

Knights thump Calgary Canucks

PENTICTON, B.C. (CP) — Penticton's James Burnett, Kevan Melrose and Scott Rawson scored two goals apiece and led the Knights to a 9-3 victory over Calgary Canucks in their Centennial Cup tier-two junior hockey playoff series Tuesday night.

Penticton now leads the best-of-seven Alberta-B.C. series three games to one; the Knights can advance to play the winner of the Saskatchewan-Manitoba series with a victory tonight at Penticton.

The Knights, champions of the B.C. Junior Hockey League, went ahead 6-1 in the second period after a 1-1 first-period tie. They got single goals from Lee Davidson, Tim Flanagan and Greg

Cyr.

Penticton goalie Warren Sharples faced 35 shots, while the Knights took 66 at Calgary's Jamie Bowman and Peter Varga.

Scoring for the Alberta Junior Hockey League champions were Mike Ikeda, Phil Huber and Jim Wheatcroft.

Penticton outshot Calgary 24-9 in the first period, but Bowman kept the score at 1-1.

"We had 24 shots on the net in the first period and just didn't seem to be able to score," observed Penticton coach Rick Kozuback. "But I thought we outplayed them considerably — it was just that we couldn't put the puck past the goaltender."

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Former Bucks in NHL playoffs

BCJHL hockey people, from Kelowna especially, can take more than a passing interest in the National Hockey League playoffs this season.

There are two ex-BCJHL players who will likely see some post-season NHL play this year. Tom Martin, a burly winger has been called up by Winnipeg Jets for muscle in what is expected to be a physical series against Calgary Flames.

And winger Chris Jensen is looking good in a New York Ranger uniform. Another former Buckaroo, Greg Adams, would see post-season action if only his New Jersey Devil teammates could manage enough wins to earn a playoff berth.

And, if New Jersey wanted a muscleman to protect Adams, they would need to look no further than Mitch Wilson, another former Kelowna Buckaroo who is now making a living with the Maine Mariners of the AHL.

I'd say that's a pretty decent crop of former Kelowna Buckaroos. And you know what? When the Bucks had all four players, they failed to win the Interior Division of the BCJHL. How's that for a kick in the pants?

That year, 1982, the Bucks got beat by the Penticton Knights for the umpteenth time. So what else is new? It happens every year.

I find it odd that not one of those highly-touted Penticton Knights is in the NHL today. I mean, what happened to all those guys? Remember guys like Leroy Rempel, Brad Beck, Brent Gropp, Rick Trupp, Bruno Campese? Did they all die and go to hockey heaven?

Odd, I find it, that so many former Buckaroos made it to pro hockey while so few Penticton boys did likewise.

On another hockey topic, does anybody besides me feel Bill Laforge has been vindicated? The Canucks axed Laforge last year after 20 games in a move I still see as basically unfair. The team then staggered to a dismal season under Harry Neale. This year, Neale is gone and Tom Watt is in. And still the Canucks continue to stagger. maybe now people will think it



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wasn't all Laforge's fault.

Actually, I feel sorry for the Canucks. They're mired in a classic no-win situation. Going into the last couple of weeks of the season the Canucks knew they had to finish either third in their division or out of the playoffs altogether. Anything in the middle would be disastrous. So, of course, the Canucks finished in the middle. Typical.

If the Canucks finished last, they would have gained the second pick overall in the junior draft this June. Or they might have made a deal with Detroit for the first pick. Detroit is known to be willing to part with the coveted top first-round pick because there's a kid named Carson playing in the Quebec league that is as good, or maybe even better than, the current number one pick — Joe Murphy.

The Canucks would have loved to get Murphy because he was raised in North Vancouver. It would have been especially gratifying in light of the Dwight Mathiason fiasco.

Now the deal with the Wings is off because the Wings would not get a high-enough pick because the Canucks finished too high.

As it stands now, the Canucks have to face Edmonton in the first round of the playoffs. No chance of advancing there. Unless of course the Canucks had scouted B.C. better.

A few years ago there were guys named Martin (Victoria), Jensen (Fort St. John, Adams (Nelson) and Wilson (Kelowna) available. Not good enough for the Canucks. They went east to get lunkers like Lowry and Sandlak.

I guess homegrown talent isn't good enough for the Canucks. The grass always looks greener. Go Oilers Go.