



Goaltender Scott King stole the spotlight time and time again Wednesday night during the final game between Vernon Lakers and Kelowna Packers. King robbed Packers' Gary Ruff on this play and made 38

saves on the night but it was all in vain as Lakers lost 4-3 in the second overtime period. Packers win the series 4-3 and go on to face Penticton Knights in the BCJHL Interior Division championship. (Daily News Photo)

DOUBLE OVERTIME

Lengthy series climaxes with high drama finish

By JIM JUDD
Daily News Sports

It took more than 440 minutes of playing time to produce a winner but Vernon Lakers and Kelowna Packers finally ended their B.C. Junior Hockey League Interior Division semi-final series in dramatic fashion Wednesday night in Kelowna's Memorial Arena.

Ward Carlson beat Vernon goaltender Scott King with a wicked blast from the top of the face-off circle at 12:03 of the second overtime period to give Packers a 4-3 victory in the deciding game of the series.

While the season is now over for Lakers, Packers will go on to face Penticton Knights in a best-of-seven Interior Division Championship final beginning Friday in the Peach City.

Lakers forced the game into overtime when centre Dennis Holland came up with a slick goal at 18:40 of the third period to draw the teams even at 3-3. Alone in front of the Packers' net, Holland waited for goaltender Frank Romeo to flop on the ice before he casually tucked it upstairs to put the teams on even terms.

It was the third power-play goal of the night for Lakers who had pulled King from the net in favor of an extra attacker. Troy Pohl scored once during a man-advantage situation in the first period while older brother Shannon tallied during a power-play in the second frame.

All three goals were needed to put Lakers on even terms as they trailed by a goal all the way through the contest.

Lakers never allowed Packers a power-play goal in the game for the third consecutive game of the series. Ironically, however, it was short-handed goal by Packers that stood as the difference in the final game.

Darren Schwartz stole the puck and went in alone on King at 7:54 of the first period to give Packers the first goal of the game during a short-handed situation.

Lakers evened the game less than a minute later with Mark McCleary and Campbell Blair drawing assists. Blair set up all three Vernon goals.

Rick Viens gave Kelowna a 2-1 lead before the period ended.

Vernon tied the game once again at the 3:50 mark of the second period but Greg Moberg gave Packers a 3-2 lead at 16:09 of the stanza.

In the first 10-minute overtime period Packers outshot Lakers 7-2 but King came up with a number of almost unbelievable saves to keep the local club in the game.

In the sudden-death second overtime period Packers enjoyed a 7-4 advantage in shots on goal.

The winner came with King slightly out of position having made one big save but the rebound came directly out to Carlson's stick and the 20-year old made no mistake as he rifled it in the top glove-hand corner. It was only the second goal of the series for the Packer's leading scorer in the regular season.

While one team rejoiced with their fans another sat dejected but proud following the game.

"All that overtime made us physically and mentally tired," Enemark explained. "We were driving on pure emotion."

Enemark felt the momentum had swung Vernon's way with the tying goal and especially after the club had killed a five-minute penalty late in the game. The team also successfully killed a minor called on them in the sudden-death overtime but it may have drained the last bit of strength they had that late in the game.

"I thought when we killed that penalty in overtime that we had it made," suggested Enemark. "We knew we'd have to kill penalties effectively but getting a short-handed goal against us was just a bad break."

Despite losing the series Lakers outscored Packers 30-21 and if there was a series most valuable player the nod would almost certainly go to Vernon goaltender Scott King. Over the seven games and 22 minutes of overtime, King posted a goals-against average of just 2.86, stopping better than 90 percent of the shots that came his way.

"He was just unbelievable," said Packers' Coach Wayne Naka of King's performance Wednesday night. "I thought we were never going to get another one by him."

Packers outshot Lakers 42-37.