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December 17, 2009

Cats net awards

By Nicole Berg - "[The Vernon MorningStar Newspaper](#)"

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers capped a silver-medal season by cleaning house at the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League's award night.

The Tigers, who notched silver at Junior B provincials, picked up the TOJLL's best coaching tandem in Rich Zecchel and Bryan Klein, Best Defenceman in Blake Lewis and Best Goaltender in Josh Phillips.

A 55-point campaign earned Kamloops Rattlers' Curtis McIntosh Top Scorer, and Stu Ford of the Kamloops Venom was named Most Valuable Player.

The Cats compiled an average third-place 8-4-2 regular season record, but roared in the playoffs by sweeping the Rutland Raiders and South Okanagan Flames in rounds one and two. Vernon then nabbed the banner by knocking off the Kamloops Venom in a thrilling five-game series, claiming their first title in six years.

"After being around the team since 2003 when we last won, it was very gratifying to win again after those six years," said Zecchel. "We've kept plucking away every year since, hoping to win the championship again, and things finally went our way this season."

This season was the first for Zecchel behind the bench, as he spent the previous seasons as the general manager.

"I know the game well in depth since I've played it for many years...but coaching is a whole different aspect than

being GM as you're behind the bench every game and more involved," said Zecchel.

Lewis, who is a four-year veteran of the game, is no stranger to winning awards. The defensive stalwart also earned the team's Unsung Hero award in his rookie season, and was named Best Defenceman the last two years.

"I'm extremely honoured to have won this award," said the 20-year-old. "I have been a defensive player for a long time so it's nice to get recognized. We had a very defensive group of guys this year, with a good core group of guys. I wouldn't have been able to win this award without my teammates' help buying into the system."

On making provincials, Lewis added: "Going to provincials was definitely a special moment. It was a great experience to be able to represent the TOJLL against the best in B.C. It was the most chemistry I have ever experienced on a sports team and we were able to put together a pretty nice run because of it."

Phillips, who finished second to Ford with a .860 save percentage, was jacked to win Best Goaltender.

"I was ecstatic to win the award. I really thought Stu Ford would win it so it was some tough competition to beat him. He really deserved the league MVP.

"Winning our league and placing second in provincials was an amazing experience. Our whole team came together and really clicked in the provincials. We will have a lot of great memories and motivation to work hard and go to provincials again next year."

Phillips also pocketed the Tigers' Most Valuable Player. Robbie Short, who spends his winter seasons skating for the B.C. Hockey League Vernon Vipers, was the team's Top Scorer, potting 26 points. Craig Bigsby was Rookie-of-the-Year, Miles Jespersen won the Coaches Choice, Braidy Webb was the Unsung Hero and Matt Kolb was the Most Improved Player.

The Tigers are already looking ahead to string together another successful season next year, by opening training camp in March. Zecchel expects good things from his squad next year.

"We have a good group of midgets coming in who won silver at the A2 midget provincials last year, so I'm looking forward to another great season."

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August 18, 2009

2009 Founders Cup

Results for the 2009 Founders Cup hosted by the Edmonton Warriors can be found at this website link....

www.seniorblacrosse.com/2009/09fc.html

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August 13, 2009

Photos from 2009 Jr. B Provincials

Individual player photos for all the teams of the 2009 Junior B Provincials are available for purchase at the following link from Gordon Lee Photography....

www.gordonleephoto.com

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August 04, 2009

You've heard of underdogs – what about undercats?

By Staff -



The Vernon Re/Max Tigers are happy to walk away from the B.C. Junior B Lacrosse Championships as silver medalists.

The Tigers, who went 3-1 in round-robin play, bowed 9-5 to the powerhouse Port Moody Thunder in the gold-medal game Monday afternoon at Archie Browning Arena in Esquimalt.

The Tigers opened the scoring, but the Thunder fired several quick goals to steal the momentum and never looked back.

“Those first couple goals we let in kind of killed us in the end,” said Tigers’ captain Robbie Short. “They’ve got a lot of good shooters and have good ball movement on offence.

“They got a few lucky goals and we took a few penalties, but a few lucky bounces and we could have turned it around.”

Added Tigers’ head coach Rich Zecchel: “Losing 9-5 to a team like Port Moody is OK, but the guys were disappointed they lost. We still had a pretty outstanding year.

“They’re (Thunder) a highly-skilled, strong side. They’d be a very competitive Junior A team. A lot of those kids play A1 all through minor – we don’t even have an A1 team.”

Zecchel adds there is always an element of uncertainty heading into provincials, and after bowing 14-3 to the Thunder in preliminary action, he is proud of the way the Cats responded.

“It’s an unknown,” said Zecchel. “You know you’ll be competitive with the Island, but the Lower Mainland will be the toughest always because of their numbers.

“I think we all surpassed our expectations. Winning the (Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League) was the most important thing. That’s what you compete for all season every year.

“Going to provincials is a bonus, and winning a silver medal is a bonus on top of that.”

Short says the silver medal is all the more satisfying knowing the Cats, who finished third in the TOJLL standings, weren’t expected to get as far as they did at provincials.

“Historically, the Okanagan teams are usually pretty underrated, but we always do fairly well.

“We were definitely underdogs going in and I think we surprised a few teams. I don’t think they expected us to be as physical as we were, or as fast.”

The Cats, who last earned silver in 2003, iced the Westshore Bears of Juan de Fuca 10-4 Saturday morning, clipped the host Esquimalt Eagles 5-4 Sunday morning and thumped the Prince George Posse 9-5 that afternoon.

Against the Eagles’ net, the Tigers’ Brennan Plante connected with Ryan Landels as he cut through the middle for the winner late in the third to secure a berth in the gold-medal game.

“It was back and forth right until a few minutes left,” said Zecchel. “As the host team, they were hoping to make it to the gold-medal game, but by beating them, we got there instead.”

Landels posted 9-2-11, including four powerplay goals in four games, and Zecchel says he was the Tiger who perhaps raised his game the most at provincials.

“That nearly reached his totals for the regular season (14 points) in just one weekend,” grinned Zecchel.

The Cat’s Jordan Jarvis (4-8-12) and Miles Jespersen (5-4-9) also chipped in on offence. But Zecchel says the Tigers’ defence, the play of netminder Josh Phillips and a team-first attitude are what got them to the medal round.

“Our goaltending got us there,” said Zecchel. “Josh Phillips was a second team all-star. He’s got a couple years left with us, so that’s good for us.

“Our defence was strong, our goaltending was strong – it was just an all around team effort.”

Zecchel thanked team sponsors – Re/Max, Coca-Cola, Boston Pizza, Canaccord Capital and Kal Tire.

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August 02, 2009

Tigers fall in B.C. playoff opener

By Staff - 

The Vernon Tigers got a wake-up call as they bowed 14-3 to the Port Moody Thunder in their opener at the B.C. Junior B Lacrosse Championships Friday night at Archie Browning Arena in Esquimalt.

“There’s a lot of good teams here, so we’ve got our work cut out for us,” said Tigers’ head coach Rich Zecchel.

“We got into penalty trouble and they can bury the ball, so it just got ugly.

“We played poorly, and we’ve really got to raise our level to be competitive. It was an eye-opener for our guys, but it will be a good experience – we’re here to learn, too.”

Zecchel noted that three of Port Moody’s players racked up roughly 25 points each in just five West Coast Junior Lacrosse League playoff games.

Miles Jespersen, Jordan Jarvis and Steve Clark handled the Cats’ attack. Jespersen missed the Tigers’ Saturday afternoon game against the Westshore Bears (Pacific North West Junior Lacrosse League champions) after he earned a one-game suspension for fighting Friday night.

The Cats face the host Victoria-Esquimalt Eagles this morning and end round-robin play tonight against the Great White North Junior Lacrosse League champions Prince George Posse.

The medal round games start Monday morning.

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July 31, 2009

Junior B Provincials

By editor - Island Sports News Network

The ice in the Archie Browning Sports Centre will be removed, for the second time this spring/summer, to accommodate the B.C. Junior B Lacrosse Championships starting Friday to Monday.

Victoria/Esquimalt Eagles are hosts for the 150 players and coaches from five teams that will take part in a total of 12 games.

Teams include the Westshore Bears, Remax Vernon Tigers, Port Moody Thunder, Prince George Great White North Posse and the Eagles.

The tournament, including opening/closing ceremonies and award presentations, will take place in the Archie Browning Centre.

A BBQ will be held on the Saturday evening, and there will be door prizes, raffle draws and more.

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July 26, 2009

Jarvis enjoying western swing

By Nicole Berg - 

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers probably wish Jordan Jarvis had found his way west a few years sooner.

A native of Saltcoats, Sask., Jarvis was the Cats' only import player this season, and he played a key role as Vernon claimed the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League championship final Wednesday night at Wesbild Centre.

He recorded one of the Tigers' six third-period goals as they iced the Kamloops Venom 9-5 in Game 5 of the best-of-five series.

The Tigers advance to the B.C. Junior B Championships, starting Friday at Archie Browning Arena in Esquimalt. They will open against the West Coast Junior Lacrosse League champions, whose best-of-three series final starts tonight.

Playing last year for the Prairie Gold Lacrosse League's Yorkton Bulldogs, Jarvis burned up the scoring charts, leading the league with a stellar 68 points in 10 games. The next best player, Brad Taylor of Saskatoon, had 46.

In his rookie season with Vernon, Jarvis finished the regular season second in team scoring with 25 points.

"I'm having a real good time playing for Vernon," said the 19-year-old. "It took me a little while to get adjusted to playing here because the PGLL is quite a different league than the one here.

"The league back home was all about offence and here it's all about defence, so it took some time to adjust to it. But I've got the feel of the difference in play and I'm really enjoying playing here and the guys are pretty chill and easy to play with."

Jarvis first picked up a lacrosse stick when he was just 12-years-old. He has played hockey since he was four, but didn't play this season because he wanted to spend more time focusing on going to university and playing field lacrosse.

"This past year was the first of four years on my scholarship," said Jarvis, who just finished his first year at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Mo. before coming to Vernon. "One of my buddies, Adam Stewart, who has played there for a couple years, referred me to the coach and got me to play there. I am studying for a history major while I'm playing there and I'm really enjoying my time there."

Field lacrosse has been an adjustment for Jarvis, who had only two years of experience before he took the scholarship. Yet he was one of two freshmen to make the Lions' roster.

"There's quite a difference from box to field lacrosse. Field is easier to transition to because it's a much bigger playing surface so you have lots of room and time to score and dodge and set up plays."

Jarvis, who idolizes John Grant Jr. of the NLL's Rochester Knighthawks for his play-making ability, found out about the TOJLL after finishing his season with the Bulldogs.

"One day when I was at work, Rich Zecchel (Tigers' general manager), called me up saying he heard about me from a friend and asked me if I'd be interested in coming to the Okanagan."

Jarvis jumped at Zecchel's offer as he was already familiar with the Okanagan Valley, having taken a few summer vacations here in the past.

Said Zecchel: "I wanted Jordan to come here because I saw he was the best player in the league scoring wise there and we were in desperate need of a lefty after Josh Taylor finished playing for us

"When he accepted to play for us, it was really great because he would fill a crucial spot on our team being a left-handed shooter. He's a key factor on our team because he adds lots of speed and stick finesse."

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July 23, 2009

Tigers rally to claim Junior title

By Nicole Berg - 

It's been a few years, but the Vernon Tigers are once again the cream of the crop in the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League.

The Tigers strung together six-straight third-period goals to upend the Kamloops Venom 9-5 in Game 5 of the best-of-five championship final Wednesday night at Wesbild Centre.

It is Vernon's first league title since they won back-to-back banners in 2002 and 2003. They now advance to the B.C. championship, which goes July 31-Aug. 3 at Archie Browning Arena in Esquimalt.

"It's just unbelievable and it is such a good feeling to have won the whole championship," said Tigers' coach Brian Klein. "We did what we set out to do which was to win every shift and to go out there and break their hearts, and we did just that.

"It was a slow start as we were losing 4-1 at one point, but the whole time I thought we were OK and our leadership of Robbie Short, Steven Clark, Braidy Webb, and Blake Lewis shined through.

"Kamloops is a good team who played a close, tough series. They had really strong goaltending in Stu Ford (37 saves) who was the best goalie in the league, so it's an accomplishment to have been able to beat him."

The Tigers had a rough start, trailing 4-3 after 40 minutes.

Ryland DeRose, Liam Hagerty, Ryan Hildebrand, and Duncan Schulz notched the Venom's first four goals. Riley Soleway, Ryan Landels, and Matt Kolb responded for the Cats, who came alive in the third stanza and played the Venom tough from the start.

Steven Clark ignited the Tigers' attack, scoring just 21 seconds into the frame.

Clark, who is graduating from the Tigers' program after five seasons, was ecstatic with the win.

"There are just no words to describe it. I'm so jacked that we won this whole championship. I just wish (teammate) Pat Quigley was here to share this with us, as he is out of town for military training.

"This is probably the biggest thing I've won in my whole life. I'm proud of the way the boys came together tonight to win the game. It's wicked how we were down two games at the beginning of the series but we rallied back to beat them in the end. It's an awesome feeling."

Goals by Jordan Jarvis, Steven Kolasko, Miles Jespersen, Skylar Hodgson, and Short rounded out the offence.

Hildebrand fired a late goal for Kamloops.

Said first star Short: "I was really happy to get the win and it feels so good to have won two championships this year (the other was a national Junior A hockey title with the Vernon Vipers).

"We knew we had the right team to win this series because we have such a good group of defencemen, and a great goalie in Josh (Phillips) who's just played outstanding for us all year long."

Venom coach Al Forster praised the Tigers' resiliency.

"This series was so evenly matched that it could have gone either way. We played great the first two periods, but Vernon just came out with more intensity and wanted it more come the third period."

This was the Venom's first-ever championship final in only their second year in the league. They finished regular season play in fifth place with a 6-6-2 record. Vernon, who spotted Kamloops a two-game series lead, missed first place by one point at 8-4-2.

"I'm very proud of the way we've played all year, considering it's just our second year in the league and we've made it to the league finals already," added Forster.

Earlier, Jespersen turned the hat-trick as the Tigers grounded the Venom 5-3 in Game 4 Tuesday night at Kamloops Memorial Arena.

"It was a low-scoring game – the goalies were good, it's tough dee, and it's tough to get a good scoring opportunity," said Tigers' head coach Rich Zecchel.

One of Jespersen's goals came shorthanded on a smart pass from Phillips.

"He's been really solid this whole series," said Zecchel, of Jespersen. "Lots of hustle, and he's just a hard-working young man."

"Everybody just put in a real team effort."

Short and Webb (empty-netter) rounded out the Tigers' attack.

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July 21, 2009

Tigers stay alive

By Nicole Berg - 

It was a nail biter, but the Vernon Tigers prevailed with a thrilling 5-4 overtime win against the Kamloops Venom in Game 3 Saturday night at Wesbild Centre to keep their Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League final hopes alive.

Playing in his first game of the playoffs, Tigers' veteran Darren Kirby collected the winner with 5:07 remaining in double-overtime on a spectacular pass from Jordan Jarvis. Jarvis faked a shot on Venom netminder Stu Ford then fed a great pass to Kirby who slammed it in the net.

Game 4 of the best-of-five series went Tuesday night at Kamloops Memorial Arena.

A fifth game, if required, goes tonight at Wesbild Centre (7:30).

"That was such an intense game," said Kirby, who can only play parttime with the Tigers, as he attends school in Vancouver. "Having not played in like three weeks, I felt fine out there.

"Everyone felt nervous in the beginning of the game, but the nerves wore out by the second period.

"This has definitely been a series of defensive plays and as the saying goes, defence wins championships, so our guys on the back end are going to have to keep up what they did tonight and keep the Venom shooters away."

Despite the Tigers winning the overall game, the Venom scored the first goal of every period. Ryland DeRose, Tyler Reid, Ryan Hildebrand, and Zach Bruneau handled the Venom attack.

Riley Soleway, Brennan Plante, and Miles Jespersen, with a pair, rounded out the Tigers' offence.

Jespersen's first came after the Venom had put a ton of pressure on the Tigers' defence, but netminder Josh Phillips was a rock. Vernon finally got possession after Jarvis made a big hit on a Venom player and then sprung Jespersen for the goal.

Even though the Tigers scored only five goals, they threw 77 shots Ford's way. Ford led the league's goaltenders with a .871 save percentage.

Phillips stopped 36 Venom shots.

Said Tigers' coach Brian Klein: "The game turned out the way I thought. All the games in this series have been really close with lots of defence.

"Both goalies on both teams played extremely well. Our defence was really outstanding and it's been a big accomplishment to us to keep Riley Donahue, one of the league's top scorers, scoreless.

"Also, this was Darren's first game of the playoffs so it was really nice to see him get the winner. He played a great game."

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July 18, 2009

Cats trail series 2-0

By Staff - 

With the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League championship series heating up, the Vernon Re/Max Tigers' offence went cold Thursday night at Memorial Arena in Kamloops.

The Tigers lost 3-1 to the Kamloops Venom and went into Game 3 of the best-of-five series Saturday night at Wesbild Centre down 2-0. A fourth game, if required, would go Monday night in Kamloops. Game 5 would be played Wednesday night in Vernon.

The Tigers jumped out to a quick 1-0 lead in the opening few minutes on a breakaway beauty by Craig Bigsby.

After that, the Tigers' defence went soft, allowing three straight goals by Ryan Hildebrand, Tyler Reid, and Steve Bordon.

"We played a poor game and couldn't hit the net tonight," said Tigers' coach Rich Zecchel. "We had lots of trouble trying to break through Kamloops' defensive zone and didn't get very many good outside shots.

"Their goalie Stu Ford (36 saves) played well and we just couldn't get anything past him. Even though our offence played poorly, our defence did play well, which was led by Joel McKenzie, Jake Soleway, Steve Kolasko, Ryan Oliverius, Blake Lewis, Russell McLean, and Joey Klein.

"Our goaltender Josh Phillips (40 saves) played a solid game and let in the least amount of goals he's let in all year."

The Tigers took 22 penalty minutes to the Venom's six.

In what could be their final game of the season Saturday, Zecchel said: "We're going to have to turn this ship around really quick. We should be up 2-0 in this series. It's been really close and the games could have gone either way. Our big guns are going to have to put all the pressure they can on Ford and our defence will have to do their best to blank their top scorers, such as Riley Donahue."

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July 16, 2009

Venom sting Tigers in final second

By Nicole Berg - 

The outcome was all decided in less than a second.

Duncan Schulz corralled a loose ball in the corner, quickly cut to the net, and took a diving shot which eluded goalie Josh Phillips with 0.4 of a second remaining as the Kamloops Venom bounced the Vernon Re/Max Tigers 9-8 in Game 1 of the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League championship series Tuesday night at Wesbild Centre.

Game 2 in the best-of-five final series went Thursday night in Kamloops. The third game goes Saturday night (7:30) at Wesbild Centre. Game 4, if required, is Monday, while a fifth game would o Wednesday in Vernon.

The winner advances to the provincial tournament, July 31-Aug. 3 at Archie Browning Arena in Victoria.

"It was unbelievable to get that goal right before the buzzer sounded to win the game," said Venom coach Al Forster. "We didn't play as well as we could have in the first period as we came out of the period down 3-1, but we came back and held a 6-5 lead coming out of the second. In the third, we pulled together, determined not to give up. Vernon's a strong team who never gives up and their captain Robbie Short (three goals) played incredible. We have to watch out for him."

The fifth-place Venom opened the scoring 61 seconds in with slick Riley Donahue pocketing his first of four goals on the night.

"Knowing we were down in the third period, we knew we had to step it up and really play hard if we wanted to win," said Donahue, who had 33 points in the regular season. "Vernon played us hard and they're a really tight team defensively so it's hard to get any balls past them, but we found a way tonight, and we'll have to keep that up if we want to win this series."

Vernon pulled away with a 3-1 first-period lead on goals by Ryan Landels, Jordan Jarvis and James Dobrowolski.

The game turned in Kamloops' favour in the second period, as they outscored Vernon 4-2 on goals by Cole Eustache, Rob Peterson, and a pair by Donahue, to take over the lead at 6-5. Short provided two goals for the Cats.

Eustache, Schulz, and Donahue notched the remaining Kamloops goals. Jarvis, Braidy Webb, and Short replied for Vernon.

Stu Ford made 46 saves in net for Kamloops, while Phillips stopped 43 shots.

"It was up and down both ways," said Vernon coach Rich Zecchel. "It was a good, hard-fought game on both sides. We ran into a few problems defensively when Kamloops got the majority of their goals in the second period. We showed lots of heart though by battling back and came within a tie but it wasn't enough to win the game."

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July 14, 2009

Cats get Venom

By Staff - 

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers were expecting to open the Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse championship series in Kelowna Tuesday night.

Instead, the Tigers hosted the upstart Kamloops Venom in the best-of-five final series. The fifth-place Venom stunned the first-place Warriors 8-5 Saturday night in Kelowna to win the semifinal series 2-1.

"We were surprised the Venom beat Kelowna," said Vernon co-coach Rich Zecchel. "They have a really good goalie in Stu Ford, who has had a few Junior A stints. Doug Clark has coached Team B.C. at various levels at the nationals so they are well coached.

"They also have one of the best players in the league, Riley Donahue (ninth in scoring with 16-17-33). They're smaller than us and they don't like to get hit. They're not as quick as Kelowna which is good for us. We match up well with them."

The Venom's top scorer in the regular season was Quinn Smith, who finished fifth with 17 goals and 41 points.

The Tigers won the season series 2-1, winning 11-4 on June 24 in Kamloops, the last time the teams met. Vernon finished at 8-4-2, while the Venom went 6-6-2, knocking off the fourth-place Kamloops Rattlers in first-round playoff action.

Game 2 in the championship series goes Thursday night in Kamloops, while a third game is Saturday night (7:30) at Wesbild Centre. A fourth game, if required, is scheduled for Tuesday night in Kamloops. Game 5 would go Wednesday, July 22 in Vernon.

The winner advances to the provincials, July 31-Aug. 3 in Victoria.

The Victoria- Esquimalt Jr B Lacrosse club is the host of the 2009 Provincials to be held at the Archie Browning Sports Centre, [Pacific North West Junior Lacrosse League](#)

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July 09, 2009

Cats douse Flames in semifinal

By Nicole Berg - 

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers have booked their spot in the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League's championship series.

Thanks to a convincing 10-4 win over the South Okanagan Flames Wednesday night before 350 fans at Wesbild Centre, the Cats have a chance to earn their first trophy since 2003, when they beat the Kelowna Dragons.

The Tigers will face either the fifth-place Kamloops Venom or first-place Kelowna Warriors, depending on who wins their semifinal series. Kelowna won Game 1 Tuesday night 8-5. The best-of-three final series will likely start Monday night.

In regular-season play, Kelowna won the series over the Tigers 2-0, while Vernon beat Kamloops 2-0.

"It feels real good to be finally playing in the finals again," said Tigers' coach Rich Zecchel. "We got this far by playing the Flames hard and Rutland before them.

"We came out with a great start tonight with no penalties, but we kind of let our discipline get the better of us come the third period, as a couple of our most experienced players took some dumb penalties and got themselves thrown out of the game. As a result of that, we'll have to work hard on making sure those penalties don't happen again."

The Tigers, who took 53 minutes in penalties, compared to the Flames' 14, played a convincing first period where they scored four straight goals in 90 seconds to pull away with a 5-2 lead after the first.

Steven Clark, Robbie Short, Ryan Landels, and Craig Bigsby scored the Tigers' quick string of goals.

Jordan Jarvis, Riley Soleway, Miles Jespersen, James Dobrowolski (empty-netter), Clark (on a nifty breakaway in the late going) and Landels, with his second goal of the game, rounded out the rest of the Tigers' scoring.

Wes Norris, Darcy Ricard, Pete McEwen and Tyler Prentice led the Flames' attack.

The Tigers lost veteran Braidy Webb in the first period due to penalty trouble, and Short, midway through the third, after his fifth penalty.

Vernon goalie Josh Phillips, who made 35 solid saves to take first-star honours, is excited to be playing in his first championship series.

"I'm really excited I got to play tonight and be the starting goalie for the Tigers this year," said Phillips. "The game went pretty good tonight but things got a little intense when our team started taking some untimely penalties and the Flames had a lot of opportunities with the man-advantage to score on me.

"Other than that though, we came out with the desire to win from the beginning and played a pretty decent game."

Flames' head coach Geoff Goodman was impressed with the way his troops played this season.

"We finished second in standings this year which is by far the best we've ever done. I'm really proud of the way the boys played this season. We were just simply outplayed by Vernon this series. Vernon's a very strong team with good coaching and players.

"It was mental mistakes tonight that cost us the win. Many times some of our guys just stood around while the Vernon players ran around them and our guys didn't do anything. It's a tough way to learn but next year we'll learn from our mistakes so that we don't make them again."

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July 08, 2009

Tigers fan Flames in Game 1

By Staff - 

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers bounced the South Okanagan Flames 8-6 Monday night at Kelowna Memorial Arena in Game 1 of the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League best-of-three semifinal series.

Game two goes tonight at Wesbild Centre (7:30). A third game if needed, goes back to Kelowna Memorial Arena Friday night at 7:30. The Flames could not get a home game in Penticton since ice was installed for hockey schools.

The 8-4-2 Tigers only got a full three days rest after sweeping the Rutland Raiders in the quarterfinals, but they were full of energy and ready to take on the 8-3-3 Flames.

“We played a pretty full game from start to end,” said Tigers’ forward Jordan Jarvis, who notched one goal and two assists. “It was a fast-paced game with lots of movement. South Okanagan didn’t pressure us as much as Rutland did so we were able to move the ball around faster and played a well-rounded game on offence and defence.”

Craig Bigsby bagged a pair of goals for the Tigers, while Robbie Short, Ryan Landels, Miles Jespersen, Riley Soleway and Steven Clark chipped in with singles.

Derek Grimm, Tyler Prentice, Pete McEwan, Tyler Berkholtz, Logan O’Brien, and Wes Morris led the Flames’ attack.

The Flames, who received a first-round bye, outshot the Tigers 51-45.

“I don’t think it was a good effort,” said Flames’ coach Geoff Goodman. “We had just maybe some rust or lack of mental readiness for some of the guys for the intensity that comes with a playoff game. What really hurt us was our special teams. They had three shorthanded goals and that just hurts.

“We can’t let that happen. And they were mental mistakes on the guys not checking properly, not getting close to their men, and letting them walk in and get the easy shot on goal.”

Goodman planned to move Brad Deshane back to forward and insert Connor Dietsen and Louis Montgomery in the lineup for Game 2 in hopes of garnering more intensity.

In other semifinal action, the first-place Kelowna Warriors (8-3-3) took on the 6-6-2 Kamloops Venom Tuesday night.

The underdog Venom made it to the second round by defeating the 7-4-3 Kamloops Rattlers 11-6 Sunday night to take the quarterfinal series 2-1.

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July 05, 2009

Tigers advance to semis

By Nicole Berg - 

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers thrashed the Rutland Raiders 8-1 Thursday night at Kelowna Memorial Arena, sweeping the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League best-of-three quarterfinal playoff series.

From start to finish, the third-place Tigers dominated both ends of the floor, by providing killer offence in the sixth-place Raiders’ end, and superb goaltending in their own.

The 8-4-2 Cats will now face the second-place South Okanagan Flames in semifinal action starting Monday night at Kelowna Memorial. Game two goes Wednesday at Wesbild Centre (7:30). Game three, if needed, would go Friday at Memorial. The Flames, who received a first-round bye finished their regular season at 8-3-3.

Josh Phillips posted 39 saves and held the Rutland shooters scoreless, until the third period, when Iain Hart scored Rutland’s only goal.

"The boys displayed a strong all-around effort," said Vernon coach Rich Zecchel. "The defence played phenomenal in front of Josh, who stepped it up when we had a chance to sweep the Raiders and move onto round two."

Captain Robbie Short led the way for the Cats, potting two goals and supplying five assists. Short had 13 points in the series. Rookie Ryan Landels pulled the hat-trick, while Craig Bigsby pocketed a pair and Brennan Plante added a single. Jordan Jarvis chipped in with two assists.

The Tigers' powerplay cashed in four times.

Vernon kept their cool come the end of the game, when Rutland tried stirring up a brawl knowing they were on the verge of being swept. Zecchel was pleased with the Tigers' discipline.

"The boys did a good job of not giving in to Rutland's rough play at the end of the game and just held on for the win. We took only 20 minutes in penalties, compared to their 42."

In other quarterfinal action, the Kamloops Venom held a 1-0 series lead over the Kamloops Rattlers, thanks to a 6-5 win Thursday night. Game 2 went Saturday night, with a third, if required, going tonight

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July 03, 2009

Tigers tame Raiders in Game 1

By Nicole Berg - 

The Vernon Tigers have Game 1 of the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League playoffs in the bag.

The Cats clipped the Rutland Raiders 10-8 Tuesday night at Wesbild Centre in the first game of the three-game quarter final series. The Tigers had a chance to sweep the Raiders Thursday night at Kelowna Memorial Arena. A third game, if required, goes Saturday night at Wesbild (7:30).

The Tigers held a huge lead in the early going, pulling away 5-2 after the first period.

"Besides our early lead in the first period, our only bright spot tonight was our powerplay which scored three goals," said Tigers' coach Rich Zecchel. "Once the second period rolled around we started taking useless penalties and that's what caused Rutland to come back into the game."

The Tigers were slapped with 33 penalty minutes, compared to the Raiders' 18, which was a large result of the Tigers taking three majors.

Newcomer Russell McLean, who played in his fourth game in a Tiger uniform, led the penalty parade with a five minute major and a match misconduct for butt-ending, which means he will miss at least the next two games.

The Hart brothers, Iain and Alistair, dominated the first period, both potting a goal for Rutland.

"Iain, who is the younger brother of the two at 17, notched one goal and one assist, while Alistair, 19, got two goals.

"I think me and my brother work pretty well together," said Iain, who had 14 points on the year. "We have some natural chemistry and we play pretty easy together. This is the second year we've played on the same team together, as I just started playing last year. Otherwise on the game, we have to work harder at getting the ball in the net if we wanna beat the Tigers. Our defence has been pretty stellar so far though."

Craig Bigsby with a pair of powerplay markers, Robbie Short (2+4), Matt Kolb, and Steve Kolasko (1+1) led the Tiger attack in the first.

The Raiders played their best period of the game in the second, outscoring the Cats 3-1 on goals coming from Alistair Hart and Jordan Urban (1+1) on the powerplay, and captain Sam Finchman, with his first of the year.

Short, who led third-place Vernon with 26 points, provided a shorthanded tally for the Cats.

"We got off to a pretty good start at the start of the game," said Short, who was one of three Tigers to score

shorthanded. "Once we build a lead like that though, we have to keep it and not let off the pedal. We have to learn the playoff games are gonna be tougher down the road because everyone wants the win. Rutland's a good team at putting on lots of tough pressure down low in the crease, which makes it hard for us to break out. With their season on the line on Thursday, they're going to come out with all they got and we have to weather the storm and beat them."

Riley Soleway (1+1), Ryan Landels, and Jordan Jarvis (2+1) scored Vernon's goals in the third frame. Brendan Urban (1+1), Jared MacLennan (1+1), and Ryan Phillips replied for Rutland.

Rutland's assistant coach Jacob Illichmann was proud of the way his sixth-place troops battled against the Tigers.

"It was a close battle and the boys worked hard. Urban and the Hart brothers had big games. We had to start our backup goalie, Cody Taschuck, because our starter Foster Hodgins is out with a separated shoulder and may not be back unless we win this round. It was Cody's third start of the year and he played his best game of the year."

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June 30, 2009

== No rest for Tigers ==

Staff - 

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers were hoping for a league title and first-round playoff bye.

Instead, the Cats lost 11-9 to the Kelowna Warriors Saturday night at Wesbild Centre, and started the Thompson Okanagan Junior B Lacrosse League best-of-three quarterfinal series Tuesday night against the visiting Rutland Raiders.

Game 2 goes Thursday in Rutland with a third game, if required, set for Saturday night in Vernon.

"That was the first time since 2003 we've had a chance to finish that high," said Tigers' co-coach and president Rich Zecchel. "We played lousy. We took too many stupid penalties.

"They're very quick and they pressure the ball well and we didn't react to the pressure."

Deryk McPhail, who finished second in the league's points parade with 26-19-45, pocketed 4+1 as the Warriors won the league pennant at 8-3-3, taking the head-to-head tiebreaker over the South Okanagan Flames, who had the same record.

The Tigers settled for third place, one point back of the leaders, at 8-4-2.

The teams were tied 3-3 after one period and 6-6 after 40 minutes Saturday night.

"In all of our ties this year, the other team came back on us in the third, so it was nice for our guys to come from behind and win the way they did," said Warriors' coach Kelly Cahill. "Our goal was to win the league and get a bye in the first round and we're thrilled to have done that. We have a good group of young men here."

Scott Renner (2), Braden Renner (1+2), Casey Wood, Lucas Cahill, Victor Wiens and Shawn Houchhausen completed the Warriors' offence. Max French and Jake Brown each pocketed a pair of assists. Kelowna outshot Vernon 54-36.

Riley Soleway pulled the hat-trick for the Tigers, scoring twice in the first period. Vernon captain Rob Short, who led the Tigers in scoring with 13-13-26, supplied 2+3.

Miles Jespersen (2), Jordan Jarvis and Craig Bigsby rounded out the Vernon offence in front of Josh Phillips.

The Tigers took 10 minor penalties and a major (spearing to Jarvis), while the Warriors received seven minors. Jarvis, who was Vernon's second leading scorer with 12-13-25, picked up three minors.

Vernon defeated sixth-place Rutland (4-9-1) twice by two goals in the regular season. The Raiders beat the fourth-place Kamloops Rattlers (7-4-3) and tied the fifth-place Kamloops Venom (6-6-2) down the stretch. The Rattlers and Venom are in the other quarterfinal series.

Vernon's Joel McKenzie rolled an ankle on a ball in practice and was doubtful for the series opener.

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June 23, 2009

== Cats eye pennant ==

By Nicole Berg -



It's down to crunch time for the Vernon Tigers.

After rolling big victories against the first-place South Okanagan Flames 10-5 Saturday night at Wesbild Centre and thrashing the Kamloops Venom 11-4 Sunday night at Memorial Arena, the Cats (8-3-2) are in a good position to claim the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League pennant.

The Tigers play their last regular-season game Saturday night when they host the 6-3-3 Kelowna Warriors. With a tie or a victory, Vernon will clinch first place and receive a bye into the second round of the playoffs.

Recording a 5-5 tie with Summerland earlier in the season, the underdog Tigers played the Flames tough by holding the league's top offence (108 total goals) to just five goals.

While the Tigers' offence has been mediocre, their defence, however, has been red-hot with 80 goals against, good for second place.

"The boys played a great game at both ends of the floor," said Vernon coach Rich Zecchel. "We had our lowest penalty-minute total of the season in just eight minutes, which helped us produce some goals.

"Overall, our goalie Josh Phillips, who made 40 saves, was solid. I think this was our best all-around team game."

Jordan Jarvis and Robbie Short had big games for the Tigers, both potting hat-tricks.

Jarvis, a prairie product who has notched four goals and eight assists in his rookie season, scored his first two goals in the opening period.

"My first goal came on a sweet pass by Patrick Quigley, who ran up the floor alone with the ball, spotted me at the right side and passed the ball, and I scored on a straight shot," said Jarvis, who took first-star honours. "I think in this game, we displayed an all-around better ball movement, which is something we've been working on in practice this week."

Short (second star) pocketed his first two goals in the first frame as well. Tyler Berkholtz (2+2) supplied the lone marker for the Flames.

Both teams exchanged a pair of goals in the second, with Short and Miles Jespersen (1+2) sniping for Vernon and third star Darcy Ricard getting a deuce for the Flames.

The third period was more one-sided as Vernon outscored South Okanagan 4-2. Riley Soleway, Jarvis, and Ryan Landels (2) led the Tigers' attack. Ricard rounded out his hat-trick and Berkholtz supplied one for the Flames.

The Cats' Darren Kirby added three assists. Rory McDowell made 40 saves in the Flames' cage.

Steven Clark returned after a two-game absence, while James Dobrowolski missed his third straight game due to an injury.

Russell MacLean made his Tiger debut Saturday night and also played in Kamloops.

"In order for a player to play for a team in the playoffs, he has to play at least three regular-season games," explained Zecchel, of the 20-year-old Vernon product. "He played pretty good tonight and we hope to have his leadership shine through in our future games."

The Cats only picked up one minor penalty as they brushed back the Venom.

Jarvis (2+3), Short (2+2), Riley Soleway (2) and Landels and Matt Kolb, with 1+2 apiece, led the Tigers. Braidy

Webb, Nolan Fame and Jespersen also scored in front of Phillips.

Quigley was a standout on defence and Kolb also drew special praise from Zecchel. Vernon outshot the Venom 51-39.

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June 16, 2009

Tigers on playoff prowl

By Nicole Berg - 

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers are in familiar territory once again.

With three games left in the Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League regular season, the Cats (6-3-2) are second in the seven-team league, just two points behind the first-place South Okanagan Flames (7-2-2).

The Tigers pounced to second place after clipping the Rutland Raiders 7-5 Saturday night at the Wesbild Centre.

Vernon's next game is against the Flames Saturday night at Wesbild. The teams tied 5-5 earlier in the season. The Flames grounded the Armstrong Shamrocks 9-6 Saturday night.

"I'm impressed with how the boys have rolled together a two-game win streak after our two big losses against the Kamloops teams," said Tigers' coach Rich Zecchel. "We're in a good position in the standings now to make lots of noise come playoff time. In tonight's game, our defence was very solid. Josh Phillips played a good game in making 37 saves. There also were only 12 minutes in penalties dished out to both teams, so that was really good to not be sitting in the penalty box for half the game, as we sometimes tend to do."

The Tigers held a 3-0 lead after the first 20 minutes on singles by Miles Jespersen (2G), Ryan Landels (2+1), and Jordan Jarvis.

Rutland and Vernon played an even second period, with both teams cashing in two goals apiece. Sheldon McDonald and Kris Needham notched the Raiders' goals, while Landels and Matt Kolb tallied for the Cats.

Rutland got their game together in the final period, stringing together three goals by Trevor Odegard shorthanded, Jared MacLennan, and Dillan MacLennan. Brennan Plante (1+2) and Jespersen responded for Vernon.

Veteran forward Patrick Quigley, who supplied an assist, and has three goals and eight assists on the year, played a great defensive game for the Tigers.

"Patrick played on defence today to fill in for a couple of injured players in Steven Clark and James Dobrowolski, who might be back for the next game," said Zecchel. "He's played a great year so far this season and is definitely one of our best leaders."

"Coming off those three losses, we knew what to work on for the upcoming games," said Quigley, who wears the 'A' on his chest. "The boys all realized we need to have a little more faith in ourselves and not be so hard on ourselves after we lose a game. We learned that we need to bounce back even harder after a loss to get the momentum going again and give us the confidence to win future games. Ultimately, we need to stop playing as individuals and more as a team, and that's what will win you the games all the time, and that's something we've definitely incorporated into our game plans."

The Kamloops Rattlers and Kamloops Venom battled to a 4-4 tie Sunday night. The Rattlers are one point back of Vernon, while the Venom are three behind, with a game in hand.

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June 11, 2009

Tigers roll past Shamrocks to stop losing streak

By Nicole Berg - 

Pent up with anger after blowing their last two games against Kamloops teams by a combined score of 23-7, the Vernon Tigers' offence erupted in a 12-6 win over the Armstrong Shamrocks Wednesday night at the Wesbild Centre.

It was a season-high goal total for the Tigers, who snapped a three-game losing skid and improved to 5-3-2 in the Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League. Their previous best was nine goals when they shaded the Rutland Raiders earlier in the season.

"It was nice to score 12 goals for a change," said Tigers' coach Rich Zecchel. "It was also great for some of our guys who have been struggling to score as of late, like Jordan Jarvis (2+2) and Nolan Frame (1+1) to score a few too. This was a good win that definitely turned the ship around and got us out of that losing skid."

Jarvis started the scoring on the powerplay with his second goal of the season.

Miles Jespersen (4+1) added his first of four on the night 23 seconds later as he quickly got a hold of the ball after his team won the face-off and ran up the wing and sniped the ball past Rocks' netminder Logan Pippolo. Jespersen had a stellar showing and earned the game's first star.

"Jespersen played phenomenal by scoring those four goals," said Zecchel. "He's really come along lately in these last few games. It's good to have our top guys like him getting all these goals and showing the other boys how it's done."

Jespersen added another goal which came on a sweet play where he ran up the floor with second star Robbie Short (2+4) and tossed the ball in the net with a wicked backhand shot. Brandon McGregor notched the lone marker for Armstrong.

The second period seemed to be the ultimate downfall for the 1-9 Shamrocks as they gave up six goals and only scored once, on a single by McGregor.

Jespersen and Short each potted a pair, and Craig Bigsby (2+1) and Frame added singles. Pippolo got pulled after nine goals in favour of midget call-up Cole MacFarlane, who was stellar in blanking the Cats. Pippolo took over again at the start of the third period.

"We decided to give Logan a bit of a rest from the game and have the young fella have a chance to take over the reins for a while," said Armstrong coach Pat Nelson. "He played really great in net considering it was his first game of the year so far."

Armstrong got their game back on track in the third with four goals.

Third star Jarrett Medhurst (2+2) led the Shamrocks' attack with two, while Logan Strohm and Jordan Huot added one each.

"We definitely poured on the goals in the third period but it wasn't enough," said Medhurst, who sits second in team scoring behind Strohm with 18 points. "Our first period was pretty good because we played a good defensive game but the second period was a write-off."

Bigsby, Jarvis, and Skylar Hodgson scored the Tigers' goals in the third frame.

Josh Phillips made 29 saves in the Vernon net.

Vernon hosts the Rutland Raiders Saturday night (7:30) at the Wesbild Centre. Rutland sits in second-to-last place at 3-7.

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June 10, 2009

Tigers hit losing skid

By Nicole Berg - 

The Vernon Tigers let their tempers get the better of them Saturday night at the Wesbild Centre.

Losing 9-4 to the Kamloops Venom in the third period, a few Tigers got into scraps and allowed the Venom to score two powerplay goals and seal an 11-4 Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League win.

Steven Borden and Duncan Schulz (three goals on the night) scored four minutes apart on the late powerplays to sink the Tigers.

Vernon lost 12-3 to the host Kamloops Rattlers Sunday night. The 4-3-2 Tigers host the 1-8 Armstrong Shamrocks tonight (7:30) at Wesbild Centre.

“Every team’s got to go through a bit of a losing streak once in awhile,” said Tigers’ head coach Bryan Klein. “We will just have to regroup from this and learn from our mistakes to be a better team come playoff time, when it really starts to count. I still think we have the team to win it all, but we have to stop taking such useless and untimely penalties. That’s what costs us every game.”

The parade to the penalty box for both teams started with just five minutes gone in the third period. Before the flurry of penalties, Vernon had been assessed only one minor and finished with 66 minutes by game’s end. Kamloops was slapped with 68.

The rough stuff really got interesting with 1:15 remaining as most of the players on the floor took part in a fight. Myles Jespersen, Braidy Webb, and Joey Klein of the Tigers fought with Kyle McBratney, Kyle Charkos, and Ted Gottfriedson. Gottfriedson also received a gross misconduct. The Venom lost their star Riley Donahue at the halfway mark of the period for being the third man in on a fight between Rob Peterson and Jespersen.

The Venom started the scoring with Schulz’s first of the night 90 seconds into the game and didn’t look back. The goal was scored on a misplay by Vernon’s goaltender Josh Phillips, who picked up a loose ball then got caught out of his net and accidentally passed the ball right to Schulz, who slammed it into the empty net.

After Phillips let in his eighth goal, by Peterson, he was replaced with 3:16 remaining in the second with Jeremy Chard. Chard didn’t fare much better as he let in two quick goals at the start of the third by Jamie Forster and Schulz.

“We took Josh out for just a little bit for him to get his composure back,” said Klein. “Jeremy was only supposed to be in temporarily anyways, so we put Josh back in later in the game and I think he did alright for the remainder of the game. It didn’t really matter at that point anyway though because we were already in too deep of a hole to come back.”

Captain Robbie Short, Craig Bigsby, Darren Kirby and Jespersen notched the Tigers’ goals. Quinn Smith and Donahue pitched in with a pair and Charkos also scored for Kamloops.

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June 07, 2009

Warriors cage Tigers in junior battle

By Staff - 

The Vernon Tigers couldn’t pull off a second-period rally as they bowed 7-5 to the host Kelowna Warriors in Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League action Thursday night at Memorial Arena.

Trailing 3-1 after a quick-paced opening 20 minutes, the Tigers fired three second-period markers before the Warriors put the game away with a pair of goals in the third.

“We didn’t move the ball well enough,” said Tigers’ head coach Rich Zecchel. “Too many individual efforts.

“Kelowna moved the ball really well, especially on offence. They had a strong team. They’re not unbeatable though.”

Myles Jespersen led the Cats' attack with 2+1, with singles coming from Craig Bigsby, Jordan Jarvis and Riley Soleway.

"He (Jespersen) did a great job killing penalties and just doing everything," said Zecchel.

Tigers' netminder Josh Phillips turned aside 46 shots, and earned an assist as he sprung Jespersen with a nice breakout pass while shorthanded.

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June 02, 2009

Tigers use stingy dee to stop Rattlers

By Nicole Berg - 

The Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League's best defence and best offence met in the middle as the Vernon Tigers and Kamloops Rattlers settled for a 5-5 tie Saturday night at the Wesbild Centre.

The 4-0-2 Tigers and 4-2-3 Rattlers kept the fans on their feet for most of the game with lots of hits and gorgeous goals in an intense match-up.

Trailing by one with three minutes remaining, the Tigers' Braiden Cantelon pocketed his first of the season to force overtime.

Kamloops' netminder Adam Sibley (44 saves) came up with timely saves to preserve the tie.

"That was quite an intense game, and I'm really happy for the boys," said Vernon head coach Bryan Klein, whose squad boasts a league-low 29 goals against and managed to keep the run-and-gun Rattlers (league high 82 goals) to a season low five goals.

"We have a great defensive core in Blake Lewis, Joel McKenzie, Joey Klein, Steven Kolasko, Patrick Quigley, and Ryan Oliverius. They showed tonight why we are the number one defensive team in the league."

Klein also praised Vernon keeper Josh Phillips, who turned in a stellar 43-saves performance.

"As the old saying goes, defence wins championships, and that's how we plan on winning the championship this year."

"This game was not acceptable for our team tonight," said Rattlers' head coach Peter Angle, of the game with the Tigers. "We did not play as well as we should have and had too many turnovers which Vernon capitalized on.

"This was the game where we've scored the least amount of goals so far and I know we can do a lot better than this, even though we only gave up the one point.

"I was really proud with how Brett Baker and Jesse Wessel played tonight in the absence of Eric Tomassini, who is one of our main point-getters."

Penalties also played a major factor in the game, as Wessel was slapped with a five-minute major in the second period, which Vernon's Ryan Landels scored on.

Vernon gave up three shorties, as James Dobrowolski and Robbie Short both received double minors. Devon Larsen made the Cats pay, notching his eighth of the year, and Garret Burton scored on the same powerplay.

Trent Evans, Nathan Hagen, and Leigh Besanger (powerplay) completed the Rattlers' attack, while Quigley, Steven Clark, and Short supplied goals for the Tigers.

Short supplied some fireworks as he rammed into a Rattlers' defender after he took a shot, earning both applause and a minor for his effort.

The Tigers visit the Kelowna Warriors (5-2-2) Thursday night (7:30 p.m.). Vernon trails the Warriors (5-2-2) by two points, but they have three games in hand.

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May 26, 2009

-- Short leads Tiger attack --

By Staff - 

Two weeks after boosting the Vernon Vipers to a national junior A hockey title, Robbie Short helped the Vernon Re/Max Tigers stop the host Rutland Raiders 9-7 in Thompson/Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League action Saturday night.

“It was nice to have Robbie Short back,” said Tigers’ co-coach Rich Zecchel. “He scored twice and played a good two-way game.”

Short, the Tigers’ captain, missed Vernon’s first four league games.

Import Jordan Jarvis, of Saskatchewan, scored on his first shot with the Tigers, and then accepted a challenge to fight a Raider in the second period.

The Tigers took a few early double minor penalties for crosschecking from behind, and went down 5-2 before tying the score in the second period while even strength.

Goalie Josh Phillips took a shot to the head in warm-up, and after appearing shaky early in the first, settled down and was solid for Vernon (4-0-1).

The Tigers will entertain the Kamloops Rattlers in a first-place showdown Saturday (7:30) at Wesbild Centre. The Rattlers (4-2-1) grounded the Kelowna Warriors 10-5 and stoned the Armstrong Shamrocks 15-2 in weekend games.

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May 13, 2009

-- Kolb boosts Tigers’ attack --

By Staff - 

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers clipped the Kamloops Venom 5-4 in Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League action Saturday night at Memorial Arena.

Matt Kolb lept off the bench, picked up a pass from James Dobrowolski, and beat Kamloops goalie Cody Mior on a breakaway, for the winning goal.

The Tigers improved to 3-0-1, good for first place in the seven-team league, one point up on the South Okanagan Flames, 9-5 winners over the Venom on Sunday.

“It was a really good game,” said Tigers’ co-coach Rich Zecchel. “Our goaltending was superb again with Josh Phillips.”

Dobrowolski finished with 1+2, scoring on a shorthanded breakaway in the third period off a feed by Miles Jespersen.

Darren Kirby, Craig Bigsby and Steven Clark also scored for the Tigers, who overcame a 3-0 first-period deficit.

Jimmy Latin (2), Riley Donahue and Cole Eustache countered for the Venom (1-2). Quinn Smith pocketed a pair of assists.

Phillips made 45 saves, while Mior recorded 37. The Tigers took seven minor penalties and Kamloops had six.

“Our discipline was pretty good,” said Zecchel. “You can’t afford to take too many penalties because the league is so tight.”

The Rutland Raiders grounded the visiting Armstrong Shamrocks 7-4 Saturday night. The Rocks (1-5) had iced the 2-3 Raiders 12-9 Friday night at Nor-Val Sports Centre.

The Flames visit the Kelowna Warriors (1-1-2) Thursday night before the league takes the Victoria Day Weekend break.

Vernon takes on the Raiders Saturday, May 23, while Armstrong battles the Kamloops Rattlers Friday, May 22 at Sunwave Centre in Salmon Arm before visiting the Venom the next night.

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May 05, 2009

-- Tigers smother Rocks --

By Nicole Berg - 

Unlike their last game against the Armstrong Shamrocks where a ton of penalties were dished out, leading to some hefty suspensions, the Vernon Tigers-Shamrocks tilt Saturday night was a tame affair.

While taking only a dozen minutes in penalties, the Tigers brushed off the Shamrocks 7-4 Saturday night in their Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League home opener at the Wesbild Centre.

The ‘Rocks were assessed 14 penalty minutes. The two teams were slapped with 103 minutes combined in their last game.

“We played a much better game tonight than we did in Armstrong where our discipline was concerned,” said Tigers coach Rich Zecchel, whose club improves to 2-0-1, for first place in the seven-team league. “Our goalie, Josh Phillips, was outstanding making 34 saves, and Braidy Webb (1+2) played a terrific game on offence.”

The Tigers have a new addition to their den. Jordan Jarvis arrived in Vernon just prior to the game but didn’t play.

“He’s a 19-year-old from Saskatchewan who was on a scholarship for field lacrosse at Lindenwood University in Missouri, so we’re looking forward to having him in the lineup pretty soon,” said Zecchel. The Lions finished season play with a stellar 16-2 record.

Armstrong scored the first goal Saturday as Logan Strohm (2+1) fired his first of two goals on the night.

“We came out flat in the early minutes until I got the first goal,” said Strohm, the game’s second star. “After the goal though we started to pick things up and played a better game. We expected an intense game tonight as our last one with Vernon was really rough, and it was, with the hits. We struggled to hit the net, as we ended up hitting a lot of posts instead.”

The Shamrocks enjoy their lead for long as the Tigers answered back just a minute later. James Dobrowolski, acting captain in place of Robbie Short, who is in Victoria with the Vernon Vipers playing in the Royal Bank Cup, ran up the left wing and shot the ball past Armstrong netminder Evan Richtsfeld (44 saves).

Vernon’s Craig Bigsby (1+1) and Armstrong’s Brad Wolgram, shorthanded, rounded out the rest of the first period scoring.

The Tigers dominated the second period, scoring four goals and keeping tight defence at the other end of the floor.

Webb, Miles Jespersen and Steven Clark, all on the powerplay, and third star Riley Soleway (2G), led the Cats’ attack.

Webb’s goal came on a beautiful play where Bigsby fed him a crisp pass across the floor, and Webb slapped the ball on the short side of Richtsfeld.

“We played a pretty good game and did a good job of staying out of the box as much as we could, which was our goal coming into the game,” said Webb, who earned first star honours.

“We made sure we kept the ball in their end as much as we could and played good defence when they came into our end. Jarrett Medhurst played good for Armstrong. He’s always one of their top shooters and we always have to keep a close eye on him.”

Soleway and Strohm both supplied their second goals of the game in the final frame, along with Dustin Heitman for Armstrong.

“We worked hard on settling down and played a good game of lacrosse tonight,” said Armstrong’s coach Pat Nelson, whose squad dropped to 0-3. “Each game we just try to play a better game and hopefully by the end of the season we’ll be better. We did do a better job tonight of staying out of the box though, and hopefully we continue that throughout the year.”

The Tigers visit the Kamloops Venom Saturday night, while the Rocks host the Rutland Raiders Friday night (7:30) before going to Rutland Saturday night.

North Okanagan Minor Lacrosse is hosting a 12-team Rock The House Midget Tournament at the Wesbild Centre and Civic Arena starting Friday. North Ok has two A teams and one B team.

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April 29, 2009

-- Tigers rally to tie up Flames 5-5 --

By Staff -



The Vernon Re/Max Tigers rallied to tie the South Okanagan Flames 5-5 in Thompson-Okanagan Junior B Lacrosse League action Monday night at the Summerland Arena.

James Dobrowolski equalized with three minutes remaining. The Tigers got shorthanded goals from Riley Soleway and Ryan Landels.

Steve Clark, who was ejected for spearing, and Braidy Webb rounded out the Tiger offence.

“We were missing a few key guys, but they’ve got a much improved team and they’ve cut way down on their penalty minutes,” said Vernon co-coach Rich Zecchel.

Both teams went to 1-0-1. The Tigers took 39 penalty minutes to the Flames’ 18.

Vernon’s home opener is Saturday (7:30 p.m.) at Wesbild Centre against the Armstrong Shamrocks.

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April 26, 2009 6:00 AM

-- Tigers earn gritty road win --

By Nicole Berg -



Despite the Vernon Tigers losing two of their top players in Braidy Webb and Patrick Quigley from a mini brawl in the second period, the Cats clawed their way through the game dropping the Armstrong Shamrocks 7-4 Friday night at the Nor-Val Sports Centre.

Following veteran Braidy Webb’s first goal of the season, which appeared to have been scored by rookie Ryan Landels, Shamrocks’ goaltender Logan Pippolo started shoving Landels after Landels bumped into him following the goal. Webb flew in and fought a spirited bout with Pippolo, with Webb getting the edge. During the scuffle, Armstrong’s Taylor Trotter jumped off the bench and wanted to get a piece of the action. While he was in the middle

of the scrum, referee Jeff Connauton tried restraining Trotter but Connauton ended up getting kned in the ribs. After the fight finally cleared up, Connauton had to be helped off the floor. The game was delayed for awhile as a new referee had to come into the game to take over for the injured Connauton.

"I think we were playing a pretty good game up until the fight happened," said Shamrocks head coach Ken McGregor, whose squad was tied 2-2 with Vernon at that point. "The same thing happened last year, as Webb ended up fighting our goaltender, and it happened again tonight. After the fight we kind of went down hill, but our boys pulled it together and played out the game. Our midget goalie Quinn Braybrook took over for Pippolo after he got kicked out and the kid just stood on his head all game. He played exceptional, being in that situation."

The Tigers-Shamrocks game was the first in a lacrosse double-header in Armstrong, as the senior Vernon Royals and Armstrong Shamrocks squared off afterwards.

"It's great to have a lacrosse double-header like this in our first game. It gets more fans out to the games and gets our junior players pumped up, looking forward to having the seniors watch them and play their game afterwards," said McGregor.

First star Darren Kirby (2+1) got the ball rolling with the game's first goal, which he slapped past Pippolo who was out of position.

"It was a really great match, really rough on both sides," said Kirby, who travels back and forth between games to attend college in Vancouver, and should make most of the games this season. "The fight pretty much changed the outcome, and Braidy did well in fighting Pippolo. After the fight, and losing two of our top players, it was a big loss being shorthanded, but we prevailed and came together to keep up the lead and put more goals past the Shamrocks."

The Tigers were also without veteran forwards Steve Clark, who served a one game suspension that carried over from last year's playoffs, and Miles Jespersen, who was still in college in Victoria. Both players are expected to be back for the next matchup in Summerland, on Monday, April 27.

Despite Kirby getting Vernon on the scoreboard early, the Shamrocks ended up with the most goals in the period, on singles from Jarrett Medhurst and Logan Strohm (second star).

After Webb's marker in the second frame, both teams swapped goals, with one by third star rookie Craig Bigsby (1+2) for Vernon and Ethan Trotter for the 'Rocks.

"Craig played great for his first game as a Tiger," said Vernon's coach Rich Zecchel. "All our rookies played great first games tonight (Landels, Jake Soleway on defense, Nolan Frame, Matt Kolb (1A) and Steven Kolasko). Overall, we did a good job of playing the ball before and after the fight. Even though we had a short bench from losing Braidy and Patrick, we held in there and picked up a goal when we could and played solid defensively. Our goalie Josh Phillips (43 saves) played great in his first game as starting goaltender for this season, as he is taking over from Brodie MacDonald, who is playing his first year Junior A with the Coquitlam Adanacs this season."

The third period was all Tigers with goals coming from Riley Soleway, Kirby, James Dobrowolski, and Ryan Landels.

Logan Strohm pocketed his second marker on the powerplay.

For Kirby's last goal, Dobrowolski made a nice play to flick him the ball right in front of the net. Dobrowolski's goal came on a nice up-the-floor-rush, with no one on him, to throw the ball past Braybrook. Braybrook and Pippolo combined to make 33 saves in the Armstrong net.

Frame and Ethan Trotter scrapped in the final minutes.

In the second half of the doubleheader, the Vernon Royals clipped the senior men's Shamrocks 6-5 in Okanagan Xtreme Lacrosse League action.

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April 22, 2009

-- Tigers rule Icebreaker --



The Vernon Re/Max Tigers recorded a pair of wins in the Ice Breaker Junior B Lacrosse Tournament Sunday at the Nor-Val Sports Centre in Armstrong.

Craig Bigsby supplied 3+1 as the Tigers doubled the Armstrong Shamrocks 10-5 in the morning, while Steve Kolasko scored twice as Vernon brushed back the Kamloops Rattlers 6-4 in the afternoon.

“Our midget players looked real well and both our goalies were sharp,” said Tigers’ co-coach Rich Zecchel. “Most of the teams (seven) were missing some players to hockey and school so it’s hard to tell who’s got what until the season starts.”

Veteran goalie Josh Phillips played the opening 40 minutes against the Shamrocks, giving way to rookie Jeremy Chard with Vernon up 5-2.

Phillips also went the first two periods versus Kamloops, allowing one goal before Chard took over.

The Tigers visit the Shamrocks Friday night (6:30) in a Askews Foods Lacrosseville Doubleheader.

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April 19, 2009

-- CLARK, William (Bill) --



Clark, William (Bill)

February 4, 1927 - January 1, 2009

An informal memorial “Celebration of Life Tea” will be held at the Pleasant Valley Funeral Home Tea Room on Saturday, May 2nd, 2009 from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. for longtime Vernon resident, Bill Clark.

Bill was an avid supporter of local Junior “B” Lacross. (His grandson, Steven, plays with the Vernon Tigers.) Friends are also cordially invited to join the Clark family in attending the season opener game of the Vernon Tigers Junior “B” Lacrosse Team beginning at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 2nd, 2009 at the Vernon Multiplex. You can be sure Bill will be there in spirit.

Pleasant Valley Funeral Home - 4303 Pleasant Valley Road, Vernon, B.C. V1T 4M4 • Phone: 250-542-4333

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Published April 16, 2009 6:00 AM

-- Tigers calling on rookies --



by MorningStar Staff -

Their captain is busy playing for the Vernon Vipers. Two other clutch veterans are attending school out of town.

So, the Vernon Re/Max Tigers go into Sunday’s Junior B Lacrosse Icebreaker at Nor-Val Sports Centre in Armstrong with a younger roster.

“It gives us a chance to look at some good 17-year-olds right out of Midget,” said Rich Zecchel, who will co-coach with Bryan Klein, and relinquish much of his GM duties to Wes Landels. “We’re faster than we’ve been in the past

with a lot of our Midgets having good speed.”

The Tigers will meet the Armstrong Shamrocks in their Icebreaker opener at 8:30 a.m. and then battle the Kamloops Rattlers at 1 p.m.

Vernon will be without captain Robbie Short (Vipers) along with Darren Kirby and Miles Jespersen.

All-star goaltender Brodie MacDonald has signed with the B.C. Junior A League Coquitlam Adanacs, leaving the Tiger duties to Josh Phillips and rookie Jeremy Chard.

“Josh will be our No. 1 and he’s looking real good,” said Zecchel, a former Junior A and Senior B all-star net detective. “Jeremy is very capable as well.”

The Shamrocks go up against the Rutland Raiders in their other game at 2:30 p.m.

Rutland battles the South Okanagan Flames (10 a.m.), the Kamloops Venom meet the Kelowna Warriors (11:30 a.m.), the Flames tangle with the Venom (4 p.m.) and the Warriors take on the Rattlers (5:30).

Vernon opens the Thompson-Okanagan League season next Friday night in Armstrong. The Tigers’ home opener is Saturday, May 2 versus the Shamrocks at Wesbild Centre.

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2008 TOJLL - MVP - ROBBIE SHORT

Robbie Short of the Remax Vernon Tigers accepts league co-MVP award from Dan Wray Vice President of Player Development for the TOJLL, and is shared with South Okanagan goalie Rory McDowell.

Robbie is the first Tiger to win this award.

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