

VERNON 7 KELOWNA 4

Lakers lead playoff series

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

Three goals by forward Stacy Hartnell, combined with a strong, close-checking, physical style of play rewarded the tenacious Vernon Lakers with an all-important 7-4 victory over the hometown Kelowna Packers Friday night in B.C. Junior Hockey League playoff action.

The win gives Lakers a 2-1 lead in their best-of-seven



STACY HARTNELL

Interior Division semi-final matchup with game four scheduled for tonight in Vernon Civic arena.

In other Interior Division playoff action Friday night Penticton Knights moved to within a game of sweeping their series with a 5-3 decision over visiting Merritt Warriors. On the Coast, Richmond dumped Abbotsford 7-3 and Nanaimo bombed Delta 10-2.

Hartnell scored the first goal of the game but also provided the game winner early in the third period on a power-play, as well as scoring what proved to be the back-breaker. His third goal gave Lakers a 6-4 cushion late in the game and put an end to a brief comeback bid by Packers who were outplayed in all three periods.

Doug Spooner scored his second of

the game into an empty net at 19:48 to complete the scoring. The teams were tied 2-2 at the end of one period despite a 15-8 margin in shots on goal for Vernon. Lakers added two unanswered goals in the second frame to surge ahead 4-2 after 40 minutes.

Centre Mark McCreary had a goal and a pair of assists while Shawn Lofroth completed the scoring with a single goal. Hartnell also added an assist to give him four points on the night.

Jamie Kurki, Pat Mangold, Shawn Swail and Kip Noble replied for Packers who were outshot 34-22 by Lakers and had to rely on the stalwart goaltending of Frank Romeo to keep them in the game. Scott King provided steady play in the Vernon nets as well.

As usual, the game featured an unwarranted amount of penalty time with 112 minutes assessed in the first period and a further 128 minutes handed out by referee Buster Rutsatz in the second frame. The contest lasted more than three hours.

A fracas erupted early in the second period when Lakers' Al Young decked Romeo who had strayed from his crease into the action to field the puck. A number of players came to the aid of Romeo and after the ensuing melee three players from each club were ejected. Following the altercation, Wes Gentles joined Young, Lofroth and Greg Guest on the sidelines when he had a physical argument with some Kelowna fans.

The biggest loss of the night was for Packers however when centre Shawn Harrison went down late in the second period. Harrison, a speedy sparkplug for the Kelowna squad, was taken to hospital where the early diagnosis indicated stretched ligaments in his knee. He will be lost for the duration of the series leaving Packers very thin up the middle.

Lakers showed their bench strength during the contest, especially after the loss of four players. Hartnell took little credit for his part in scoring three times.

"They were all team goals, all hard work," explained Hartnell who leads the team with seven points including

four goals so far in the series. "I was in the right place at the right time."

Meanwhile Coach Mike Enemark was choked with emotion following the game and feels the next two games in two consecutive nights will tell the final story of the series.

"Three games in three nights will be tough but we're just going to have to keep up this physical game," he explained.

The physical stuff is obviously taking its toll on Packers who appeared tired, confused and lacklustre for the second straight game under constant pressure and relentless checking by Lakers.

The loss of Harrison means Enemark and his charges will have one less aspect of the game to concern themselves with.

"That's going to hurt Kelowna a lot," suggested Enemark. "They're going to have to dig a lot deeper."

Kelowna Coach Wayne Naka concurred with Enemark's observation but is adamant that Packers will etch out the necessary win tonight in Vernon.

"We're going to win a hockey game tonight you just wait and see," he said. "Everyone has to dig deep because it's a key game."

In Penticton, Knights got goals from David Shields, John Depourcq, Todd Torrens, Chris Anderson, and Scott Rawson as they led 3-2 and 4-3 by periods. Knights outshot Warriors 43-33.



INTERIOR BOWLING TEAMS

Vernon Interior Men's, women's, and mixed bowling teams from the local bowling clubs will do battle in the Provincial rollofs. Team members include, back row, left to right; Len Chahley, Gord Wiffen, Mike Orobko, Jim Chenoweth, Alan St. Jean, John

Tykalovich, and Denis Thibault. Front row, left to right; Bobbi Poulsen, Carol Skidmore, Marie MacKenzie, Bev Thibault, Doreen Larson, Irene Walker, and Mary Turek. Bev Thibault will act as coach while Len Chahley is manager.

(Daily News Photo)

Vernon
Daily
News

sports

Editor—DON KENDALL

Ski to sea race scheduled for May 4

An event which includes the skills of five Olympic sports is scheduled in Vernon on May 4.

Kalamalka Rotary Club, in conjunction with four corporate sponsors, has scheduled a ski to sea race. It will be the first event of its type held in the North Okanagan, however, similar competitions have become popular throughout B.C.

A downhill skier starts the race on Silver Star Mountain. He, or she, will pass

Sleeping giant has been awakened

If someone had suggested just a brief while ago that Vernon Lakers would be playing the style and calibre of hockey they are at present I might have been inclined to check them for signs of intense fever.

There have been times during the past three games, when I find I want to actually pinch myself to see if I'm really watching the same team that barely managed to finish in third place in the B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division.

Just for the record, a number of the players did insist that they were going to be a playoff team this year and consequently weren't too worried about the regular season.

One really couldn't blame their apparent lack of enthusiasm in the late going since there was certainly nothing they could do that would have advanced them beyond third place.

It might have been a total waste of energy, I suppose, to try for second place. Having home-ice advantage certainly hasn't been a factor for Kelowna Packers. First place was almost certainly out of the question very early in the season for Lakers so just a minimum amount of effort would keep them ahead of the surging horde from Merritt who wound up in fourth place.

The conscious conservation of energy during the regular season seems to be paying off handsomely at this stage however. Packers may have burned up a lot of valuable long distance fuel by trying to catch Penticton. It's starting to show already in the playoffs. In the past two games Packers have looked very tired. Certainly unable to withstand the physical punishment Lakers are dishing out.

Although Packers finished the season with four players in the top 10 in the Interior Division scoring statistics, there just doesn't seem to be sufficient depth at any position to carry the team through a long tough playoff series such as the one they are currently engaged in.

With Harrison out of the lineup now, things are going to be just that much more grim for the Orchard City crew. Harrison hasn't been a major scoring factor up until now in the series but his presence caused Lakers much grief. His speed was certainly noticeable and he generally had the puck a lot when he was on the ice.

But the speedy centre went down for the count Friday night in Kelowna dur-



by
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ing game three of the series. The early diagnosis is that he's suffered ligament damage in his knee and while University of Wisconsin Badgers will benefit from his play next season, there's nothing further he's going to do for Packers.

There were a few other bright lights for Kelowna this season as well with Pat Mangold and Ward Carlson finishing among the top five point getters. However, neither player appears able to lead Packers out of the wilderness right now.

Defensively Packers are really hurting. Their star blueliner is 17-year old Kip Noble who has little or no reason to even be playing at that position. His obvious lack of size is hurting the club on the blueline with the aggressive and much larger Vernon forwards running roughshod in the Packers' defensive zone. Having 17 goals scored against them, including 15 in the past two games, pretty well sums up the difference between the two teams on that account.

On the other hand, Lakers' bench strength seems excellent at this stage of the season. Every man on the club looks as though he belongs at his position and everyone is turning in his personal best performance right now.

Lakers are playing with a confidence I've never seen at any time during the season. They are also demonstrating extreme confidence in their coaching system. Ironically, it was this point that was considered their weak spot coming into the playoffs. Although members of the club have indicated that coach Mike Enemark isn't the best technical director around, they are willing to concede that he can get what he wants out of them . . . they are being motivated.

What it amounts to is that a sleeping giant has been awakened and is ready to fight.

With respect to Wayne Naka and his Packers I really think they'll be lucky to be around after this weekend.

or-seven quarter-final 3-1)

B.C. Junior

Penticton 5 Merritt 3

(Penticton leads best-of-seven
division semifinal 3-0)

Vernon 7 Kelowna 4

(Vernon leads best-of-seven
division semifinal 2-1)

Richmond 7 Abbotsford 3

(Richmond leads best-of-seven
division semifinal 2-1)

Nanaimo 10 Delta 2

(Delta leads best-of-seven divi-
sion semifinal 2-1)

University