon. "We all realized that it (fighting) is a part of the game."

The tough philosophy goes a little deeper than just using their fists for the Pohl brothers. As Troy explained, it's all part of a mental attitude that they carry into each game.

"Being tough is more than just fighting," he said. "You have to strive for the consistency of playing as hard

and determined in your last shift as your first shift and everything in between."

No doubt those words are an integral part of the Sutter brothers' credo as well.

"Trevor and I spend two hours before every game in mental concentration," explained Troy. "In order to score goals you have to have the concentration."

If the three brothers have one regret for this season it is that they can't play with brother Terry. All three insist that the fourth member of the clan, as different in looks as he is on the ice, is the best player in the family. Unfortunately, being the runt of the litter, so to speak, has worked against Terry most of his playing days.

"He (Terry) is a very smart hockey player but everyone thinks he's too small because he's only (5'11") 145 lbs.," said Shannon. "He never gets hit though... he could have helped this team this season... he always was the best of us four on the ice."

The Pohl brothers will lead Lakers into the semi-final round of the Interior Division playoffs, beginning March 4, against Kelowna Packers.

Though the club has played inconsistently this season and recently experienced their third coaching change in less than two years, Shannon feels they will come together, differences aside, come playoff time.

"This year hasn't been too good personally and the team has been so-so, but we're going to do good things in the playoffs," he concluded.

LOOK BACK
FIVE YEARS

FEB., 1981

Vernon Cougars trounced Salmon Arm Aces 10-2 in North Okanagan Hockey League playoff action Saturday. Wayne Dye led the Vernon attack with three goals while Les Salo and Terry Lowe added two goals apiece. Singles were credited to Lyle Brewer, Dave Caldwell and Gary Gilchrist. The Cougars, now 5-0 in elimination playoff action have qualified for the NOHL finals.

Hoop finals
start Thursday

At least one of the top three teams in the province will not qualify for the British Columbia 'AA' Boys Basketball Championships, March 12-15, in Vancouver.

Kelowna Owls, Vernon Panthers, and Penticton Lakers are considered the top three clubs in B.C. However, only one team will advance to the provincial tourney from the valley finals, scheduled this weekend, in Kelowna. The Okanagan's second place squad has an opportunity to challenge the North Central Zone's second place team, next week, for another berth.

The valley playdowns get under way Thursday, at 3:30 p.m., with Kamloops Red Devils meeting Brocklehurst, also of Kamloops. Penticton takes on Westside Whundas at 5:15 p.m., Panthers tangle with Salmon Arm Golds at 7 p.m., and Owls host North Kamloops Saints at 8:45 p.m.

Vernon, which placed second behind Kelowna during the regular season, is considered to be on the 'weak' side of the draw. If Panthers win their opener, they meet the winner of the Kamloops-Brocklehurst match in the semi-finals, Friday, while Owls are expected to face Lakers in second round action.

Vernon Coach Dave Jackson admits it was an advantage to finish second, rather than first, during the regular season. "Kelowna has a tougher draw than us. I should be able to use your bench strength in the first two games. I don't want to wear out our starters..."

New York coach
praises rookie star

By The Canadian Press

Head coach Ted Sator of New York Rangers is the newest member of the Wendel Clark Fan Club.

"He's a complete hockey player and he's only going to get better," said Sator after Clark scored three goals to help Toronto Maple Leafs mow down his Rangers 7-3 Tuesday night. "Among rookies, he's certainly among the cream of the crop."

Sator is not the first visiting coach to offer up the 19-year-old left winger as a prime candidate for the National Hockey League's rookie-of-the-year award. The last Leaf to win the Calder Memorial Trophy was defenceman Brit Selby in 1965-66.

"I just go out there and work hard and give 100 per cent," said Clark. "Nobody can say much against you when you do that."

In other games, it was: Boston Bruins 7, Quebec Nordiques 4; Calgary Flames 4, St. Louis Blues 1; and Washington Capitals 4, Detroit Red Wings 3, in overtime.

Russ Courtnall, who assisted on all three of Clark's goals, Walt Poddubny, Borje Salming and Rick Vaive added a goal each for the Leafs, who put a 13-point stranglehold on fourth place, the final playoff spot, in the Norris Division ahead of Detroit.

Kelly Miller, James Patrick and Reijo Ruotsalainen scored for the Rangers, who had won their six previous games.

"You can't say enough about Wendel," said Leaf coach Dan Maloney. "He gives the team a great lift."

"There is no one (rookie) around like him."

Clark now has 26 goals—two shy of the club rookie record.

Bruins 7 Nordiques 4

Dave Pasin scored twice in the third period to break a tie and lead Boston to a third consecutive win on the road. The Bruins won in Edmonton last Saturday and in Vancouver on Sunday and now are only three points behind second-place Quebec in the Adams Division.

we'll need to be at full strength for Saturday's game against either Kelowna or Penticton."

Panthers defeated Lakers twice, by a total of six points, during the regular season. Kelowna and Vernon split their two league games.

Panthers tuned up for the valley finals by dumping Fulton Maroons 90-63 in the Battle of Vernon game, Tuesday night, at VSS.

J.D. Jackson led Panthers with 26 points while Tim Tollestrup added 22, Rod Charlton sunk 13, and Ted Vanderwal collected 11.

Bruce McElroy replied with 20 points for Fulton, which is ranked among the top 'A' teams in the province.

The performances of Tollestrup, who has been hobbled by shin splints, and Vanderwal, who was kicked in the knee last week, were encouraging for Jackson. "Tim hasn't been able to practice and we didn't really know how much he'd be able to play this week," Jackson said. "I know he is in pain, but it obviously didn't slow him down much."

"We used Vanderwal only sparingly, but he should be alright for this weekend."

Starting guard Bruce Babiuk also saw only limited duty, due to the flu, while reserves Leon Meier and Andrew Winston missed the game because of the flu.

"A couple days rest will do everyone a lot of good," Jackson said.

Ken Linseman, Ray Bourque, John Blum, Gord Kluzak and Charlie Simmer also scored for Boston. Michel Goulet scored his 39th and 40th goals of the season and Peter Stastny his 33rd for Quebec, which lost its fifth game in a row. Brent Ashton also scored for the Nordiques.

Quebec lost defenceman Robert Picard for at least three weeks when he suffered broken ribs in the second period. With defencemen Normand Rocheford and Pat Price already sidelined, the Nordiques find themselves in serious trouble.

"We've lost our three best defencemen," said coach Michel Bergeron. "It's a tough time of the season to play with three or four rookies on defence."

Flames 4 Blues 1

In St. Louis, Gary Suter's disputed goal late in the second period broke a 1-1 tie and Jamie Macoun and Joey Mullen added unanswered third-period goals for the Flames. Steve Bozek had Calgary's other goal. Dave Barr scored for St. Louis.

"There's no way it was a goal," St. Louis goaltender Rick Wamsley said after Suter's goal, scored as Suter fell to the ice and pushed Wamsley into the net. "It wasn't close at all but (the officials) saw it differently."

"All we can do now is forget about it."

Capitals 4 Wings 3

In Landover, Md., defenceman Peter Andersson scored 36 seconds into overtime for the Capitals. Mike Gartner, with two goals, and Bobby Garperter also scored for Washington. Detroit, loser of eight in a row, got goals from Joey Kocur, Warren Young and Gerard Gallant.

Noah advances

LA QUINTA, Calif. (AP) — Fourth-seeded Yannick Noah scored a service break in each set — the only ones of the match — to beat Tim Wilkison 6-4, 6-4 in second-round play of the \$405,000 Pilot Pen Classic men's tennis tournament Tuesday.

JUDD'S JOURNAL

House league hockey
can be a lot of fun

It was with some reluctance that I agreed to coach a midget hockey team in the Vernon Minor Hockey Association house league this season, but in retrospect, I'm glad I did.

At first the idea didn't really appeal to me. House league isn't where the action is and there certainly wasn't much glamor attached to the job. What it amounted to in my mind was simply performing a job of babysitting some kids a couple of times each week.

You see I had become attuned to the idea that hockey was a highly competitive sport and if a player didn't fit into the ideal mold of this system, then he was relegated to the house leagues.

The sad thing is that my way of thinking, however recessed it was in the back of my mind, reflects the attitudes of a lot of people involved in minor hockey these days. If a kid isn't going somewhere in the sport, then he isn't worth the time.

I was wrong. We're all wrong if that's the way we think. Hockey is a game that doesn't have to be drawn up and battled out on serious lines of competition. The game can be fun and the youngsters who are still playing at the midget house level know this for a fact. They like the



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game and they love to play and that's basically all that's important to them.

It only took a short while behind the bench for me to realize that this was the case. Many years of playing competitive hockey and then covering highly competitive hockey for newspapers had gouged out all sense of perspective for the sport.

Over the years, everything has been funnelled into the concept of providing the best possible hockey players as fuel for the major leagues and fodder for the junior clubs. Now the entire process of minor hockey is geared toward finding the best youngsters and trying to push them into the ranks of the highly competitive teams.

It has meant that in these days of economic cutbacks and rising costs of ice time, equipment, and of-

ficiating, the money is felt to be better spent at the rep level of competition. Accordingly, the house leagues have almost become a thing of the past. Each season fewer and fewer youngsters are interested in joining the sport at this level because they feel nobody cares.

Fortunately, for myself, I was able to see life on the other side of the fence for a change. There are still a lot of kids who like to play the game because it's fun.

Our midget team has a lot of fun and nobody really cares in the long run who wins the game. Blowing a four or five goal lead is no big deal and at the end of the game everyone is still friends... with their teammates and with the opposition.

Now I look forward to getting out for my hockey games. We have a lot of laughs on the bench and in the dressing room. The topic of conversation is rarely the game of hockey even when the team retires to the dressing room between the second and third periods when the ice is resurfaced.

The real benefit of this procedure I've noticed, is that the kids who play house league are less inclined to be one-dimensional macho jock types who will have difficulty dealing with real life once their playing days are ended.