

LOTS OF RETURNING PLAYERS

Gare prepares for good hockey season

With just a little more than a month remaining until they open camp in September, Vernon Lakers appear to be on solid ground with a new owner, new head coach, and a solid nucleus of returning players with which that new coach can forge a contending club.

Ernie Gare, appointed Head Coach by team owner Mel Lis, indicated that at least 10 players and possibly as many as a dozen will return this fall for the club's main camp. Gare expects he will have about 35 players competing for positions at that time.

He also expects about twice that many players to show up to Lakers' rookie training camp which will be held just prior to the main camp.

"We've sent probably close to 100 letters out so we'll probably be looking at 60 or so kids in our rookie camp," explained Gare who gained valuable coaching experience with Spokane Chiefs of the Western Hockey League last season.

Among the rookie hopefuls that will swell the ranks of the primary camp are some of the best 16-year old players in the province — the result of some early scouting work done by Gare recently during the provincial under-17 team camp held in Nanaimo.

"We've got three or four of the best under 17-year old players in the province coming to our (rookie) camp," suggested the newest Vernon coach.

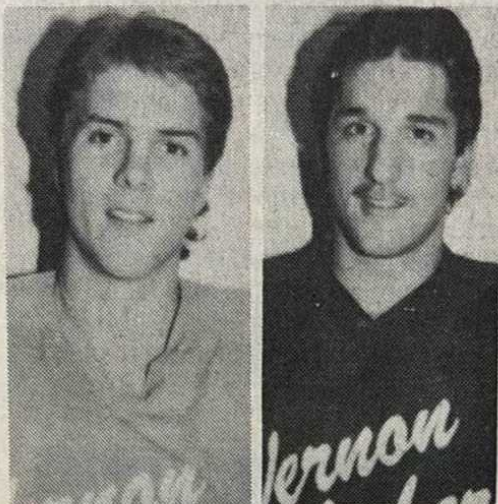
In addition, Gare and Lis obtained the rights to 17-year old goaltender Ryan Dennis in the dispersal draft of players from Salmon Arm Blazers.

Blazers are taking a one-year leave of absence from the B.C. Junior Hockey League, leaving the junior A circuit with just five clubs in the Interior Division this season.

Dennis, however, will check into Kamloops Blazers' camp before journeying South to join Lakers.

The youthful goalstopper, who began last season with Kelowna Packers before a trade sent him to Salmon Arm, will be looking for a spot on the club along with a pair of veteran goaltenders from Lakers' 1985-86 campaign. The two are Darryl Dickens who saw quite a bit of action before playing back-up role to Scott King, and Vernon native Blu Smith who spent more than half the season with the club.

Defensively Lakers will have a good jump on most of their counterparts



SHAWN LOFROTH DOUG SPOONER

with four veterans returning. Among these are high-scoring blueliners Shawn Lofroth and Campbell Blair. Both of these rearguards will likely see a lot of duty this season including the power-play.

Other returning defencemen include Sean Hartnell, back for a third season with the club, and tough-guy Tony Toth who gained valuable experience last season.

Gare hopes to lure Vernon native Keith Chase back home from Merritt

this season as well and if that is the case his defensive corps would be all but established.

A few other local defencemen will have an honest shot at making the club however and among these are Kris Ganzert, Tom Arkell and Mike Weir, all of whom have the proper tools to be of help to Lakers' defensive unit.

Up front there will be more than just a few familiar faces with centreman Doug Spooner expected to carry more than his share of the workload. Spooner was a BCJHL all-star last season and will likely lead the team in individual scoring this season.

Wingers Stacey Hartnell and Greg Guest will be expected to produce career high seasons for the club while speedy defensive forwards Wes Gentles and Allan Young will also add maturity and confidence to the club.

Gare has indicated that he expects a number of other quality players to arrive for the main camp as well.

"We've got some good prospects lined up so we should have a really competitive camp," he suggested. "However, I'm looking to those guys (returning vets) to provide the nucleus."

Veteran air riflers finish one-two today

EDINBURGH (CP) — The word around the Pleasance shooting range at the Commonwealth Games is don't mess with Guy Lorion and Sharon Bowes.

The veteran Lorion and the youthful Bowes, the first Canadian woman to ever shoot in the Games, were the class of the air rifle competition, winning the three top medals available to them.

The duo won the Games' first gold medal last Friday, capturing the air rifle pairs, and came back Wednesday with a 1-2 finish in the individual competition.

Lorion, a 33-year-old bank teller from Longueuil, Que., won the gold with a Games record shoot of 588 of a possible 600. Bowes, 19, of Pointe

Claire, Que., was second with 583 and Malcolm Copper of England third at 582.

"Between the two of us we couldn't have done any better," said a smiling Bowes.

Lorion, whose best finish in the 1982 Games was a third, had a good start, shooting a first-round 97. Then he strung together three nearly perfect rounds to build up a margin that was uncatchable.

MISSED TWICE

Over 30 shots he missed the bullseye only twice.

"You try to do your best at the start and then let it flow to the end," said the sharpshooter. "I get to a certain point where I just forget about looking at my score and just shoot my best."