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July 08 Tigers forfeit series

by Nicole Berg

With their season on the line, Vernon Source for Sports Tiger goaltender Brodie MacDonald took things into his own hands by turning aside 60 Rutland Raider shots, en route to an 11-8 victory Saturday night at the Multiplex.

The win extended the Tigers' ½ Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League playoff run to a winner-take-all game three final Tuesday night in Rutland.

But the Tigers won't be making the trip to Rutland for the deciding game, as the team was forced to forfeit their win against the Raiders due to a newly-introduced rule that was placed at the start of the season.

Competing with a short bench due to five players missing, the Tigers called up Midgets Darren Kirby and Mitch Steel.

"According to the new rule, a Midget player must have played in three or more regular-season games before they are allowed to compete in the playoffs," explained Tiger GM Rich Zecchel.

"But due to an unfortunate oversight, we mis-read this rule and as we were short-benched five players because of injuries, we were forced to call up the Midgets."

Vernon finished the regular season in third place at 8-4-3.

Their best game of the season arguably came against the regular-season league champion Kamloops Rattlers (13-1-1), when they handed the Rattlers their first and only loss of the season.

"That game was a tribute to a bunch of kids who worked real hard and allowed no back seat to anyone," said head coach Bill Kirkland.

"From that game on, we proved we could compete with anyone if we contended with that gutsy effort we displayed that day. Also our last game of the playoffs against Rutland and our first playoff round with Armstrong were some of the best games we played this season."

Veterans Chris Evans, Mitch Schochter and Karl Friesen, who are unable to return next year due to age restrictions, finished their last season in outstanding fashion.

"I have a lot of fond memories of these guys," said Kirkland. "They're a bunch of very special kids who played tremendous lacrosse for us since our entrance into the league. I'm very pleased and honoured to have had the chance to coach them throughout their five-year stay with us."

On the regular season, Kirkland had a lot of positives to say about the team.

"I was extremely proud of the way the guys played this season. Brodie was arguably our best player and team MVP. Every night he played solid and gave us a chance to win every game.

He really matured from last season filling in as a Midget and will continue to be great for us in the coming years. Robbie Short also had an exceptional season, leading our team in points as a rookie. Our Midget players as well played terrific when called upon. They adapted quite nicely and will be great players for us in coming years."

Starting in October, the Tigers will run their Winter Lacrosse Camp open to last year Bantam- and Midget-aged players. It will take place at the Hassen Arena one day a week, with the official practice times to be announced at a later date.

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July 06 Raiders down Tigers in opener

by Nicole Berg

The Vernon Source for Sports Tigers didn't bring the red-hot goaltending, strong defense and high-octane offense Thursday night that led them to their first round Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League playoff sweep of the Armstrong Shamrocks.

The downfall began at the start of the first period, when they came out flat and heavily undisciplined, being assessed a season-high game-record of 82 penalty minutes, in an 11-6 losing cause to the host Rutland Raiders in the opener of their best-of-three semifinal. Game two went Saturday night at the Multiplex.

"We just didn't show up to play tonight," said Tigers' head coach Bill Kirkland. "We played totally undisciplined, which caused us to lose. Rutland dominated every aspect of the game, by hustling on loose balls and being very strong offensively and defensively."

Coupled with rock-solid goaltending from starter Cam Needham (41 saves) and timely goals from the Raiders' go-to-players contributed to a 3-0 Rutland lead after the first period.

Captain Aiden Munson (1+2) potted the Raiders' first goal 1:45 into the contest. Chris Phillips (1+1) took no time in recording a powerplay tally, on a fabulous pass by Munson. After being checked to the floor, Munson still managed to keep a hold of the ball and made a clear pass to Phillips, who caught the ball and stunned Tigers' goalie Brodie MacDonald (40 saves) with a backhanded goal.

Darcy Leach (2+1) recorded the third goal of the period for the Raiders, who had a team total 69 PIM in the game.

Narrowing Rutland's lead to just two goals, Kyle Whieldon finally got the Tigers on the scoreboard one minute into the second frame. But the comeback was short lived, as Leach wasted no time on padding the Raiders' lead to 4-1 just six seconds following Whieldon's tally.

Putting the game away, the Raiders continued to pour on the goals with five straight from Geoff Wray (1+3), Mark MacLennan (2+1), Doug Langlois (1+4) and a pair by Tyler Parrent (2+1).

With 3:29 remaining in the period, MacDonald was assessed his second ten-minute misconduct of the night, which resulted in him being tossed from the game. Midget call-up Josh Phillips was

thrown into the fray, thanks to MacDonald's game ejection.

"Josh played extremely well for us," said Kirkland. "Coming into the game under the pressure of having to replace Brodie, he stepped up to the plate and only allowed two goals the rest of the game."

Tyler Plante brought a brief stop to Rutland's scoring frenzy, on a shorthanded marker with 1:42 remaining in the period.

Playing their most disciplined period of the game while only amassing eight penalty minutes, compared to the Raiders' period total of 42, the Tigers finally put their offense to work. Robbie Short (1+3) netted the Tigers' first of four goals in the period.

Jacob Illichmann (1+1) answered back with a goal of his own, to lift the Raiders to a 10-3 lead, before Brandon Ditchfield and Patrick Quigley (1+1) connected.

To end the game, both teams exchanged powerplay goals. MacLennan netted his second PP marker of the night, while Steven Clark (1+1) at the other end of the floor registered the Tigers' last goal, with just 29 seconds to go in the game.

If needed, game three would go Tuesday night at the Kelowna Memorial Arena.

Tigers scoring summary:

Luke Mednis (0+1) Karl Friesen (0+1) Patrick Quigley (1+1) Mitch Schochter (0+4) Brandon Ditchfield (1+0) Robbie Short (1+3) Tyler Plante (1+0) Steven Clark (1+1) Kyle Whieldon (1+0)

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June 27 & 28 Tigers Take Out Rocks

by Nicole Berg

It was a lacrosse playoff quarter-final series that lived up to every expectation.

Lots of end-to-end action, fabulous scoring, and thundering checks contributed to a Vernon Source for Sports Tigers first-round Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League sweep of the Armstrong Shamrocks Wednesday night in Armstrong.

Logan Pippolo faced 77 Tiger shots as Vernon beat the Shamrocks 14-8 in game one of the two-game, total-point series Tuesday night at the Multiplex.

Patrick Quigley led the Tigers'½ attack with six points. Mitch Schochter added 4+2, while Josh Taylor contributed 3+2. Karl Friesen notched 2+2, while Blake Lewis and Robbie Short each potted 1+1. Tyler Plante and Mike Miller both added singles.

Logan Strohm (3+3) and Thomas Belanger (4G) led the way for the Shamrocks.

In a hotly contested affair, the Tigers completed the sweep with a 16-3 thrashing of the Shamrocks in Armstrong, Wednesday.

70 penalty minutes were dished out to Armstrong, while Vernon was assessed 78 PIM.

"It felt really great to sweep the Shamrocks in a highly competitive playoff series," said Vernon's½ head coach Bill Kirkland, whose crew now faces the Rutland Raiders in a best-of-three semifinal series starting Thursday night in Rutland.

"We played a very even game, with our defensive playing very aggressively, while the offense moved the ball well at the other end of the floor. Our powerplay was particularly effective, with eight goals being scored on the man advantage.

"Karl Friesen (4G) played an awesome game, while Josh (3+1) continued to be the huge

offensive weapon he was in the last game. Brodie MacDonald (29 saves) also played outstanding, especially on the 5-on-3 chance Armstrong had and couldn't put anything past him."

A 10 minute delay at the start of the game didn't affect the Tigers one bit, as they came out hitting on all cylinders since the opening face-off.

Taylor on the powerplay, Quigley (1+6), and Luke Mednis started the game off with a 3-0 Vernon lead.

Jeremy Meredith (1+2) registered Armstrong's first goal halfway through the period.

Friesen netted his first goal of the night on the powerplay, before Jarrett Medhurst replied for Armstrong.

Chris Evans (2+1) showed his Hercules-type strength by ambitiously fighting off a Shamrock defender, knocking him straight to the floor and picking up the loose ball to promptly run in alone on starter Graham Turnbull (27 saves) for his team's fifth goal.

Friesen potted his second marker just four seconds into a powerplay opportunity on a high shot which found the top corner of the net.

The Tigers continued to surge ahead in the second period on goals from Braidy Webb (2+2), Taylor (PP), Mitch Schochter (1+4) and Friesen (PP).

Hans Van Deursen scored Armstrong's lone goal of the period, after Webb's marker.

Friesen extended Vernon's lead to 11-3 on an astonishing play to complete his hat trick. With his team shorthanded, Friesen caught a nice pass from Quigley and scored a laser-beam shot past Turnbull.

Friesen was ecstatic with the way his team played. "We played a thorough series against Armstrong. They really came out flying, having had a good chance to win the first game. Strohm and Belanger were especially unbelievable, as well as Pippolo in game one. In the second game, we worked harder and played a smarter game, not giving them any chance to run away with the victory."

Taylor wrapped up his own hat trick just a minute after Friesen's, on a powerplay marker.

The final frame was all Vernon, as the Tigers intensely played a thorough period, with MacDonald slamming the door shut on every Armstrong shot.

Tyler Plante (1+1) and Evans on the powerplay, Webb and Luke Lecavalier rounded out the Tigers' attack.

"That third period was unreal," said MacDonald. "We really tightened up our defense in this second game by only letting Armstrong get three goals. All the guys played a really great team effort."

The Tigers will host Rutland in game two, Saturday July 8, at the Mutliplex.

Tigers scoring summary:

Chris Evans (2+1) Luke Mednis (1+0) Karl Friesen (4+0) Patrick Quigley (1+6) Mitch Schochter (1+4) Ryan Minchenko (0+1) Josh Taylor (2+1) Robbie Short (0+2) Luke Lecavalier (1+0) Blake Lewis (0+2) Tyler Plante (1+1) Braidy Webb (2+2)

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June 24 Tigers Playoff Primed

by Nicole Berg

The Vernon Source for Sports Tigers got an extraordinary performance from their big guns in their last regular season Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League game.

Rookie leading scorer Robbie Short (5+3) and veteran Josh Taylor (4G) combined for nine goals in a 11-6 victory over the South Okanagan Flames Saturday night at the Multiplex.

The Tigers finished in third place with a 8-4-3 record, behind the Kamloops Rattlers and Rutland Raiders. Vernon opened the playoffs Tuesday night by hosting the Armstrong Shamrocks. Game two in the two-game, total-points series goes tonight in Armstrong (7:30). The series against the Shamrocks should be highly competitive, said head coach Bill Kirkland. If we play with good discipline and play a full 60 minutes, I expect we will do very well. On Saturday's game Kirkland said:

We definitely displayed a better effort than yesterday (12-12 Friday tie with Armstrong). There was a better team commitment and discipline displayed.

Appearing in just his second game of the season after sustaining an injury at the beginning of the year, Taylor didn't look out of place by recording four goals.

It felt great to finally come back and play, said Taylor. After a good pre game warmup, I felt good enough to go tonight. After mostly playing powerplay time for the first two periods, I played a full third period.

Kirkland was pleased with Taylor's play after returning from a lengthy injury.

It's very nice to have Josh's stick back in the lineup. He's a big offensive weapon which is what we're going to need in the playoffs. As well, Robbie continues to play well every night too. We're definitely happy to have these guys on our team, continued Kirkland.

The Tigers, who never trailed in the game, jumped out to an early 3-0 lead on goals by Luke Lecavalier (1+1), and Taylor and Short on the powerplay.

Tyler Prentice (2+2), who was constantly in the Tigers' face all night by being handed a ton of breakaway scoring chances, netted the Flames' lone goal of the period with the man advantage.

Short added an unassisted breakaway goal nine seconds after Prentice's marker. Taylor opened the second period with his second powerplay goal of the night.

Patrick Quigley (1+3) lifted the Tigers to a 6-1 lead on a spectacular shorthanded move, where he shot off the bench and caught a nice pass from Braidy Webb (2A).

Pushing Vernon to their biggest lead of the night at 7-1, Short added his second tally before the Flames finally started to click with three straight goals.

Prentice netted a single, while Davis Kelly (2+1) notched a pair on the powerplay, to lead the Flames' attack. Short pocketed his fourth tally with 3:51 remaining in the period.

Vernon and Summerland both traded goals to open the third frame, with Galen Brimms and Short connecting.

The Flames crept within three goals on Evan Brunelle's (1+1) tally with 6:45 remaining in the game, to make the score 9-6 Vernon.

Not allowing a Summerland comeback, Taylor notched two late goals to hand the Flames their third straight loss of the season against the Tigers.

Tigers scoring summary:

Luke Mednis (0+1) Patrick Quigley (1+3) Robbie Short (5+3) Josh Taylor (4+0) Luke Lecavalier (1+1) Blake Lewis (0+1) Tyler Plante (0+1) Braidy Webb (0+2) Kyle Whieldon (0+1)

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June 23 Tigers Battle Back for Draw

by Nicole Berg

The host Armstrong Shamrocks appeared to have their second win of the season over the Vernon Source for Sports Tigers in the bag.

Coupled with great goaltending by Logan Pippolo (40 saves) and superb scoring from Logan Strohm (6+1) propelled the Rocks to a 12-7 lead over the Tigers with seven minutes remaining in the game.

Not about to let the Shamrocks steal another victory from them, the Tigers stepped up to the plate and scored five straight goals en route to a 12-12 tie with the Rocks.

"We showed a lot of character in the final 10 minutes to get the tie," said Tigers head coach Bill Kirkland. "But we can't keep waiting until this time of the game to compete. We must come out and play for a full 60 minutes. Our first two periods contained a lack of discipline, effort and commitment. This is not how we are going to win games if we begin them like this."

The Tigers won't get a long wait until they face their rival Shamrocks again. Armstrong, who finished the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League with a 1-11-3 record, will meet the Tigers (7-4-3) in their first taste of playoff action Tuesday at the Vernon Multiplex (7:30). "The playoff series against the Shamrocks should be very interesting," continued Kirkland. "Every game we play against them, Armstrong always comes out strong. If we are not prepared, they will give us a lot to handle in the playoffs."

Strohm, who is Armstrong's leading scorer with 33 goals and 58 points, netted his first of the night 48 seconds in. "We played a great first period, with Pippolo making a ton of tremendous saves," said Strohm, who has seen some action with the senior Shamrocks this year. "Once the third period rolled around, we got into too much penalty trouble which gave Vernon a chance back into the game. If we want to beat them in the playoffs, we have to stay out of the penalty box."

Mike Miller (2+1) evened the score two minutes later, before the Shamrocks got a pair from Strohm (1 PP) and a single by Dan Giger (1+2). Tigers' midget call-up Mitch Steel (2+2) added a late goal to end the period.

The second period got off to a rough start with Ryan Minchenko apparently running into Pippolo. Jamie Cockerill (2A) came to the aid of his goalie and started to mix it up with Minchenko. Both players were assessed fighting majors and were kicked out of the game. Vernon's assistant coach Rob Johnson also was tossed after the fight. With no scoring until halfway through the period, Vernon got goals Mitch Schochter (2+3) and Robbie Short (2+1) to tie the game at 4-4. Strohm took no time breaking the tie on the powerplay a few minutes later, with Jeremy Meredith (1+2) adding a goal to put the Rocks ahead 5-4. Braidy Webb and Delaney Halifax (2G) both exchanged goals to open the third period.

After a scuffle in Vernon's crease, a Tiger defender attempted to swat the ball out of the crease with his glove, which caused a penalty shot to be awarded to the Shamrocks. Strohm took the shot and made a fabulous move on midget call-up Josh Phillips (24 saves) to lift the Rocks to a 8-5 lead. "I was happy with the way Josh handled his game tonight," said Kirkland. "After the first period settled down, he played well for his first start of the season." Following Strohm's goal, Halifax increased the Shamrocks lead to 9-5, before Vernon's Kyle Whieldon pocketed a powerplay marker 48 seconds later.

In a span of 51 seconds, Miller and Strohm traded powerplay goals, with Thomas Belanger adding a single. After Cody Burt (1+1) put the Rocks ahead 12-7, they saw their lead slowly slip

away, as the Tigers roared back with five straight goals. Tony Minchenko started the Tiger comeback 39 seconds later, on his first goal of the season. Schochter (PP), Steel and Short chipped in with singles to bring the Tigers within one goal, before Schochter potted his hat-trick on the tying goal with 36 seconds remaining.

Tigers scoring summary:

Mitch Steel (2+2) Tony Minchenko (1+0) Mitch Schochter (3+3) Robbie Short (2+1) Blake Lewis (0+2) Tyler Plante (0+1) Mike Miller (2+1) Braidy Webb (1+0) Kyle Whieldon (1+0)

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June 17 Tigers Rally for 7-7 Tie

by Nicole Berg

In their last two games against the Rutland Raiders, the Vernon Source for Sports Tigers could not muster a single point. That all changed Saturday night in Rutland as the Tigers charged back from a two-goal deficit to tie the Raiders 7-7 in Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League action.

"Despite taking a point from Rutland in the game, I think we still did not have a strong outing," said Tigers assistant coach Rob Johnson.

"Our senior leadership needs to step it up and display a better play for our younger guys. Our one point was mainly thanks to Brodie MacDonald, who gives us a chance to win every night. If everyone could step up like him, we would be unreal."

For the first time in a game all season, the Tigers were unable to register at least one goal in the opening frame. Rutland took advantage of the Tigers' $\frac{1}{2}$ scoring block, by building up a quick 2-0 lead on singles from Travis Lee (1+1) and Mark MacLennan(1+2).

In the final minutes of the period, Clayton Ditchfield was assessed a five minute major for kicking. He was also given a match misconduct, meaning he will likely miss at least three games.

The Tigers came roaring back in the second with two straight goals. Chris Evans (1+1) netted the first 1:41 in on a hardworking unassisted play, where he stole the ball and ran alone up the floor. Mitch Schochter (1+1) added a powerplay marker.

Geoff Wray (3+2) padded the Raiders' lead to 3-2 on a impressive goal, where he slid on his stomach in front of the net to put the ball past MacDonald.

With 5:48 remaining, Vernon's Steven Clark (1+1) tied the game at three. Tyler Plante (1+1) pocketed a fast goal seven seconds later, immediately following a Tiger face off win.

Wray added his second powerplay goal 30 seconds later. Rutland opened the third period on two straight goals by Doug Langlois (1+1) and Wray, with his third tally coming on the powerplay.

Patrick Quigley (1+2) cashed in with the Cats' $\frac{1}{2}$ second powerplay marker, before Luc Blinkhorn (1G) lifted the Raiders to a 7-5 lead. Down by two goals with 8:10 remaining in the contest, Vernon's $\frac{1}{2}$ s leading scorer Robbie Short (2+1) was determined on getting his Tigers back into the game. He blasted a hard shot past Rutland's goaltender Cam Brown on the powerplay and added the equalizer with 1:15 remaining.

On holding the TOJLL's top scoring team to just seven goals, their lowest total all year, MacDonald thought his team played a pretty average game. "I think we could have played a lot better to win tonight," said MacDonald. "We played really well until our scoring lapse, which caused the Raiders to get back into the game."

Vernon also had a new face in the lineup, as Dan Stebbings made his Tiger debut. Stebbings,

20, who was a scoring threat with the Armstrong Shamrocks last year, got the offer to play for the remainder of the year with the Tigers. "I was quite happy with the way Dan played tonight. He played a very sound defensive game and I'm sure he will continue to be a good player for us this year," said Johnson.

Stebbing won't have a long wait to face his former team, as the Tigers travel to take on the Armstrong Shamrocks Friday night at the Armstrong/Spallumcheen Sports Complex for a 7:30 start.

The Shamrocks, who were thrashed by the top seed Kamloops Rattlers 11-3 last Friday, will wrap up their regular season against the Tigers. Armstrong has a current record of 1-11-2 for last place, with their lone victory coming at the hands of the Tigers.

Vernon's last home game of the regular season concludes this Saturday night at 7:30, when they will host the South Okanagan Flames at the Multiplex.

Tigers scoring summary:

Chris Evans (1+1) Patrick Quigley (1+2) Mitch Schochter (1+1) Robbie Short (2+1) Tyler Plante (1+1) Steven Clark (1+1) Braidy Webb (0+1)

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June 14 Tigers Strike Down Warriors

by Nicole Berg

Battling through a short bench and numerous penalties, the Vernon Source for Sports Tigers preserved and wiped out the Kelowna Warriors 11-5 in Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League play Wednesday night at the Multiplex.

The Tigers, who competed with only 15 runners, still managed to out hustle the Warriors through a penalty filled. The win puts Vernon (7-3-1) three points behind the Rutland Raiders for second place.

It felt very good to get the win against Kelowna, said head coach Bill Kirkland. They're a hard working team, with talented players.

Vernon received 73 penalty minutes, that included three 10 minute misconducts and a game misconduct. The Warriors were only assessed 38 PIM, including one ten minute misconduct.

The penalties that were called tonight did not offer any flow to the game at all, said Kirkland. It was really frustrating receiving more than twice as many penalties as Kelowna did.

The Tigers struggled in the opening minutes on two defensive breakdowns.

Desperately trying to clear the ball on a penalty kill, goaltender Brodie MacDonald (50 saves) threw out a bad clearing pass that was intercepted by Kelowna's Keyvan McPhail (1+1).

McPhail, who stands as the league's fifth leading scorer with 23 goals and 45 points, eagerly caught the ball and ran up the floor for the easy goal.

The Warriors increased their lead less than a minute later on Vic Wiens' goal, when he picked up a loose ball and beat MacDonald at the side of the net.

The Tigers finally got into gear with three straight goals from Mitch Schochter (2+1), Patrick Quigley(1+1) and second star Robbie Short (2+1).

With Josh Kemp (1G) in the penalty box for interfering with Short at the time of his goal, Pete Friesen (1G) jumped out of nowhere, where he picked up a loose ball and out-muscled the tiring

Vernon defense to tie the game 3-3.

With 42 seconds remaining in the first frame, Short made up for the defensive misplay by pocketing his second on a nice pass from Kyle Whieldon (2+1) on the powerplay.

Playing their best lacrosse for most of the second, the Tigers opened the period with a four goal outburst. Schochter and Karl Friesen supplied powerplay markers, with Whieldon and Tyler Plante (1G) adding even-strength singles.

Eric Scott (1G) netted the Warriors' ½ second short handed goal of the game, before Braidy Webb (1+1) padded Vernon's lead to 9-4 on the powerplay.

The third period had a calmer atmosphere than the first 40 minutes did, until the final six minutes.

The Tigers, who only allowed either a short handed or powerplay goal all night, gave up another loose ball in Kelowna's end on the powerplay. Kemp scooped up the loose ball and ran full speed ahead up the floor, where he slammed the ball past MacDonald.

In the dying minutes of the game, Webb and Riley Hilbert exchanged some rough stuff along the boards.

With Hilbert getting the initial spearing major, Webb then ran him into the boards in front of the players bench, costing him a boarding major.

Whieldon showed the reason why he was named first star, when he knocked a Warrior defender to the floor and scooped up the ball to run in alone unassisted for his second goal.

½The game started out kind of iffy with the tons of penalties but once it winded down, we started to play good Tiger lacrosse to pull out the win, ½ said Whieldon.

½I think for this game, we played more of a team game and didn't get down on each other and that is key reason why we won. ½

With 2:23 remaining in the game, Luke Mednis (1G) potted an amazing unassisted marker. Wiens came far out of his net to play the ball but mishandled it, passing it straight to Mednis. Mednis furiously grabbed the ball and snuck in behind Wiens.

Whieldon was astounded with the way Short and Chris Evans (1A) played.

½Robbie played amazing tonight, every game he brings his game face. Also Chris played tremendous. All game long he was in everyone's face and never gave up once, by tight checking his man. ½

The Tigers visit Rutland Saturday night. The Raiders lead the league with 144 goals, while the Tigers are third for goals scored with 116.

½It's going to be a tight-nose game for sure, ½ said Whieldon. ½There will be a lot of scoring action. We'll have to pull out all the stops and not take unnecessary penalties, in order to beat them. ½

Tigers scoring summary:

Brodie MacDonald (0+1) Chris Evans (0+1) Luke Mednis (1+0) Karl Friesen (1+2) Patrick Quigley (1+1) Mitch Schochter (2+1) Robbie Short (2+1) Clayton Ditchfield (0+2) Blake Lewis (0+2) Tyler Plante (1+0) Braidy Webb (1+1) Kyle Whieldon (2+1)

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June 10 Tigers tie up Rattlers

by Nicole Berg

In the beginning, it looked like the Vernon Source for Sports Tigers would walk away with another clutch victory against the Kamloops Rattlers.

However, the Rattlers rallied with back-to-back powerplay goals in the third period to earn a 5-5 tie in Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League action Saturday night at the Multiplex.

Moving just three points behind the Rattlers for second place at 6-4-1, Tiger head coach Bill Kirkland was pleased with the way his team played.

"The guys played a great first 30 minutes by tight-checking the Rattlers and keeping on the loose balls. It was probably the best we have played all year until the 10 minute lapse we had in the third, where we let them get back in the game."

Identical to their last game where Vernon handed Kamloops their first loss of the season, the Tigers sprung ahead with the first goal and never looked back.

Just 54 seconds into the contest, Mike Miller (1+1) netted the lone goal of the first period.

The Tigers continued to pour on the goals in the second, where they built up a 4-0 lead. Mitch Schochter (1G) started the scoring frenzy 22 seconds in.

Robbie Short (2+1), who still remains the Tigers leading scorer since day one with 22 goals and 42 points, added two fabulous goals of his own.

His first marker came on the powerplay where he made a spectacular move to score with one second remaining on the 30-second shot clock.

Short pocketed his second three minutes later, beating Rattlers' ½ second star Scott Helton (35 saves) over the shoulder from the high slot.

It took the Rattlers almost 40 minutes before they finally solved first star Brodie MacDonald (36 saves).

"I was really happy with the game until the 10 minute mark of the third, where we let them back in it," said MacDonald.

"It would have been really nice to beat them, but I think we still played great by getting one point out of them for the tie."

Jared Emery on the powerplay (2G), Bo Donahue (1G) and Craig Mattioli (1G) led the Rattlers' ½ attack.

The Cats jumped ahead to a 5-3 lead 3:32 into the third on a powerplay marker from Kyle Whieldon (1+2).

Determined to not let the Tigers walk away with another victory, the Rattlers' ½ offense turned on the heat, while Helton stepped up big with a flurry of saves at the other end of the floor.

Cole Eustache (1+2) and Emery each recorded a powerplay goal six minutes apart to tie the game 5-5.

With an exciting finish to the game in close sight, there was a collision in MacDonald's crease.

After Kamloops' ½ Kyle LeBlond crashed into MacDonald, Braidy Webb came to the aid of his goaltender, where he attempted to get even with LeBlond. After the scuffle, Webb was assessed a two minute roughing penalty. LeBlond took a total of seven minutes, including a two-minute roughing minor and an unnecessary roughness major.

Not long after LeBlond's major, Kamloops' ½ Derek Swan was kicked out of the game, which was coupled with a gross misconduct.

When the smoke cleared Kamloops would play the final five minutes two men short. The Cats threw everything they could at Helton, but Helton was a wall, slamming the door shut on each

Tiger shot.

"With his team being down two men for the rest of the game, Helton just played outstanding, by not letting any goals get past him," said Kirkland.

"He is definitely a very solid goaltender, who gives his team a chance to win every night."

Tigers scoring summary:

Karl Friesen (0+2) Patrick Quigley (0+1) Mitch Schochter (1+0) Ryan Minchenko (0+1) Brandon Ditchfield (0+1) Robbie Short (2+1) Mike Miller (1+1) Kyle Whieldon (1+2)

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June 09 Kirby Struts stuff for Junior Tigers

by Nicole Berg

A big game from Robbie Short (1+4) and midget call-up Darren Kirby (1+1), along with a nailbiting final ten minutes clinched a 7-6 Vernon Source for Sports Tigers victory over the South Okanagan Flames Wednesday night at the Multiplex.

The third-place Tigers went to 6-4, while the Flames fell to 3-7 in the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League.

"Darren played very well tonight, I was very pleased with him. He plays the ball smart and reads the floor well," praised Tigers head coach Bill Kirkland on Kirby's play. "He's a really exciting player to watch and will be awesome for us next season."

Playing in his second Junior B game, Kirby thought his team still played an overall good game, despite allowing the Flames to register a few late powerplay goals.

"I think the game started out pretty well, but near the end we let in a few too many goals that we shouldn't have let them get," said Kirby.

Added Kirkland: "We definitely did not play the last two minutes well at all. We fell apart where we played sloppy defense and allowed the Flames a chance back into the game. If we want to beat Kamloops again who is still in first place (Saturday, Multiplex at 7:30), we must come out working hard and challenge the Rattlers right away."

Both teams exchanged a goal to open the first period with Kyle Whieldon (1+2) hitting the net first, followed by Summerland's leading scorer Tyler Prentice (1+1) on the powerplay.

Luke Lecavalier (1G) scored his first goal of the season short handed, on an impressive hard working penalty kill.

Third star Mitch Schochter (2+1) netted a powerplay marker to put the Tigers ahead 3-1, while Chris Johnson (1+1) added a four-on-four goal with 1:54 remaining in the first frame.

Vernon opened the second period with two straight goals with the first coming from Short, who finished the game with first star honours. Kirby later added his first of the night on an up-the-floor-rush on a nice pass from Whieldon.

Just seconds after a Vernon penalty had expired, Davis Kelly (1+1) potted a fast goal that surprised Tigers' starter Brodie MacDonald (49 saves).

With 1:23 remaining in the second, Schochter put the Tigers ahead 5-3 on a hard laser beam shot at the side of the net.

After Clayton Ditchfield (1+1) scored a nice breakaway goal two minutes into the final period, the Tigers' defense started to slide.

The Tigers allowed the Flames to register three straight goals, including two on the powerplay by second star Galen Brims (2+1), and a single by Darcy Ricard (1+1).

Some fabulous saves from MacDonald helped the undisciplined Tigers stay in the game.

"Brodie continued to be outstanding for us again tonight," said Kirkland. "He really kept us in it near the end when we started to take lazy penalties."

Short agreed with Kirkland's assessment on taking unnecessary penalties late in the game.

"We played kind of bad in the dying minutes by letting Summerland get back into the game with our late period penalties," said Short, who is the Tigers leading scorer with 39 points.

"For our game against Kamloops Saturday, we got to come out and play as a team and don't take stupid penalties."

The Tigers took a total of 30 PIM compared to 34 by the Flames, but Summerland was also assessed two game misconducts to Prentice and Kyle Marsh (0+1) in the final minutes.

Dustin Oliver made 45 saves in the Summerland cage.

Tigers scoring summary:

Karl Friesen (0+2) Mitch Schochter (2+1) Robbie Short (1+4) Luke Lecavalier (1+0) Clayton Ditchfield (1+1) Tyler Plante (0+1) Braidy Webb (0+1) Kyle Whieldon (1+2) Darren Kirby (1+1)

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June 03 Raiders Rattle Cats

by Nicole Berg

After handing the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League's Kamloops Rattlers their first loss of the season, the Source for Sports Vernon Tigers failed to keep that swagger swinging Saturday night.

The Tigers (5-4) lost their first game in four outings, bowing 10-7 to the second place Rutland Raiders at the Multiplex.

"After four good games, I was disappointed with the effort we put forth tonight," said head coach Bill Kirkland. "There was an uninspired effort since the beginning of the game, where we came flat out unprepared."

Despite out-shooting Rutland 56 to 44 and leading the Raiders 4-3 at the end of the first period, the Tigers could only muster three goals the rest of the game.

Blake Lewis (1+1) opened up the scoring at 2:30 on the powerplay when he picked up a rebound off a failed shot by Mitch Schochter (1+1), before Rutland's first game star Geoff Wray (2+2) answered back.

Following Wray's marker, Vernon's Kyle Whieldon (2G) registered the go-ahead goal on a nice play, where he scored with just a few seconds remaining on the 30-second shot clock.

The Tigers then started to play sloppy defensively as they made too many incomplete passes, with the final pass costing them a goal. Second star Tyler Parrent (2+2) made the Cats pay, as he intercepted the ball and passed it to Wray for the equalizer.

Finally finding their game again, Vernon woke up with two straight goals just 17 seconds apart. Third star Mike Miller (2G) jump-started the Tigers with their first goal in over 10 minutes. Whieldon promptly added his second tally off a breakaway opportunity, following a face off win.

32 seconds later, Kyle Tomiye (1+1) brought the Raiders within one as he picked up a loose ball

and threw a low hard shot on Vernon's netminder Brodie MacDonald.

There wasn't any scoring until the halfway mark of the second frame, where Parrent recorded his first on the powerplay to tie the game 4-4.

Just 11 seconds later, Miller scored on the five hole of Rutland's goalie Cam Brown. Rutland's Alistair Hart (1+2) evened the score again a few minutes after, on a floor length breakaway chance.

The Tigers continued their sloppy play into the third period, when MacDonald threw out a bad clearing attempt, that was intercepted by Aiden Munson (1G). It was the Raiders' first lead of the night. Schochter later tied the game 6-6, on the powerplay.

The Raiders, who stuffed the Armstrong Shamrocks 15-4 Friday night, then pressed full steam ahead as they recorded four straight goals.

Luc Blinkhorn (1G) was left wide open, where he took advantage with a low shot on MacDonald.

Parrent netted his second before Wray and Rutland's leading scorer Mark MacLennan (1+2) each added a powerplay goal.

Luke Mednis (1+1) potted an unassisted marker five seconds later.

Vernon's next game is tonight at the Multiplex (7:30), when they take on the fourth-place South Okanagan Flames (3-6).

Tigers scoring summary:

Luke Mednis (1+1) Karl Friesen (0+2) Mitch Schochter (1+1) Brandon Ditchfield (0+1) Robbie Short (0+2) Blake Lewis (1+1) Mike Miller (2+0) Kyle Whieldon (2+0)

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May 27 & 28 Weekend sweep for Tigers

by Nicole Berg

Entering the Kamloops Memorial Arena as the underdog, the Source for Sports Vernon Tigers silenced the hometown crowd with a hard fought 7-5 win over the first place Rattlers.

"I was very satisfied with the win tonight," beamed head coach Bill Kirkland. "Everyone worked very hard to deserve the win."

After kicking off the season at a dismal 1-3 record, the Tigers recorded their fourth straight victory. It was also their first win over the 7-1 Rattlers since the 2004 season, when they beat them 13-10.

"It felt awesome to knock off the top team in the league," continued Kirkland. "I was very proud of all the guys, especially the veterans. Mitch Schochter (0+3), Chris Evans (2+0) and Ryan Minchenko (0+1) all played terrific. As well, Brodie MacDonald (44 saves) was outstanding in net for us."

On allowing the high scoring Rattlers to record only five goals, MacDonald was pleased with his play. "I was really happy to beat the number one team, especially doing so in their own barn and by holding them to only five goals."

To make the victory even more sweeter, the Cats pulled off the win with a short bench. With absences due to Karl Friesen, Steven Clark, Tyler Plante and Braidy Webb, the Tigers brought up three midget call-ups for their first Thompson Okanagan Junior B Lacrosse League game. "The call-ups Darren Kirby (1+1), James Dobrowolski (0+1) and Mitch Steel (0+1) played an awesome crash and bang game," said Evans. "I was very impressed with their efforts. After the veterans

leave, the Tigers will be in good hands with these outstanding call-ups."

In a game they never trailed, the Tigers (5-3) jumped out 2:43 into the game on a goal from Clayton Ditchfield (1+0). Kiel Donahue (3+1) brought the Rattlers into the game seven minutes later with an unassisted marker. Evans and Kirby each added a goal to lift the Tigers to a 3-1 lead to end the first.

On his first Junior B lacrosse goal, Kirby said: "It felt pretty good to score my first goal. It gave me a ton of confidence as the game wore on. The game was a lot more fast moving and harder hitting, than what I'm used to in midget."

The Rattlers came out charging in the second to record two straight goals from Donahue to tie the game at 3-3. After Donahue's tally, both teams exchanged a goal each. After Evans broke the 3-3 tie on a nice play from Luke Mednis (0+2), Jared Emery (1+1) brought the Rattlers even once more at 4-4. With 1:13 remaining in the period, Patrick Quigley (1+0) shot off the bench to score a pretty goal by picking the top left corner.

Tigers leading scorer Robbie Short (2+1) padded the Cats' lead to 7-4 with a pair, before Derek Swan (1+0) finally solved MacDonald. With 31 seconds remaining in the game, the Tigers were awarded a rare penalty shot. The TOJLL's rules state that if a team is called for too many men on the floor with less than two minutes remaining in a game, the opposing team is rewarded with a penalty shot. Schochter was chosen to make the attempt where he made a nice move, but couldn't get the ball past starter Mike Smith (35 saves).

In other action, MacDonald and midget call-up Josh Phillips combined for 36 saves, as the Tigers thrashed the Kelowna Warriors 15-7 Saturday night at the Multiplex.

First star Robbie Short led the Tigers with the hat trick, with second star Minchenko adding 2+2. Schochter and Quigley both finished with (1+4), while Kyle Whieldon (2+1) and Plante (2+0) added a goal each. Brandon and Clayton Ditchfield, Blake Lewis and Mike Miller added singles. Third star Deryk McPhail (3+0) led the way for the Warriors.

"Josh played a great game, coming in cold in a tough situation," said Short. "A few times we let him stand on his head, but he continued to play awesome for us. After falling apart defensively in the second period, we roared back in the third for the win. We stuck to the game plan, by working hard on special teams."

Tigers scoring summary vs Kelowna:

Brodie MacDonald (0+1) Chris Evans (0+1) Luke Mednis (0+1) Patrick Quigley (1+4) Mitch Schochter (1+4) Ryan Minchenko (2+2) Brandon Ditchfield (1+1) Robbie Short (3+0) Clayton Ditchfield (1+2) Blake Lewis (1+1) Tyler Plante (2+0) Steven Clark (0+1) Braidy Webb (0+2) Mike Miller (1+1) Kyle Whieldon (2+1) Josh Phillips (0+1)

Tigers scoring summary vs Kamloops:

Chris Evans (2+0) Luke Medis (0+2) Darren Kirby (1+1) Patrick Quigley (1+0) Mitch Schochter (0+3) Ryan Minchenko (0+1) Mitch Steel (0+1) Robbie Short (2+1) Clayton Ditchfield (1+0) James Dobrowolski (0+1)

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May 15 Tigers make Short work of Flames

by Nicole Berg

Vernon Tigers rookie Robbie Short (4+4) led the way with an eight point performance, as the Tigers dropped the South Okanagan Flames 17-13 Monday night in Summerland.

With the win, the Tigers (3-3) now have sole possession of third place in the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League standings. The Flames fell to a 2-4 record.

"I was very impressed with how Robbie played tonight," said assistant coach Rob Johnson. "He had a very big night, by leading the team with eight points. He is definitely a great leader for this squad."

Johnson was also happy with the efforts of captain Chris Evans (3+2) and veteran Kyle Whieldon (3G).

"They both played tremendous. Chris had a great game, by providing a lot of hustle and leadership. He was rewarded for his hard work with the five points he scored. As well, Kyle had a big night by netting the hat trick, which ended his scoring drought."

With the Tigers taking 22 penalty minutes in the first period, for a total of 32, the Flames (23 PIM) built up a quick 6-3 lead.

"We played undisciplined in the first period and played with little effort. But as the second and third periods rolled around, we regrouped and played much better, by outscoring them and cracking down on penalties," Johnson continued.

Summerland's Kyle Marsh (5+4) completed his hat trick in the first frame. Tyler Prentice (4+1) connected twice and Jordan Moss (2G) added a single. The Tigers got a goal each from Mitch Schochter (1+4), Whieldon and Evans.

After taking a much needed first intermission break, the Tigers came out flying in the second to record seven goals. The Cats also tightened up on their discipline, by not making any visits to the sin bin. Brandon Ditchfield (1+1), Evans and Whieldon all hit the net, while Short and Tyler Plante (2+1) provided two goals apiece. The Flames supplied singles coming from Niko Sopow (2+1), Stefan Robertson (1G) and Moss.

Just as they did in the second period, the Tigers provided a lot of offense and hustle in the third. Blake Lewis (1+1), Mike Miller (1+1), Braidy Webb (1+2), Evans and Whieldon led the way for Vernon with one goal each. Short added two. Prentice also notched a pair, while Sopow and Marsh scored once.

Brodie MacDonald made 43 saves for Vernon, while Dustin Oliver stopped 40 shots in the Summerland cage.

Tigers scoring summary:

Chris Evans (3+2) Karl Friesen (0+3) Tony Minchenko (0+1) Patrick Quigley (0+1) Mitch Schochter (1+4) Ryan Minchenko (0+1) Brandon Ditchfield (1+1) Robbie Short (4+4) Clayton Ditchfield (0+2) Blake Lewis (1+1) Tyler Plante (2+1) Braidy Webb (1+2) Mike Miller (1+1) Kyle Whieldon (3+0)

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May 13 Tigers top Shamrocks

by Nicole Berg

After losing their first ever game to the Armstrong Shamrocks in their home opener, the Vernon Tigers sought revenge with a 10-6 win Saturday night in Armstrong.

"It was really nice to get the win," said Vernon head coach Bill Kirkland. "We certainly made a better effort than we did in our last couple games, by working hard on all aspects."

"Brodie MacDonald again played outstanding, by allowing only six goals. Every night he continues to play better. Blake Lewis (1A) and Braidy Webb(1G), who scored his first Junior B

goal tonight, played very solid." MacDonald, who finished the night with 40 saves, thought his team improved a lot from their previous outing against Rutland, where they lost 11-9. "We really picked it up from the last game. Every one contributed to their role. If we continue to take fewer penalties and do the little things right every game, we should keep on winning," said MacDonald.

10 minutes into the first frame Robbie Short (1+1) scored a beautiful breakaway goal, that was followed up by goals from Mitch Schochter (3+2) and Brandon Ditchfield (2G) on the power play. Jeremy Meredith (2+1) quickly replied back with a power play marker of his own, on an easy shot that got past MacDonald. Ditchfield added his second power play goal just a minute before Tyler Plante (1+2) ran in alone on starter Logan Pippolo (45 saves) to increase the Tigers lead to 5-1 after the first.

Just as they did to begin the first period, the Tigers came out flying to record the first goal in the second. 1:44 into the period, Schochter connected short handed on a nice pass from Short. Jarrett Medhurst answered back with a goal to bring the Shamrocks within four, before Vernon's Mike Miller (1G) netted his first of the season. The Shamrocks soon after scored two straight goals, with the first coming from their rookie leading scorer, Logan Strohm (1+2). Strohm, who has 24 points on the season, scooped up a loose ball and scored unassisted on a 3-on-3 opportunity. With 5:19 remaining in the period, Jess Villeneuve (1G) supplied a power play marker to make the score 7-4 Vernon.

There wasn't any scoring until the halfway mark of the third period, when Meredith pocketed his second of the game on the power play. Schochter completed his hat trick just 10 seconds later, on an impressive end-to-end rush that surprised Pippolo. Left standing alone in front of Vernon's net, Nathan Strohm (1+1) intercepted a pass, where he blasted a quick shot past MacDonald. After Strohm's marker, Luke Mednis (1+1) padded the Tigers' lead to 9-6, before Webb scored his first of the season on a nice pass from Karl Friesen (1A).

The Tigers traveled Monday to Summerland to face the Flames. Summerland is in third place with a 2-2 record. For the upcoming game, assistant coach Rob Johnson said: "The game should be really fast paced. Summerland has a bunch of young guys that have a lot of speed. If we come out firing from the beginning, we should have a good shot at winning."

Tigers scoring summary:

Mitch Schochter (3+2) Brandon Ditchfield (2+0) Luke Mednis (1+1) Tyler Plante (1+2) Braidy Webb (1+0) Mike Miller (1+0) Robbie Short (1+1) Karl Friesen (0+1) Luke Lecavalier (0+1) Clayton Ditchfield (0+1) Blake Lewis (0+1) Brodie MacDonald (0+2)

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May 09 Raiders upend Tigers

by Nicole Berg

Charging back from a one-goal deficit at the end of the second period, the Rutland Raiders recorded five goals in the third to cruise past the Vernon Tigers 11-9 Tuesday night, at the Memorial Arena.

"We did not play well tonight," stated Tigers' head coach Bill Kirkland. "From the third period on, we were completely dominated and did not deserve to win. Right from the beginning of the game, there was a major lack of consistency, commitment and effort."

Rutland's Doug Langlois (4+3) opened the game's scoring 3:53 into the first period. Starting less than a minute later, the Tigers scored their first of four straight goals to go ahead 4-1. Robbie Short (3G) connected twice, Mitch Schochter (2G) added a single, and rookie Blake Lewis (1G) netted his first of the season. Short's second goal came on a two-man powerplay advantage,

where he picked up the ball at centre and ran in alone on Rutland's starting goaltender Cam Needham (48 saves). Tyler Parrent (2G) pocketed a late goal with 55 seconds remaining in the period, to bring the Raiders within two goals.

To start the second period, the Raiders tied the game on two quick powerplay markers coming just seven seconds apart, from Geoff Wray (1+2) and Parrent. Langlois shortly later added a goal to put the Raiders in front at 5-4, for the first time in the game. But the Tigers quickly responded, as Tyler Plante (1G) picked up a loose ball off a Tiger face-off win and shot the ball past Needham, for his fourth goal of the season. Schochter, followed by Short with a powerplay marker, padded the Cats' lead to 7-5, before Mark MacLennan (2+3) answered back on a two-man advantage power play.

Kirt Stewart (1G) took no time in tying the game early in the third period at 7-7. He jumped out of the penalty box to pick up a loose ball, ran up the floor, and buried it past Vernon's starting netminder, Brodie MacDonald. Brandon Ditchfield (1+2) soon broke the tie on a long pass from Patrick Quigley. The Tigers' 8-7 lead would be their last of the night, as captain Aiden Munson (2G) dashed the Tigers' hopes by scoring a short-handed marker. MacLennan and Laglois, on the powerplay increased the Raiders' lead to 10-8 before Steven Clark (1G) potted his first of the season. Stopping any chance of a Vernon comeback, Munson added a short-handed insurance tally with 39 seconds to go.

The Tigers will be looking to improve upon their 1-3 record Saturday night, when they travel to face the 1-4 Armstrong Shamrocks at the new Armstrong/Spallumcheen Sports Complex. The game will be an early 6:30PM start.

Tigers scoring summary:

Tony Minchenko (0+1) Patrick Quigley (0+1) Mitch Schochter (2+0) Brandon Ditchfield (1+2) Robbie Short (3+0) Blake Lewis (1+0) Tyler Plante (1+0) Steven Clark (1+0) Mike Miller (0+1) Kyle Whieldon (0+2) Braidy Webb (0+2)

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May 06 Penalties hurt Tigers

by Nicole Berg

Much like the style of play that cost the Vernon Tigers a chance at victory in their season opener, they resorted back to the same ways Saturday night to lose to the Kamloops Rattlers 11-8 at the Civic Arena.

The Tigers were dinged with 71 minutes, 29 more than they had against the Armstrong Shamrocks last week. Kamloops also saw their fair share of the penalty box, as they were handed 49. "We were just too undisciplined tonight, especially in the third period," said head coach Bill Kirkland. "With taking so many penalties, it definitely contributed to the score to lead Kamloops with the victory. They have a lot offensive talent and that really showed tonight, when they connected on their many power play opportunities." In the third period the Tigers had 38 PIM; 1/2s alone. Mitch Schochter (1+1) was tossed from the game due to receiving his fifth penalty. Assistant coach Rob Johnson was also kicked out of the game in the last few minutes.

The Rattlers jumped out to a quick 2-0 lead, with the first goal coming just 21 seconds into the contest from Derek Swan (1+1) on the power play. Ryland Derosé (1G) added a single three minutes later. Patrick Quigley (2G) answered back 20 seconds later on a nice pass from Schochter, before Kiel Donahue (4G), who was named the game's first star, increased the Rattlers' 1/2 lead to 3-1. On a Vernon defensive lapse, Donahue was left standing alone in front of goaltender Brodie MacDonald (50 saves), who took the easy shot for his first goal. After Quigley scored his second, Donahue again made the Vernon defense pay. While shooting on MacDonald,

the ball rebounded off the post and slowly trickled to the centre line. Donahue shot up the floor, grabbed the ball and ran in alone short handed for the goal. Kin Kelsey (2G) padded the Rattlers' ½ lead to 5-2 on a short handed marker 32 seconds later. Schochter and second star Robbie Short (3+2) each scored a power play goal to pull the Tigers within one goal at 5-4, to end the period.

Short, who is the Tigers' ½ leading scorer with 13 points, thought his team still played a good game despite taking so many penalties. "We played well by moving the ball around and creating some scoring chances for ourselves, but the power play goals by Kamloops really killed us." On his first season playing for the Tigers, Short added, "I really like playing lacrosse for the Tigers. It's a great place to play, and the guys are a really great group to play with."

The Tigers and Rattlers each exchanged a goal to open the second period, with Vernon's ½ Brandon Ditchfield (1+1) connecting first, followed by Donahue on a two-man advantage power play. Short later tied the game again at 6-6, on a pretty pass from Ryan Minchenko (2A). But Kamloops soon broke the tie, with three straight goals coming from Donahue, Jared Emery (3+2) and Kelsey. After a scrum in front of Rattlers' ½ starter Scott Helton (50 saves), Vernon's ½ Chris Evans and Kamloops' ½ captain Chris Elliot tangled and were each assessed fighting majors and a game misconduct. Short completed his hat trick with 34 seconds remaining in the period.

The Rattlers continued to pour on the goals in the third period, on two markers from Emery to extend their lead to 11-7. With Vernon's ½ Luke Mednis in the penalty box for a checking-from-behind double minor, the Rattlers peppered MacDonald with a ton of shots, but MacDonald slammed the door shut on each one. "Brodie was just outstanding for us in net again," said Kirkland. "All those stops on the four minute penalty kill were definitely superb. Karl Friesen (1+2) added a late goal for the Tigers with 25 seconds remaining in the game.

The Tigers travel to Kelowna Tuesday, where they face off against the Rutland Raiders at the Memorial Arena at 7:30. The Raiders are currently in second place with a 3-1 record. The Raiders swept the Tigers 2-0 in the first round of the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League playoffs last year.

Tigers scoring summary:

Karl Friesen (1+2) Patrick Quigley (2+0) Mitch Schochter (1+1) Ryan Minchenko (0+2) Brandon Ditchfield (1+1) Robbie Short (3+2) Steven Clark (0+1) Mike Miller (0+1)

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May 04 Tigers dominate Warriors

by Nicole Berg

In a game they dominated all night, the Vernon Tigers won their first game of the season 10-4 over the Kelowna Warriors, Thursday night at the Memorial Arena. The win improves Vernon's record to 1-1. The Warriors dropped to 1-3. "It felt good to get our first win after two good practices this week," said Vernon head coach Bill Kirkland. "We improved in all areas dramatically, compared to our last game against Armstrong."

The Tigers reduced their time spent in the penalty box, by being called for only 12 minutes, which was a dramatic decrease from their 42 last week. Kelowna received 10. "For tonight's game, we addressed to play a more calmer style, " said assistant coach Rob Johnson. "We tightened up on penalties and played more defensive."

"It was awesome to get the first win under our belts to get the season rolling," said Mitch Schochter, who was the leading scorer on the night with two goals and two assists. "We played

outstanding and really picked it up from last game, by shutting them down and playing hard defense."

Goaltender Brodie MacDonald (55 saves) played his best game in a Tiger uniform, by allowing only four goals throughout the game. "I felt a lot more comfortable in net tonight," MacDonald said. "It felt really good to get our first win of the season, by allowing only four goals. The defense played a lot better than they did against Armstrong." Kirkland was proud of MacDonald's play in net. "Brodie was just outstanding for us. He played great and is improving with every game he plays."

5:59 into the first period, Schochter jumped off the bench and charged up the floor to receive a pass from Steven Clark to go ahead 1-0. The Warriors quickly tied the game 1:30 later on a powerplay marker from Deryk McPhail (1+1). After stealing the ball in a scrum, McPhail deked out MacDonald on a nice play for the goal. Schochter rounded out the first period scoring by putting the Tigers ahead 2-1 with 7:15 remaining.

Kelowna's Kurt Deschner (2+0) opened the second period with his first of two goals to tie the game 2-2. After Deschner's marker, the Tigers came out firing with five straight goals, with the first coming from leading scorer Robbie Short (2+1). Patrick Quigley (2G) increased the Tigers' lead by two, on a beautiful end-to-end pass, coming from Chris Evans (2+1). Evans got a goal of his own shortly after assisting on Quigley's, by using his strength to out-fight the Warriors to win the ball in a mad scramble. The quick shot caught Kelowna's starting netminder Steve Wiens (65 saves) off guard. "Chris was just outstanding tonight," said Johnson on Evan's play. "Every game he hustles 110% and always provides good leadership." Coming just nine seconds later off a Tiger face-off win, Short scooped up the loose ball and blasted a hard shot past a surprised Wiens, to increase the Tigers lead to 6-2. While frantically trying to clear the ball out of his crease, Wiens accidentally threw a clearing pass that was intercepted by Tyler Plante, who fired the ball past Wiens. Finally waking up from their defensive lapse, Deschner got his Warriors on the scoreboard by scoring his second of the night to pull within 7-3. After Vernon's Luke Lecavalier missed an attempt to score on a back handed shot, Josh Taylor (1+1) picked up the loose ball for his first goal of the season.

To begin the third, Kelowna's Victor Wiens (1G) scored the first of only three goals exchanged by both teams in the period. Evans potted his second goal of the night on the powerplay, before Quigley stole the ball from a Warrior defender at the centre line. As soon as he grabbed the ball, Quigley promptly ran in alone on Steve Wiens and scored off his own rebound to win 10-4.

The Tigers next game is Saturday night 7:30pm at the Civic Arena, where they host the defending Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League champions, the Kamloops Rattlers. The Rattlers are also this season's top team at a 2-0 record.

Tigers scoring summary:

Brodie MacDonald (0+1) Chris Evans (2+1) Karl Friesen (0+1) Patrick Quigley (2+0) Mitch Schochter (2+2) Josh Taylor (1+1) Robbie Short (2+1) Luke Lecavalier (0+1) Blake Lewis (0+2) Tyler Plante (1+0) Steven Clark (0+1)

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April 30 Penalty woes hurt Tigers

by Nicole Berg

The first game of the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League season for the Vernon Tigers started off on the wrong end in a penalty-filled 13-12 loss to the Armstrong Shamrocks, at the Civic Arena Saturday.

The Tigers were assessed 42 minutes in penalties, compared to just 30 by the Shamrocks.

"We were outworked in every aspect of the game," said Tigers head coach Bill Kirkland. "Tonight we just didn't come out prepared to play. We showed poor discipline and effort. Full marks go to Armstrong, they worked really hard and deserved the win."

The Tigers drew first blood 4:30 into the contest, with assistant captain Ryan Minchenko (3+1) netting his first of the season, with goaltender Brodie MacDonald pulled for an extra attacker on a delayed penalty call.

Shamrocks leading scorer Jeremy Meredith (4+1) soon erased the Tigers 1-0 lead, by kick-starting his team with the equalizing goal.

The Shamrocks continued to surge ahead, with a goal from Harley Rail (1G) and an unassisted marker by Logan Strohm (2-1).

With the Rocks ahead 3-1, the Cats fell into penalty trouble, where they were assessed their first of three checking-from-behind double minors of the game.

First star Thomas Belanger (4+2) took no time in increasing the Shamrocks lead, with a two-man advantage powerplay goal just seconds after Mitch Schochter (2G) was penalized with his first of five penalties, which led to a game ejection in the third period.

Luke Mednis (2G) scored to bring the Tigers within two goals at 4-2, with 37 seconds remaining in the period.

To begin the second period, Patrick Quigley (2+2) brought the Tigers within one, on the first of three straight 3-on-3 goals from both teams.

The Shamrocks responded 14 seconds later with a goal from Delaney Halifax (1+1), just seconds before Tyler Plante (2G) connected.

Quigley later pocketed his second of the game, as he blasted a heavy shot from the slot to tie the game at five apiece, before Belanger completed his hat trick at 7:55, to lift the Rocks to a 7-5 lead.

The Tigers finally clawed their way back onto the scoreboard with four straight goals, with the first coming from Schochter just 13 seconds following Belanger's hat trick.

Rookie Robbie Short (1+4) scored his first goal in a Tiger uniform, to tie the game 7-7 on the powerplay. Short is coming off a successful Kootenay International Junior Hockey League Championship run with the Sicamous Eagles.

"Robbie played very solid tonight," said Kirkland. "I was impressed with his play in his first game. As well, Braidy Webb (3A) was a huge physical presence."

The Tigers finally got a short taste of being in front again, with Minchenko (PP goal) and Mednis connecting to put the Cats ahead 9-7, which led to a Shamrocks time out.

The lead wouldn't last long however, with Strohm and Meredith (2) cashing in two powerplay goals of their own, to put the Rocks ahead 10-9.

With 1:15 remaining, Schochter scored a beautiful rebound goal from captain Chris Evans (1A), who earlier shot the ball on Shamrocks starter Logan Pippolo.

With the 30 second shot-clock winding down during a penalty kill, Plante jumped out of nowhere to steal the ball from the Shamrocks, who were in a last minute dash to tie the game. Impressing his teammates, Plante held onto the ball for over 20 seconds, running circles around the Shamrock defenders, before finally blasting the ball past a surprised Pippolo, to put the Tigers ahead 11-10 with 17 seconds remaining in the period.

Meredith, who finished the game with second star honours, ripped the ball past MacDonald just 35 seconds into the third period, to tie the game on a two-man advantage opportunity.

Six minutes later, third star Minchenko completed his hat trick with an unassisted marker, with

Pippolo out of position on the powerplay to go up 12-11.

Determined to win their first game of the season, the Shamrocks surged ahead on goals from Belanger on the powerplay and Jamie Cockerill (1+2) short handed to win 13-12.

The Tigers next game is Thursday May 4, where they will visit the Kelowna Warriors at the Memorial Arena in Kelowna, 7:30pm.

Tigers scoring summary:

Chris Evans (0+1), Luke Mednis (2+0), Karl Friesen (0+3), Patrick Quigley (2+2), Mitch Schochter (2+0), Ryan Minchenko (3+1), Robbie Short (1+4), Blake Lewis (0+1), Tyler Plante (2+0), Steven Clark (0+1), Braidy Webb (0+3)

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April 28 **Tigers host Shamrocks in showdown**

by Nicole Berg

With their 2006 Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League season opener just around the corner, the Vernon Tigers are gearing up to take on the competition.

The Cats will kick off their 2006 season this Saturday at the Civic Arena against the Armstrong Shamrocks. Game time is 7:30pm.

"I expect it to be a hard fought game," said head coach Bill Kirkland. "I expect that Armstrong will come out competing hard, being that it will be their third game of the season."

Assistant captain Ryan Minchenko also feels the game will be hard fought and fast paced.

"It's always nice playing at the Civic, because it's a small arena and the crowd gets right into it. And since it's the first game of the season, everyone is anxious to get out on the floor and set the tempo."

Kirkland says the Tigers need to rely mainly upon their snipers to make a significant team impact.

"We are solid on goaltending and defense, but goal scoring is our main concern this year. If our top goal scorers compete hard every night, we will be successful in this league."

The Tigers will likely lose the highly-offensive skills of third year-veteran Tanner Skolrood. Skolrood is in New Westminster at the Junior A Salmonbellies' training camp.

"Tanner probably won't be returning to us this year. He has had a strong pre-season with the Salmonbellies and they are anxious to sign him," said General Manager Rich Zecchel.

The Tigers will also be without the hands of veterans Jeff Stairs and Kyle Whieldon, who are both sidelined for four to six weeks, nursing upper-body injuries.

"The losses of Jeff and Kyle are huge. They are both tough players who always make an impact when they play," said Minchenko.

To help fill in the loss of Whieldon and Stairs, the team has recently signed 20-year-old Clayton Ditchfield, the older brother of veteran Brandon.

Kirkland says the absence of Whieldon and Stairs will be a big opportunity for Clayton and fellow rookies Robbie Short, Braidy Webb, Tony Minchenko, and Blake Lewis to show off their skills.

"With Kyle and Jeff missing, this will give the rookies a great opportunity to play an active role and to develop and mature quickly as players," said Kirkland.

The team has released goaltender Graham Turnbull, who played for the Kelowna Braves last

year. Replacing Turnbull will be 16-year-old midget call-up Josh Phillips, who will be backing up starting goalie Brodie MacDonald.

"I think Brodie is one of the best goalies in the league when he's on his game," said Minchenko. "And Josh is always on top of his game and is very calm in net. He should have no problem backing up Brodie when called upon."

Fan favourite Andy Holte, who wasn't expected to return until late June, could return to the lineup sooner than expected.

"We're not too sure whether or not Andy will be able to go Saturday, but we hope he will be able to join us soon," said Zecchel.

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April 2 Kirkland back to guide Tigers

by Nicole Berg

The Vernon Tigers are looking to improve upon their third-place finish last season, by bringing in veteran head coach Bill Kirkland back to the fold.

Kirkland, who had coached the Tigers since their entrance into the league five years ago, will be returning to the helm after taking last year off.

"I've decided to come back and help out where I could. I am really excited about being head coach again," said Kirkland.

Returning bench boss Rob Johnson is also looking forward upon returning, and is ecstatic about having Kirkland's veteran presence on the team.

"I loved it when Billy decided to come back. Having him here will be great and I hope to learn a lot under him," said Johnson.

Defensive style assistant coach Dennis Taylor will also be returning behind the bench as an assistant coach.

"It is really awesome to be back. I missed being a part of the team. I look forward to helping out the team more defensively. We look like a fast, skilled group this year."

To round out the coaching staff, 2004 Tiger grad Rob Rintoul will bring a player's view into the game, by taking on the role as an assistant coach.

Last year's head coach Jim Point won't be returning, as he will be coaching his own kid's minor lacrosse teams, along with being a BCLA Aboriginal Development Coach.

On the player front the Tigers have many key veterans returning, including top scorer Mitch Schochter and impact players Chris Evans, Karl Friesen and Ryan Minchenko.

16-year-old Brodie MacDonald will be taking over the starting goaltending duties from Jon Holmes, who is ineligible to come back, due to age restrictions.

Saskatoon native Todd Currie and last year's rookie of the year Tim Gutwald of Castlegar will not be coming back, due to work commitments. Additionally, Andy Holte won't be back with the team until at least early June, due to other commitments.

Key veteran Tanner Skolrood also may not be returning to the Tigers, as he has received an invite to try out for the Junior A New Westminster Salmonbellies.

"Tanner goes to their main training camp on April 7. They are quite interested in his play, which is just awesome for him. It would be terrific for our organization to develop players on to that level

of play." said Kirkland.

To fill in the departing player's holes, the Tigers management is busy looking for new players to bring to the squad.

"We are looking at goaltender Graham Turnbull who was with the (Kelowna) Braves last year to try out for us." said Kirkland.

Last year call-ups Robbie Short and Braidy Webb are dedicated to playing full time for the Cats this season. Short is currently playing in the league final for the KIJHL's Sicamous Eagles. As well, he played a few games as an affiliated player for the Vernon Vipers. Webb is also active in hockey, as he plays for the Vernon Midget team.

Tony Minchenko, who is the 18-year-old younger brother of Ryan, along with 17-year-olds Blake Lewis and Philip Klein will be hoping to crack the line-up and make an instant impact for the team.

"These are some good new rookies coming in that I am excited to teach." boasted Johnson. "Having Brodie back in net will be huge, with Graham pushing him for the starting position."

The annual Exhibition Ice Breaker Tournament will be hosted by the Shamrocks at Hassen Arena Saturday, April 8. The Tigers are slated to play at 9 A.M. and 3 P.M.

The Tigers begin their season opener by hosting the Shamrocks at Civic Arena Saturday, April 29.

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