



KELOWNA PACKERS' goaltender Frank Romeo (25) saw a lot of action in his crease area during the opening game of the BCJHL Interior Division semi-final Wednesday night. Packers edged Lakers 3-2 to take a

1-0 lead in the series which resumes this evening at Civic Arena. Lakers outplayed Packers and outshot the hometown club 34-22 in game one but couldn't get the equalizer in the final minutes of play.

(Daily News Photo)

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Editor—DON KENDALL

**Cseke
captures**

SECOND GAME TONIGHT

Packers take lead in playoff series

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Kelowna Packers scored two power-play goals en route to a 3-2 decision over Vernon Lakers in the opening game of their best-of-seven B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division semi-final, Wednesday night, in the Orchard City.

The victory gives Packers a 1-0 lead in the STACEY HARTNELL series, which resumes tonight at the Vernon Civic Arena. In other BCJHL play Wednesday night, Penticton Knights defeated Merritt Warriors 8-5, Abbotsford Falcons upset Richmond Sockeyes 5-4, and Delta Flyers defeated Nanaimo Clippers 7-5.

Lakers, who outplayed their Kelowna opposition throughout the contest and held a 34-22 margin in shots on goal, tried to set the pace of the game early with a hard-hitting physical style of hockey, but referee Buster Rutsatz of Kamloops had other ideas.

Bent on keeping the two teams at arms length, Rutsatz completely dominated the game, slowing the play to a crawl with a barrage of penalties including 53 minutes in minor infractions in the first period.

Neither coach was impressed with the manner in which the game was officiated.

"There were 96 minutes in penalties in a clean game," suggested Lakers' Coach Mike Enemark. "They (officials) took our game plan and threw it right out the window."

Kelowna Coach Wayne Naka concurred with Enemark's view of the officiating.

"That was a weird game," said Naka. "The refs slowed the game right down... there was no flow to the game at all."

Packers opened the scoring on a power-play late in the first period when speedy centre Shawn Harrison beat Scott King during a goalmouth scramble.

In the second frame, Lakers tied the game 1-1 on Trevor Pohl's goal with Mark McCleary and Dennis Holland drawing assists at 6:15. The goal also came during a man-advantage situation.

Packers closed out the second period with two straight goals, one by Shawn Swail and a second by Rick Viens, on another power-play. The Kelowna Club held a 3-1 advantage after 40 minutes.

Lakers missed a number of golden opportunities in both periods. Shannon Pohl hit the goal post with a wide open net to shoot at in the first period, while McCleary pulled Packers' goaltender Frank Romeo out of position and fired wide. McCleary had the Kelowna goalie so far out of position that the goal judge signalled a goal before he took the shot.

Lakers had the only goal of the third period and held an obvious advantage in play. Stacey Hartnell let loose one of his patented slap-shots along the ice

after capitalizing on a miscue by a Kelowna defender with slightly more than five minutes remaining.

Enemark even managed to engage a bit of late strategy when he fingered Harrison for an illegal curve in his stick. With 53 seconds remaining the face-off came out of the Lakers' zone and with King out of his net in favor of an extra attacker, the local squad buzzed the Kelowna net but couldn't put home the tying goal.

Neither coach felt that any patterns to the series had emerged from the first game, but both felt their teams would play a better game tonight in Vernon.

"One game is too soon to tell," explained Enemark. "They (Packers) had the pressure on them because they were in their own rink."

"I've seen better hockey between these two teams," said Naka.

Meanwhile, in Penticton, Knights got two goals each from David Shields and John DePourcq while Kevin Therrien, Tim Flanagan, Greg Cyr and Chris Anderson had singles.

Merritt got goals from Mike Catchpole, Rob Revell, Brad Smiley, Kevin Thorlakson and Troy Mick.

Game two of the Penticton-Merritt series also takes place tonight.

LOOK BACK FIVE YEARS

MARCH 1981
Vernon Screaming Eagles lost two consecutive games at the British Columbia Broomball Championships recently in Kamloops.



BCJHL

VANCOUVER (CP) — Final
regular-season statistics released
Tuesday by the British Columbia
Junior Hockey League:

STANDINGS

Coastal Division

	W	L	T	Pts
Richmond	39	13	0	78
Delta	35	17	0	70
Nanaimo	25	26	1	51
Abbotsford	15	37	0	30
Sidney	13	38	1	27
Langley	12	40	0	24

Interior Division

Penticton	44	8	0	88
Kelowna	40	12	0	80
Vernon	28	21	3	59
Merritt	27	23	2	56
Summerland	19	30	3	41
Shuswap	10	42	0	20

SCORING

Coastal

	G	A	Pts
Decker, Del	56	78	134
Caford, Nan	40	64	104
Jennings, Nan	24	62	86
Weremy, Rich	42	42	84
Sloan, Lang	31	53	84
Lewis, Nan	33	48	81
Austin, Rich	42	37	79
Harder, Rich	34	45	79
Crossley, Rich	33	45	78
deLeeuw, Nan	29	47	76

Interior

Shields, Pent	53	76	129
Harrison, Kel	54	66	120
Carlson, Kel	57	62	119
Davidson, Pent	34	74	108
Holland, Vern	43	62	105
Fisher, Kel	33	66	99
Olson, Sum	46	52	98
Anderson, Pent	42	52	94
Scott, Pent	34	58	92
Taillifer, Kel	29	62	91

GOALTENDING

Coastal

	Min	GA	Avg
Woodley, Rich	1689	103	3.65

Palmer,	Del	1359	88	3.88
Dickson,	Del	1568	116	4.43
Stewart,	Abb	689	57	4.96
Fairlie,	Nan	1442	138	5.74

Interior

Sharples,	Pent	1522	94	3.70
Loewen,	Pent	1405	90	3.84
Colvin,	Kel	1234	84	4.08
King,	Vern	1718	133	4.64
Romano,	Kel	1475	120	4.88

B.C. Junior

Abbotsford 5 Richmond 4

(First game best-of-seven quarter-final)

Kelowna 3 Vernon 2

(First game best-of-sevenqua-
rter-final)

Penticton 8 Merritt 5

(First game best-of-sevenqua-
rter-final)

Delta 7 Nanaimo 5

(First game, best-of-seven
quarter-final)

Referee steals the limelight during BCJHL playoff opener

From where I sat Wednesday night in Kelowna Memorial Arena, there was a strong indication that things were going to go in Lakers' favor on the ice.

The Vernon team is physically bigger and stronger than their Kelowna counterparts and they were in the process of letting Packers know this when Buster Rutsatz decided to pull the rug out from under their feet.

In the opening five minutes of the game, the Vernon forwards kept up a relentless body-checking game against packers and it was having an immediate effect . . . especially on the more slightly built Kelowna defencemen. It was apparent that Packers were very quickly hearing footsteps coming at them from behind and were a little reluctant to carry the puck and to go into the corners.

But that's as far as it got. The Kamloops referee began to in-

discriminately shower his attention on the two teams and inside of the next 10 minutes the game had slowed to a snail's pace. Any kind of physical activity resulted in minor penalties and the minor penalties were exaggerated into misconducts at the slightest hint of objection from the players on either team.

It seems there's just no happy medium where junior hockey officials are concerned, and it's one of the more unfortunate aspects of the game.

Last season it was just the opposite as the BCJHL officials apparently turned a blind eye to the style of play Merritt Centennials used to win their series against the Vernon club. When Lakers tried to profit from the lesson and bolstered the team with more size and aggression, they end up on the losing end of the stick again.

I'm under the contention that playoff hockey is held in a higher



by
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regard than regular season. Most referees will tell you that they're going to let 'em play the game and they'll see to it that the obvious rough stuff is taken care of.

But the least congruent aspect of junior hockey seems to be officials and their philosophy on how the game should be played. Personally, for what it's worth, referees are supposed to be like traffic lights with the idea being to keep the traffic flowing. But get the lights out of synchronization and things get pretty

slow come rush hour.

My idea of a good hockey game isn't sitting through 45 minutes of stop-action, referee-dominated play every period. It also translates into a poor product for the spectators who paid their money to watch.

There's certainly been no pattern of violent proceedings demonstrated by these two teams during the regular season so why would Rutsatz suddenly have to convince himself that he's the only thing standing between civilized sport and animalistic behavior?

In spite of the officiating, I think this will still be a series that will be determined by physical activity on the ice. Lakers realized how effective their bodychecking was on Packers and I think they're planning to stay with that plan throughout. I'd look for a six or seven game series and for my money I'd pick Lakers to succeed.