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August 3, 2010

Venom wins provincial title

By MARK HUNTER, Sport Reporter  
[Kamloops Daily News](#)

Doug Clark calls the Kamloops Venom's provincial junior B title "a win for all of Kamloops lacrosse."

Clark should know — he's not only the head coach of the Venom, but also president of the Kamloops Minor Lacrosse Association.

The Venom won Kamloops' first junior B lacrosse championship when it beat the Westshore Bears 6-4 in Sunday's final in Langley. Kamloops, the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League champion, is getting ready for the Founder's Cup national championship, which runs Aug. 16-22 in Mimico, Ont.

"We knew we would be in the running at the start of the season," said Clark, who has been head coach of the Venom since it joined the TOJLL in 2008. "But we weren't that confident — we knew the kids would continue to grow.

"This is a really good feeling."

There are a lot of people who have put a lot of work into making the Venom a quality program, and Clark is

somewhere near the top.

In fact, most of the quality players to come out of Kamloops — they make up the Venom and Kamloops' other junior B team, the Rattlers — have been trained by Clark at one point or another. That includes all of the Venom's players, who grew, just like the Venom itself, under Clark.

"It's very special," Clark said. "It's a win for all of Kamloops lacrosse, as well as the Okanagan. It's the first time that a team from the Okanagan has ever won the provincials for junior B."

Kamloops opened the provincial tournament Friday with a 6-4 loss to the Bears, before beating New Westminster 12-5 and Port Moody 7-4 to clinch a spot in the final.

There, Kamloops got a rematch with the Bears, the same team that beat the Rattlers 16-15 in the 2005 final, one of only two times a Kamloops team has made it into the championship game. The other, in 2008, ended with the Coquitlam Adanacs beating the Rattlers, 8-4.

Quinn Smith scored twice in the first period Sunday to give the Venom a 2-1 lead, but Westshore tied it. Jimmy Latin gave Kamloops another one-goal lead in the second period, but the Bears tied it again.

Brett DeFrias broke the tie in the third period, and Latin scored his second of the game to make it 5-3. Rob Peterson iced the victory with another goal, and Jamie Forster was game MVP. Andrew Copeland, a tournament all-star along with Smith and Riley Donahue, made 39 saves in the victory.

"Westshore's a good team," Clark said. "Our legs paid off for us — our fitness is tremendous. That paid off in the third period. We just outran them."

The Venom was without five regulars due to injury — Ben Saklofsky, Mike Henry, Cole Eustache, Trent Johnston and Teddy Gottfriedson.

"We set the bar, and these guys reached it," Clark said. "I wouldn't say it's unbelievable. We have a lot of excellent players, and even with a bunch of good ones out of the lineup, we used our whole roster and managed to get it done."

The Venom will take a few days off before hitting the floor again for practice on Thursday.

There isn't much to do for the regulars, but the Venom's three newest players have to learn the systems. Kamloops was allowed to add three players for the tournament, and picked up Jordan Ellis and Brett Fleming from the Rattlers and Tyler French from the Kelowna Warriors.

"We have to get them tuned into our systems," Clark said, "but they'll be good."

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[TOP](#)

July 29, 2010

BCLA upholds Venom appeal

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

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers were hoping for a packed house Wednesday night at Civic Arena. Instead, they got an empty one.

The Cats had successfully filed a protest to the B.C. Lacrosse Association (BCLA) after Game 4 of the best-of-five of the Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League championship series – originally a 5-4 series-clinching overtime win for the Kamloops Venom – and were expecting a Game 5 to be played as a result.

However, in an emergency meeting on Wednesday afternoon in Vancouver, the BCLA upheld an appeal filed by the Venom.

Tigers' general manager Rich Zecchel protested the Game 4 loss on the grounds that Kamloops had an illegal player on its roster for the win. The player cited is goaltender Mark Larsen, who plays with the Kamloops Jr. Rattlers, but was suiting up with the Venom as an emergency backup, but didn't play.

Under BCLA and TOJLL rules, to be eligible for a playoff game, a player must be signed to his current team and must

have participated in at least three regular-season games with that team.

However, TOJLL president Ed Kwasniewski sent out a memo on June 28 to all teams in the league, stating he would allow goalies to be picked up for emergency use in case of an injury.

"I really don't feel it's fair for a team to default a game/series if they lose their only starter," the memo reads.

"The team would have to go through me . . . convincing me they need a backup . . . and the backup goalie, of course, would have to be from the Thompson-Okanagan.

"This backup goalie would be listed on the game sheet, but would sit [on] the bench and not play unless the starter was injured."

Zecchel objected to the memo from the start, but didn't file an official complaint at the time. After learning the Venom would be dressing Larsen as their backup, he says he called Kwasniewski before the game to voice his concern.

"The reason we disputed it is commissioners can't just arbitrarily say who can play and who can't. There are rules in place to govern all that – our operating policy," said Zecchel, who only learned of the appeal ruling three hours before the game was supposed to start.

"It wasn't so much the (Game 5). If we had got it, great, but we needed to get our point across. You can't muck around with rules, and the commissioners were out of bounds doing that.

"Our point was made with the BCLA and we're good with it. Good luck to the Venom."

Gerry Van Beek, the BCLA's vice president of administration, was part of the panel that addressed the Venom's appeal, and says they felt satisfied the TOJLL was capable of making the decision to allow Larsen to play.

"I guess the question was, if you want to go deep into the league agreements and operating policies... 'Did the league have the ability to approve (Larsen) as a back-up goalie for the Venom?'" said Van Beek.

"The appeal group felt that the league did have the ability to make the exception."

Asked if the BCLA would look at instituting policy to prevent situations like this in the future, Van Beek replied:

"That's going to be up to their membership to decide how they want to handle that. It's covered in a lot of the league policies, but not in this one.

"Being a relatively young league... they haven't come across some of these situations."

The Venom begin play in the Junior B Lacrosse Provincial Championship tonight at George Preston Arena in Langley.

[TOP](#)

4:45 pm July 28, 2010

Venom Win Appeal

The Kamloops Venom appealed the decision of the BCLA Senior Directorate and have been given the win in game 4! As a result Game 5 (Wednesday July 28) is not necessary.

They win the 2010 TOJLL Championship Final Series, 3 games to 1.

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[TOP](#)

July 27, 2010

Tigers get second chance to play for TOJLL playoff pennant

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

It looks like cats do have extra lives after all. Even big ones.

It appears the Vernon Re/Max Tigers will have another chance to play for the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League pennant (Wednesday July 28 7:30 p.m.) at Civic Arena.

Vernon general manager Rich Zecchel filed a protest with the B.C. Lacrosse Association (BCLA) following the Tigers' 5-4 overtime loss to the host Kamloops Venom in Game 4 of the best-of-five championship series last Thursday

at Memorial Arena. He cited the Venom's inclusion of an illegal player on their roster.

With Midget backup netminder Mitch Horsman playing in the B.C. Summer Games, the Venom dressed Kamloops Rattlers' starter Mark Larsen.

The BCLA agreed with Zecchel's protest, and went on to overrule an appeal by TOJLL league commissioner Ed Kwasneiwski.

"The board told me to go ahead and play that game – plan on it," said Zecchel, who added the Venom have since filed a second appeal. No ruling on that one was known by The Morning Star's Tuesday deadline, but Zecchel was confident there would be a Game 5.

"The BCLA's main contention here is you can't laterally move players," said Zecchel.

"If there was a Midget player on the bench, we would have lost fair and square. But when they got security on the bench of the top Rattlers goaltender, that just changes the whole picture.

"They took a player from another Kamloops junior B team, that's the issue here. You can't laterally move players within the league. That just gets away from all our operating policy and procedures we have in place."

Zecchel also noted that for a player to be eligible to play in the post-season, he must dress for a minimum three games for that team in the regular season.

"You can't just randomly pick guys up. They only qualified one Midget, and he went to the B.C. Games. They didn't do their homework in qualifying a second or third Midget goalie."

Venom head coach Doug Clark was clearly disappointed by Vernon's decision to file a grievance.

"The whole league is up in arms, except for Vernon," he said, noting the Venom had Kwasneiwski's approval (via an e-mail memo) to use Larsen solely as an emergency backup.

"What they've done is violated the sanctity of our league. It's about as low as it goes. But it shows Vernon's true colours – we beat them fair and square."

Given what has happened off the floor, both teams believe Game 5 will be an emotionally-charged affair.

"There's no love loss here. It's getting worse. Our guys are fired up, they're ready to play," said Zecchel.

Replied Clark: "They're (Venom) just saying, 'Just bring it on.'"

This extra game won't give the winner much time to regroup for junior B provincials, as the Interior champions are slated to play Friday night (8 p.m.) in Langley.

"The hotels and everything are booked already... so whoever shows up, shows up," said Zecchel.

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[TOP](#)

July 26, 2010

#### GAME PROTEST

Upon reviewing the protest of Game 4 of the Thompson-Okanagan Jr B League Playoff Final between the Kamloops Venom and Vernon Tigers we, Bill Dawes, Terry Kirstiuk and Judy Regier, find in favour of the Vernon Tigers as the Kamloops Venom played an ineligible player.

As stated in the protest this is in contravention of the TOJLL League Agreement, Section 12 (d), Championships, and the Senior Directorate Operating Policy, Regulation 14: Championships, Article 14.13.

#### **TOJLL League Agreement-Section 12: Championships**

<http://www.ekecc.com/Files/TOJLL-LeagueAgreement2010.pdf>

- d) To qualify for league and provincial play-offs, a player must be signed to a current form and must have been listed and participated in three regular season league games with the team he/she will play on. This includes pick-ups from a lower division. The only exception would be a player who was placed on an injury list and could prove the injury to be valid.*

In accordance with the Senior Directorate Operating Policy, Regulation 5: Player Eligibility - General, Article 5.17 which reads: Any team found guilty of playing an ineligible player, other than over the age limit permitted, during a regularly scheduled game shall forfeit all games won during which said player was a participant. Points will be awarded to the opposing side. **Should this occur in the playoffs, only games said player played in the playoffs will be awarded to the opposing side.**

The Playoff Final is now considered tied with 2 wins for each team. As requested by the Vernon Tigers **Game 5 of the Playoff Final Series is to be played on Wednesday, July 28 @ 7:30 p.m.**

Any questions regarding this decision may be directed to the following:??

- Bill Dawes Vice Chair
- Terry Kistiuk Vice Chair
- Judy Regier Secretary

NOTE: re: GAME PROTEST

The BCLA committee told teams to play the game on Wednesday. They also said that the Venom may yet appeal. The current appeal was the commissioner and acting commissioner.

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[TOP](#)

July 24, 2010

Venom tame Tigers for title

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

In only their third season of existence, the Kamloops Venom have captured the Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League title.

The host Venom grounded the Vernon Re/Max Tigers 5-4 in overtime on Thursday night at Memorial Arena to win the best-of-five championship series 3-1.

The Cats controlled most of the play throughout the game, peppering Venom star netminder Andrew Copeland with 52 shots. Tiger veteran Braidy Webb said Copeland, who was ejected from Game 3 for wearing illegal equipment (oversized shoulder pads), was the difference Thursday.

"He played a great game. We got a lot of movement on offence, but we couldn't get anything by him. He definitely knows how to stand between the posts," said Webb, 21, one of four graduating Tigers. Captain Robbie Short, Blake Lewis and Russel MacLean are the other three.

Added Tigers' assistant coach and general manager Rich Zecchel: "We outshot them 52-42, we out-played them, we out-hit them, we punished them. We deserved that win, but their goalie stoned us.

"We got no breaks, and they always seemed to score that late goal (in this series). We just couldn't squeeze out a win."

The Venom now advance to the provincial junior B lacrosse championship, a four-team affair that will take place, July 30-Aug. 3 at the George Preston Arena in Langley.

Jamie Forster opened the scoring for Kamloops, but Vernon responded in the second period with goals from Joey Klein, Nolan Frame and Short. Goals by the Venom's Rob Peterson and Cole Eustache had the game tied 3-3 going into the second intermission.

There was just one penalty called the entire game, which Zecchel said is a good indication of how entertaining this matchup was.

"It was a well-played game, well attended, the refs let us play. It was just good lacrosse," he said.

Brett Hanna had a glorious chance to pot the winner in the final minute of regulation. In a gutsy call, the Venom pulled Copeland in the final minute to try to earn the win, but it nearly backfired as Hanna worked through their press and unleashed a shot from centre that hit the post with three seconds left of the clock.

Steve Bordon potted the winner in non-sudden death overtime, after regular-season scoring leader Quinn Smith and Webb traded goals earlier in the extra frame.

While the Venom are more renowned for their run-and-gun offence, Webb said Kamloops' defence held its own.

"They play really tight defence and it was difficult getting their guys to move in the crease."

The Venom finished second this season in the seven-team TOJLL at 11-2-1, two points behind the Tigers (12-1-1).

Since the TOJLL was formed in 2000, Kamloops squads have won six of the 11 titles. The Kamloops Rattlers captured five straight crowns from 2004-08 before the Tigers claimed it last season.

While Webb would have loved to have added a second straight TOJLL playoff pennant to the trophy case, he will think back on this season, and his career with the Tigers, fondly.

"It was a good way to go out. We had a great season last year, and we only lost one game in the (regular) season this year. It was fun being around the guys. I'll miss it," he said.

"We had our chance last year, and now they get their chance this year, and I wish them the best of luck and hope they come back with something."

Zecchel noted the Tigers are expected to be a contender again next year.

"We're getting half of the (North Okanagan Legends) Midget A2 gold-medal team, and Armstrong is getting the other half.

"They got mostly lefties, we got all righties," added Zecchel, grinning.

The Tigers thanked sponsors Re/Max, Boston Pizza, Coca-Cola and Canaccord Wealth Management.

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## [TOP](#)

July 23, 2010

Tigers torch rookie tender

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

It was a gutsy call that could have backfired.

Instead, it gave the Vernon Re/Max Tigers a decided edge in Game 3 of the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League finals Tuesday night at Wesbild Centre.

Kamloops' netminder Andrew Copeland was ejected early in the first period after Tigers' general manager and assistant coach Rich Zecchel, a former netminder himself, asked for an illegal equipment check.

Copeland's shoulder pads were deemed too wide, and the Tigers went on to light up Midget call-up keeper Mitch Horsman to earn a 9-3 win.

"That was a good call by Rich. He's fanatical about lacrosse rules and technicalities," said Tigers' head coach Bryan Klein. "It put them in a tailspin and they lost focus. It changed the game."

Vernon went into Game 4 trailing the best-of-five series 2-1 Thursday night at Memorial Arena in Kamloops. A Tigers' win would see the two teams square off for Game 5 Saturday night (7:30) at Civic Arena.

With Copeland out and the Venom bench still fuming, the Tigers unleashed their offence, getting first-period goals from Craig Bigsby (2), Brooks Christensen and Riley Soleway.

Goals by Soleway and Nolan Frame had Vernon in complete control in the second period. Liam Haggerty answered for Kamloops in the middle frame.

"Everybody played so well, but one kid that really came alive for us was Nolan Frame," said Klein. "He's a very talented offensive player and he had some huge shifts for us."

Tigers' captain Robbie Short, with a pair, and Ryan Landels rounded out the Vernon attack in the third period. Short added two assists.

The Venom got other offence from Chris Case and regular-season scoring leader Quinn Smith.

Klein believes his team's punishing brand of defence is finally paying dividends, as the Kamloops snipers are showing

reluctance in going to the middle.

“They’re feeling the wear of this series. Our guys are pretty marked up too, but they can still get out there and run when they have to,” he said.

“It’s the same as last year – every chance we get to wear them down, we have to do it. That’s how we have to approach it. Our defensive focus is right where it needs to be.”

Things got rough in the third period as the Tigers’ Brennan Plante and Venom’s Ben Saklofsky, who scored the double-overtime winner in Game 2 Monday night, got into a scrap late in the period. Both will miss Thursday’s game.

Kamloops’ Colten DeFrias will miss the remainder of the series after he earned a double-gross misconduct. The Venom finished with 55 penalty minutes, the Tigers earned 31.

Netminder Josh Phillips recorded 36 saves for the win. Horsman, who is competing with the Zone 2 Thompson Okanagan box lacrosse team at the B.C. Summer Games in Langley, made 45 stops.

**On a side note:** Former Tiger netminder Brodie MacDonald backstopped the Coquitlam Adanacs to a 10-7 win over the host Delta Islanders in Game 2 of the best-of-five B.C. Junior A Lacrosse League semifinals Tuesday night in Ladner. MacDonald came in midway through the first period to relieve Dan Lewis, who allowed five goals on 11 Islander shots. The 6-foot-7, 260-pounder recorded 32 stops for the win.

The Adanacs will look to make it a three-game sweep as Game 3 goes tonight in Coquitlam.

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## [TOP](#)

July 20, 2010

Tigers trail Venom, again

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

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers must be experiencing *deja vu*, and not in a good way.

For the second straight year, the Cats fell into a 2-0 deficit in their best-of-five Thompson-Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League championship series with the Kamloops Venom.

Last year, Vernon was able to orchestrate a three-game run to stun the Venom and advance to the B.C. championships. It would be a remarkable repeat, especially after the Cats’ 8-7 loss to the host Venom in double-overtime Monday night in a sauna-like Memorial Arena.

Despite the outcome, Tigers’ general manager Rich Zecchel praised the way Vernon battled.

“Overall our team played well, our defence played exceptional. It was back-and-forth all game,” he said.

“We started to break down their zone defence, we started cutting in like we were supposed to in Game 1, and we started getting quality shots.”

Zecchel especially liked the Tigers’ start, something that has lacked any sense of real urgency in recent games.

“We showed our guts finally, and we finally got a good start. We normally start slow, but our guys came out flying. It was a good sign.”

Venom head coach Doug Clark is hoping for a different outcome in 2010.

"It feels a lot like it did last year at this time," he said. "We just try to keep them (players) composed and keep reminding them to believe in themselves and believe in the system."

The Tigers opened the scoring with two minutes left in the first period of the second game, but Kamloops' Quinn Smith put the home team on the board with 26 seconds remaining to make it 1-1 after the first period.

Vernon went up 2-1 five minutes into the middle frame, but Kamloops rookie Ben Saklofsky evened the score on the power play a short time later.

The Venom then took their first lead of the night with Rob Peterson finding the back of the Vernon net to make it 3-2.

The Tigers then scored two unanswered goals to take a 4-3 lead into the locker room for the second intermission.

A pair of quick goals by Kamloops to start the third put the Venom up 5-4, but Vernon answered right back with a marker of their own to make it 5-5.

Saklofsky's second of the night then made it 6-5 for Kamloops, but Vernon's Craig Bigsby responded for the Tigers to keep the score tied 6-6.

Regulation time settled nothing, so the two teams headed to overtime tied at six.

Vernon's Ryan Landels put the Tigers up 7-6 midway through the 10-minute extra frame, and Kamloops was forced to pull its goalie with just over a minute to play.

With the extra attacker on the floor, Saklofsky scored his third of the night to force another overtime period – this time sudden death.

Five minutes into the second OT, Saklofsky scored a breakaway goal to give Kamloops the win.

"I was just hoping it would go in the net because I was pretty tired," Saklofsky joked after the game.

"We just came out to a rough start, but we really bounced back. That's what our team's all about."

Game 3 went Tuesday night at Wesbild Centre.

If necessary, the fourth game would be played at Memorial Arena on Thursday, with Game 5 returning to Vernon Saturday night at Civic Arena (7:30).

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## [TOP](#)

July 17, 2010

Venom sting Cats

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

The Kamloops Venom earned the win, but the Vernon Re/Max Tigers made sure it came with a hefty price tag.

The Venom relied on dazzling speed and blitzing counterattacks to outgun the Cats 6-4 in Game 1 of the best-of-five Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League championship series Friday night at Wesbild Centre.

Yet every time Kamloops went on the attack, the Tigers' meat-grinder defence was there to welcome them to the hurt locker.

"They hit hard and we just have to take it. We gotta pay the price and get bumps and bruises and scratches to get a goal. That's what it's about," said Kamloops' sniper Riley Donahue, who earned first star for his 2+3 showing.

Added Tigers' head coach Bryan Klein: "Their guys are feeling this game, I'm pretty sure. Our defence dropped them down pretty good."

Trailing 2-0 midway through the first period, the Tigers got on the board when captain Robbie Short scooped up a loose ball and barreled up the floor on a partial shorthanded breakaway to beat netminder Andrew Copeland.

In the second period, Jimmy Latin beat Vernon keeper Josh Phillips with a perimeter shot seven seconds into a powerplay. Ben Saklofsky made it 4-1 Kamloops on a breakaway goal at 6:28, and things got worse as Short earned a double minor for a check from behind after the play.

Vernon's short man went to work as burly Darren Kirby and lanky Matt Kolb repelled the smaller Kamloops players, chewing valuable seconds off the clock. This seemed to spark their teammates as the Cats then recorded three goals in a four-minute span to tie it 4-4 after 40 minutes.

Ryan Landels, diving across the crease to bury a low shot, and Kirby, working the hidden ball routine with Short to perfection, scored less than 15 seconds apart. Brooks Christensen provided the equalizer at 18:50.

Even Venom head coach Doug Clark was impressed by Kirby's sleight of hand.

"The hidden ball trick was great, it was classic," beamed Clark. "Everybody on our bench knew where the ball was,



but nobody on the floor knew. I've always had a lot of respect for Kirby, and it was nice to see him get that one."

Clark, who credits the Tigers for their gritty brand of play, knows his team's best chance at success lies in their speed.

"That's what we have to do. We certainly don't have the size they do, so we try to get their bigger guys moving and fill the holes and hopefully get some good chances out of it."

In a back-and-forth third period, Donahue sniped the winner at the five-minute mark with a blast from the top of the perimeter, assisted by Colten DeFrias.

Rob Peterson added an empty-net insurance goal with 30 seconds to play.

Despite the loss, Phillips didn't think Kamloops were at their best Friday night.

"I was actually expecting a tougher game. I thought they were going to come out a lot harder, just from the last game we played, but they were a little bit softer than I thought they were going to come out," he said.

Vernon finally started getting players cutting through the middle in the final period, and Klein expects more of that in Game 2, which goes Monday night at Memorial Arena in Kamloops. Game 3 goes Tuesday night (all games are 7:30) at Wesbild.

"We didn't take advantage of what they gave us on defence," said Klein. "We should have been cutting to the middle because their defence was wide open. Our forwards were a little timid, but it'll come."

Klein adds the longer this series goes, the more it will favour Vernon's physical style of play. He knows they will have to pay closer attention to Donahue.

"It took a couple games, but last year by the end he was a non-factor. He takes a while to wear down. He's a very good player, he's a big boy and he shoots from anywhere."

If necessary, Games 4 and 5 would go Thursday and Saturday night respectively in Kamloops and Vernon.

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[TOP](#)

July 16, 2010

Tigers ready for championship rematch with Venom

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

There isn't a lot to choose between the Vernon Re/Max Tigers and Kamloops Venom heading into Game 1 of the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League championship series tonight at Wesbild Centre.

The defending champion Tigers finished just two points ahead of Kamloops in the regular season, netting one more goal (126) than the Venom to boast the league's best offence.

Kamloops, meanwhile, allowed the fewest goals (71), but that's only three less than Vernon gave up.

The only real statistical difference between the two teams is discipline, as the Tigers earned 114 fewer penalty minutes than Kamloops. It is one trend Vernon captain Robbie Short knows his team will need to continue if they want to repeat as champions.

"They're a good team – they work hard and they have a well-coached offence," said Short. "With an offensive team like that, you can't take any stupid penalties."

In recent years, Short admits maintaining team discipline hasn't exactly been the Tigers' forte. Far from it. He credits last year's trip to provincials, where Vernon earned a silver medal, as an incentive for the change in play.

"Everybody's buying in. We've got a lot of our guys back from last year and we're realizing it's a lot easier to play at even strength than being a man down all the time."

The Cats are fully aware that Kamloops will be seeking redemption for last year's final. The Tigers battled back from a 2-0 series deficit against the Venom to win the title.

Venom head coach Doug Clark said he doesn't want to see that happen again.

“We do feel like we want to get back at them after last year,” he said. “We feel like maybe we have something to prove.”

Having won the most recent meeting between the two teams, handing the Tigers their only loss of the season on June 20 at Memorial Arena, the Venom feel they have a bit of momentum in their favour.

“That’s pretty big,” Clark said. “It showed us that if we play within ourselves and stick to our system, we can handle them.”

In the Venom, the Tigers will face three of the top-four TOJLL scorers. Rookie sniper Quinn Smith led the Venom with 26-30-56, and veteran Riley Donahue pocketed 27-17-44.

The Tigers answer Kamloops’ big guns with Craig Bigsby (22-16-38), Brooks Christensen (15-20-15) and Short (12-17-29).

“They’re more of a run-and-gun type team where we’re more defensive minded. Our styles usually cancel each other out so they’re pretty close games,” said Short.

Added Tigers’ head coach Bryan Klein: “The attitude is there. They’re really pumped and they really like playing this team. Our defence likes the challenge of playing their big shooters. It will be interesting to see which one prevails.”

Clark added the Venom will have to avoid falling into the Tigers’ trap of chippy play.

“We’ll have to focus on pushing the ball up the floor and trying not to engage in the extra-curricular activities they’re going to try to engage us in,” he said. “They’re a big, strong team and they do whatever it takes to win. We know that.

“We’ll expect them to try to break us down from the bottom like they have all year. They’ll be very physical in their end and we know they have very good goaltending.”

Game 2 goes Monday night (all games 7:30 p.m.) at Memorial Arena in Kamloops, with Game 3 returning to Wesbild on Tuesday.

If necessary, Games 4 and 5 would go Thursday and Saturday night respectively in Kamloops and Vernon (Civic Arena).

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## [TOP](#)

July 13, 2010

Tigers run down Rattlers

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

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers have earned the chance to defend their Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League crown.

The Cats got a pair of key goals from unlikely sources to upend the Kamloops Rattlers 8-6 in the deciding Game 3 of the TOJLL semifinals Monday night at Wesbild Centre.

Trailing throughout the game, the Tigers got clutch goals from defensive specialists Joey Klein and Blake Lewis, who recorded the winner on a breakout with captain Robbie Short.

“I just like to contribute. It’s usually in a more defensive role, but when I saw the opportunity for the 2-on-1 with Robbie, I just tried to jump up with the play and give us a chance to score,” said Lewis.

“I don’t usually have the opportunity to score so it was nice to get another one.”

Regarding Klein’s goal, Tigers’ head coach Bryan Klein, and also Joey’s father, chuckled: “He hasn’t scored in two years. He just got a loose ball, went up on a breakaway and tied it up.”

The defending champion Tigers now face the Kamloops Venom in a best-of-five series for the TOJLL title. Game 1 is tentatively scheduled for Friday night at Wesbild Centre.

Klein, who called a team meeting before Monday’s game, was impressed with how his squad rebounded from a disappointing performance in Game 2 the night before.

“We all had to refocus on our goals and tasks, and could tell in our warmup that we’d be competitive. The mindset was there.”

Despite falling behind 3-1 after the first period, the Tigers remained steady and chipped away at Kamloops’ lead, getting singles from Craig Bigsby (2G), Riley Soleway (2G) and Klein.

“The last game in Kamloops we were too scambly, and were getting beat one-on-one. This game started off with more of the same, but eventually we tightened things up and made it more difficult for them to get the ball to the net,” said Lewis.

“The offence will come, we have enough threats up there, we just need to play a more well rounded game.”

The Cats got other offence from Braidy Webb and Short, who added five helpers.

In the Venom, the Tigers will be facing three of the top-four goal scorers in the TOJLL.

“For us to be successful, Josh (Phillips, Tigers’ netminder) has probably got to be the best player on the floor,” said Klein, who praised his keeper for a solid effort in Game 3.

“We’ve played them before and we’ve played them well. I expect it will be a long series.”

Added Lewis: “The Venom have proven to be one of the best teams in the league for the last couple of years, and we need to be ready for them.

“If we all play our roles, and the players continue to buy into our systems, we can win the league again.”

In Game 2 Sunday night in Kamloops, the Rattlers got goals from Ryan Flottorp and Trent Evans in the opening minute, cruising to a 9-3 win.

“Our kids weren’t ready to play,” said Klein, describing the loss as a poor team effort. “We clawed our way back to 3-2 and looked like we were coming alive, but then they scored a few more goals and that kind of decided our fate.

“They were hitting the corners and we weren’t. We were hitting him (goalie) in the numbers.”

Vernon’s offence came from Bayne Bosquet, Brooks Christensen and Craig Bigsby.

The Venom swept the Kelowna Warriors 2-0 in the other semi. The Venom outlasted the Warriors 9-6 in Game 2 Thursday night at Memorial Arena in Kelowna.

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[TOP](#)

July 08, 2010

Tigers use balanced attack to bury Rattlers in Game 1

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

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers got away with a 40-minute effort Wednesday night at Wesbild Centre.

After building a 3-0 first-period lead, the Cats stumbled a bit in the second, settling for a 6-4 win in Game 1 of the best-of-three Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League semifinals.

Originally slated for tonight, Game 2 has been rescheduled for Sunday (6:30 p.m.) at McArthur Island Sports Complex in Kamloops due to a referee shortage. If necessary, Game 3 would go Monday (7:30 p.m.) at Wesbild.

“We had a good start. The offence showed signs of rust, but they also showed some good things,” said Tigers’ head coach Bryan Klein. “We kind of fell asleep in the second.”

Tigers’ captain Robbie Short, who had been stymied on several earlier breakaway attempts, netted the winner in the third period. Rookie Austin Lewarne provided the insurance goal, his first of the season, picking the top left corner on netminder Mark Larsen (44 saves).

“It was awesome. I just saw the open spot and took the shot,” said Lewarne, 17, who is entering Grade 12 at Vernon Secondary School.

Added Klein: “It was really nice to see him get his first. He’s been a valuable player for us as a rookie in the two-way

transition.”

The Tigers got other offence from Ryan Landels, Craig Bigsby, Brooks Christensen and Brennan Plante. Bayne Bosquet, Joey Klein, Christensen, Nolan Frame, Plante, Brett Hanna and Braidy Webb chipped in with assists.

Sniper Curtis McIntosh led the Rattlers with two goals and two assists. Devon Larsen and Nathan Hagen each supplied singles.

Klein credited the Tigers for silencing the Rattlers’ big guns for most of the night.

“Our defensive game was really solid, and that’s what we’ll need to get through these series and back to provincials,” he said. “We don’t get on each other’s case, we just keep going.

“We’ve got a very tough defence, and they’re clean. They’re big boys and they just take them to the floor.”

In particular, Klein credited Webb for playing a smart, physical game.

“He brought up the intensity when it needed to be, and he knew how to control it.”

Cats’ keeper Josh Phillips recorded 34 saves for the win.

In the other TOJLL semi, the host Kamloops Venom outlasted the Kelowna Warriors 12-11 Monday night at Memorial Arena.

The two teams squared off in Game 2 Thursday night in Kelowna.

Vernon’s Brodie MacDonald had a successful debut with the Coquitlam Adanacs Tuesday night, backstopping the league-champion A’s to a 15-7 win over the Nanaimo Timbermen in B.C. Junior A Lacrosse League play at the Coquitlam Sports Centre.

After allowing a goal just two minutes into the game, the 6-foot-7, 260-pound MacDonald settled down, posting a 25-save showing, with one assist.

The Adanacs (19-1-1), brought in MacDonald, a Tiger grad, along with Nick Bilic and Riley Loewen, from the Burnaby Lakers at the June 30 BCJALL trade deadline. They are hosting the Minto Cup, Aug. 20-29

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[TOP](#)

July 06, 2010

Cats ready to prowl

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

Head coach Bryan Klein is hoping a first-round catnap won’t affect the Vernon Re/Max Tigers too much.

After an opening-round bye in the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League playoffs, the Cats host the Kamloops Rattlers in Game 1 of a best-of-three semifinal tonight (7:30) at Wesbild Centre.

Game 2 goes Friday night at McArthur Island Sports Complex in Kamloops, and if necessary, Game 3 would go Monday night at Wesbild.

Klein called a team meeting Monday, followed by a light practice, to make sure his players’ focus is where it needs to be.

“Our mental focus is what makes our team what it is,” said Klein. “It’s hard with a bye week, especially with the long weekend, but the boys are quite loose and getting ready to go.

The regular-season champion Tigers (12-1-1) come into the series with the league’s top offence (126 goals for), second-best defence (74 against) and the least penalty minutes (217) by more than 100.

The Cats are led offensively by Craig Bigsby (22-16-38) and Brooks Christensen (15-20-35).

The Rattlers (6-8) advanced to the second round by sweeping the Armstrong Shamrocks in the quarterfinals, ending with a thrilling double-overtime 7-6 win in Game 2 Friday night at Nor-Val Sports Centre.

JJ Woldum recorded four of Kamloops’ six goals and was a major factor in that game. Klein knows they will have to

keep him in check in the semis.

“JJ Woldum, he’s a big body that has a good stick in the crease. Our guys have to play him physical without taking penalties,” said Klein. “We have a big defence, so I think we match up well with them.

“They’ve got a couple of key guys we need to focus on,” added Klein, referring to the McIntosh boys, Curtis, Russ and Gavin. “Their guys have been around for a lot of years, but if we keep our discipline and play our game, we should be OK.”

Curtis led his team in scoring (14-12-26) and was second in penalty minutes (34) in a dozen games. Devon Larsen was second in scoring with 14-8-22 in nine games.

The one positive about the bye week is the Tigers will regain the services of injured players Darren Kirby (4-5-9) and Austin Lewarne (0-8-8).

Veteran Miles Jespersen (9-5-14) will miss Game 1, as Klein lists him as “day-to-day.”

The Tigers owned the regular-season series with the Rattlers, winning all three games by a cumulative score of 26-15.

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## [TOP](#)

June 29, 2010

Cats zap Rattlers

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

For three key veterans of the Vernon Re/Max Tigers, a two-week break gives them more time in rehab. The rest of the Tigers will train hard and await the winner of the Kamloops Rattlers-Armstrong Shamrocks first-round playoff series.

The Tigers finished the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse regular season with a comeback 11-10 victory over the Rattlers Saturday night at Wesbild Centre.

Vernon topped the seven-team loop at 12-1-1, two points ahead of the Kamloops Venom, who also receive a first-round bye.

Miles Jespersen (9-5-14), Darren Kirby (4-5-9) and Austin Lewarne (0-8-8) all missed Saturday's game with various injuries. Jespersen hurt his rotator cuff wakeboarding and could be questionable for the start of the playoffs.

"With three injuries, it's (the break) perfect," said Tigers' co-coach Rich Zecchel. "Otherwise, we'd rather keep playing. It's nice to win the league so it's a tradeoff."

The Tigers finished third last year before claiming the playoff crown and a silver medal at provincials.

Said alternate captain Blake Lewis, who missed Saturday's game to attend a wedding: "I think the bye will be a good thing because even though we don't play any games, it allows the team to rest up and come into our first match-up relatively healthy. The time off will allow the team to regroup, and enter the playoffs at full strength."

Tigers' captain Rob Short supplied four goals in the first period and ended Saturday night with 5+4, getting the winner with a minute remaining.

Craig Bigsby bagged 3+1, while Nolan Frame collected the equalizer with just under three minutes to go, and added two assists.

Riley Soleway and Bayne Bosquet also had singles for Re/Max, who held period leads of 7-4 and 8-7. Brennan Plante recorded three assists.

Devon Larsen led the Rattlers with 3+2, while Curtis McIntosh counted 2+3 and Trent Evans 2+1.

Vernon alternate captain Braidy Webb scored an unanimous decision over Scott Duncan in a first period fight, while Jake Soleway did likewise over the Rattlers' Ian Wilcox in the second period.

The Tigers outshot the Rattlers 61-38 with Josh Phillips earning the win.

Armstrong, meanwhile, closed the regular season Saturday night by losing 6-5 to the host Kamloops Venom.

Stephen Ringdal paced the Shamrocks with 2+1, while Dalaney Halifax, Logan Strohm and Owen Barker netted singles.

The Venom (11-2-1) held period leads of 2-0 and 6-3. The ever-improving Shamrocks finished fifth at 4-9-1 and opened the playoffs Tuesday night in Kamloops. The Rattlers were fourth at 7-7.

Game 2 in the best-of-three series goes Friday night at Nor-Val Sports Centre (7:30). A third game, if required, would go Saturday night in Kamloops.

The third-place Kelowna Warriors (8-3-3) go up against the sixth-place Rutland Raiders (3-9-2) in the other quarterfinal series.

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## [TOP](#)

June 22, 2010

Tigers tops in TOJLL

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

Their quest for an undefeated season might be over, but the Vernon Re/Max Tigers still have cause to celebrate.

Even with Sunday night's 9-8 loss to the second-place Kamloops Venom, the Cats secured the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League title at Memorial Arena in Kamloops.

The two clubs are separated by just two points heading into their final regular-season games Saturday night, but even if they end up in a tie, Vernon (11-1-1) would claim first based on goal differential in their head-to-head matchups (Tigers won the other game 10-6 on May 8).

Both teams earn first-round byes in the playoffs, which begin Monday.

This weekend would have been a little more interesting had the Cats not battled back from a 6-1 deficit. Already trailing 4-1 after 20 minutes, they ran into penalty trouble in the second period, taking eight minors (28 total penalty minutes), and the Venom (10-2-1) capitalized twice more on the man advantage.

"We ran into penalty trouble in the second period, which is pretty uncharacteristic of our team," said Tigers' head coach Bryan Klein, noting his team is the least penalized (201 PIM) in the league by a wide margin, incurring 67 fewer penalty minutes than the next nearest team (Armstrong Shamrocks, 268 PIM).

"All good teams need to learn to lose. It's how you respond that counts," he added.

The Tigers did respond in the third period, getting hat tricks from veterans Miles Jespersen and Craig Bigsby, who had the Cats' first-period goal.

"Bigsby had a couple of real nice ones cutting through the middle. He really got us going in the third period," said Klein. "They finally got some time on the floor without being shorthanded, and it showed what we're capable of.

"For the guys to come back like they did... our team just doesn't go away. Huge character on this team."

Brett Hanna collected the other third-period marker, and chipped in with three assists, as did Bayne Bosquet.

Brooks Christensen, who had a solid chance for a last-minute equalizer, and captain Robbie Short, supplied two helpers each. Christensen is the Tigers' leading scorer with 15-18-33 in a dozen games (2.75 points per game).

Netminder Josh Phillips recorded 31 saves.

Kamloops' sniper Riley Donahue was the Venom's main threat with four goals and three assists. Quinn Smith (2+2), Mike Henry (1+2) and Rob Petersen completed their offence.

Playing without snipers Riley Soleway and Ryan Landels, Klein credited the Tigers' defenders – Blake Lewis, Joey Klein, Ryan Oliverius, Russel McLean, Darren Kirby and Jake Soleway – for holding the talented Venom in check.

Saturday night at Wesbild Centre, the Tigers steamrolled the Rutland Raiders 10-2.

After racking up a 5-0 first-period lead, the Cats put the game in the cruise control, allowing backup keeper Josh Point mop up the final 40 minutes.

“It was valuable for him to get that playing time,” said Klein. “The game was in hand and our guys were focused.”

Brennan Plante led Vernon offensively, collecting three goals and two helpers.

Klein credited Plante for stepping into James Dobrowolski’s old position and doing a stellar job of adjusting.

“He used to be strictly an offensive guy, but now he’s doing more of the transition work. The defensive side of the ball is the hardest to learn and he is fitting in really well.”

Bigsby (2+1), Short (1+3), Christensen, Kirby, Jake Soleway and Braidy Webb rounded out the Vernon attack.

Dillon McLennan and Patrick McMillan answered for the Raiders (3-9-1).

Vernon closes the regular season Saturday night at Wesbild against the Kamloops Rattlers (6-7). The Armstrong Shamrocks (4-8-1) end their season against the Venom in Kamloops.

The ‘Rocks will tangle with the Rattlers in a best-of-three series, starting Monday, June 28 in Kamloops. Game 2 goes Friday, July 2 at Nor-Val Sports Centre. If necessary, Game 3 would go Saturday, July 3 in Kamloops.

The Kelowna Warriors and Rutland tangle in the other TOJLL quarterfinal, dates to be determined.

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[TOP](#)

June 15, 2010

Bigsby goes large in Tigers’ win

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

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers are so deep in talent, they really never know who's going to step up and be the first star come game nights.

Second-year Craig Bigsby, 17, took a turn Saturday night, exploding with four goals and five assists as the Tigers ambushed the South Okanagan Flames 17-5 in Okanagan Thompson Junior Lacrosse League play at Wesbild Centre.

The first-place Tigers are 10-0-1, while the last-place Flames dropped to 0-9-2. Vernon hosts the Rutland Raiders Saturday night.

"Everyone was contributing and getting me the ball," said Bigsby, a Grade 12 VSS student. "I was shooting from outside the dots, high and low, mixing my shots up. Once I scored the first one, I felt I was in a groove."

Five-year veteran Blake Lewis, an alternate captain with the 2009 provincial silver-medalist Tigers, wasn't surprised by Bigsby's outburst.

"Biggs had a really good rookie campaign, and he hasn't missed a beat this season either," said Lewis, who counted 1+2. "He is the type of guy you want to have the ball when we are on offence because he has proved to score from any angle, under all sorts of pressure. His nine-point game is just a single example of how well he has played for us."

Brooks Christensen supplied 3+4, while Braidy Webb earned 2+2 and Brennan Plante and Nolan Frame also scored twice for the Tigers, who held period leads of 3-2 and 10-5. They scored two of their seven third-period goals on the powerplay.

Matt Kolb, with 1+2, captain Rob Short and Riley Soleway rounded out the Re/Max scoring in front of Josh Point, who collected two assists while making 21 saves. Bayne Bosquet also bagged two assists.

Brent Fougier, Derek Grimm, Su Watts, Quinn Ramsay and Niko Sopow replied for the Flames.

Lewis says the Tigers possess so many offensive threats, they never worry about where the goals are going to come from. Vernon averages almost nine goals a game.

"A good example is Nolan (Frame). He didn't play that much last season, but this year he has way more confidence with the ball. He got more playing time this season and took advantage of it, producing consistently every game for us. We have so much potential on offense that some really good players can't crack the lineup."

Bigsby, whose previous single game-high was 2+3, said the Tigers tightened things up as they shut out the Flames in the third period.

"The whole team just started playing better defence and we starting working harder. We're playing more of a team game than last year."

The Tigers moved four points ahead of the second-place Kamloops Venom, who beat the Raiders 12-9 Saturday night. Lewis said the Cats are gunning for a second shot at a gold medal.

"We know how well we can play. We feel we are better then we were last year, and anything short of another provincial berth will be disappointing. As long as we stick to the coach's systems, and guys are accountable and know their roles, there is no reason that we can't make another push for that provincial title."

Garrett Burton provided 4+2 as the Kamloops Rattlers downed the visiting Armstrong Shamrocks 12-5 Sunday.

Devon Larsen chipped in with 3+1 for the Rattlers (5-5), while Dalaney Halifax pulled the hat trick and Logan Strohm scored twice for the 4-8 Shamrocks. Armstrong hosts the Kelowna Warriors Friday night.

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## [TOP](#)

June 10, 2010

Tigers dust off 'Rocks

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

Pat Nelson asked his players to check the Vernon Re/Max Tigers like they were a suitcase bound for South America.

The ever-improving Armstrong Shamrocks listened to their coach and almost swiped a point, falling 4-3 before a packed house Wednesday night at Nor-Val Sports Centre.

The first-place Tigers improved to 9-0-1 in the seven-team Okanagan Thompson Lacrosse League. The 'Rocks fell to 4-7 and tied with the Kamloops Rattlers for fourth spot. Kamloops has two games in hand.

"It was a great game," said Nelson. "The boys played really well, with lots of heart. We just played solid, strong defence and shut down their fastbreak. Quinn (Braybrook) was big in goal; he's really stepping up well for us. Their goalie (Josh Phillips) played well too."

The Tigers, who opened the season with 10-8 and 10-6 wins over the Shamrocks, outshot Armstrong 38-36. Vernon was up 3-1 after two periods. The first period was scoreless.

Tiger alternate captain Braidy Webb scored the eventual winner, putting Vernon up 4-2 midway through the third.

Ryan Landels, Craig Bigsby and Brett Hanna also scored for the Tigers, who took four of 10 minor penalties.

Stephen Ringdal, Carston Schlaak and Dalaney Halifax responded for the Shamrocks. Schlaak had a goal called back in the first period on a close foot-in-the-crease violation.

Phillips, one of the league's top net detectives, didn't mind the defensive showing.

"Armstrong has a lot of good shooters but our defence did a great job," said Phillips, an apprentice carpenter who turns 20 next weekend.

"Since Bryan's (co-coach Klein) been with us, he's really put a strong focus on defence. I think that's why we were second at provincials last year. Once you put defence first, the offence will follow."

Webb said the Tigers were able to keep the likes of Jarrett Medhurst, Logan Strohm and Halifax to the outside much of the night.

"It was a very good and close game," said Webb. "Josh played well. There was not much movement by our offence. We weren't cutting to the middle hard enough."

The Tigers entertain the last-place South Okanagan Flames Saturday night at Wesbild Centre, while the Shamrocks visit the second-place Kamloops Venom (7-2-1) Sunday night.

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## [TOP](#)



June 08, 2010

Soleway ignites Tigers' offence

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

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers can cross one major item off their bucket list: beating the Kelowna Warriors.

The Tigers finally knocked off the Warriors, cruising to an 8-5 Thompson Okanagan Lacrosse League win Saturday night before 350 fans at Wesbild Centre.

"We hadn't beaten them in two years," said co-coach Rich Zecchel. "They were just a little deeper than us in the past and now we've got better depth than them. That's still a pretty good team we beat."

First star Riley Soleway paced the Tigers with 2+2 on a night where Re/Max passed the ball cleanly and creatively to score some gorgeous goals in an exciting tilt where each team fired 44 shots.

Tigers' leading scorer Brooks Christensen (11-14-25) added 2+1 to earn third star, while captain Rob Short, Braidy Webb, Nolan Frame and Darren Kirby completed the offence.

Kirby was a force on the penalty kill, scoring once while the Cats were shorthanded and ragging the ball for at least 30 seconds before taking a nasty check from behind into the side boards to draw a penalty.

Christensen fired a beauty low from 20 feet shortly after Miles Jespersen struck the post. Ryan Oliverius retrieved the loose ball for Christensen.

"Our defence was awesome again and our goaltending (Josh Phillips) was solid," said Zecchel.

The Tigers (8-0-1) moved six points ahead of the third-place Warriors. The Kamloops Venom climbed to within a victory of the Tigers at 7-2-1 following a 10-3 stuffing of the Kamloops Rattlers Saturday night.

Roadrunner and second star Tyler French led the Warriors with a hat trick, giving him 19 goals on the season. He completed his hat trick on a powerplay in the final minute. Kurt Deschner supplied 2+1, while Lucas Cahill added two helpers.

Vernon, who visit the Armstrong Shamrocks tonight, held period leads of 2-1 and 6-3.

The Shamrocks improved to 4-6 with a 10-6 win over the South Okanagan Flames (0-7-2) Monday night in Summerland.

"The boys played pretty good," said Armstrong head coach Pat Nelson. "Now, we're gearing up for Vernon. We'll have to tighten up our defence because they're pretty strong on offence. They have a lot of guys who can score goals."

Dalaney Halifax supplied 3+1 for the Shamrocks, who held period leads of 5-1 and 6-4. Jarrett Medhurst and Brad Wolgram each pocketed 2+1, while Carston Schalaak also scored twice and Mitch Steel and Logan Strohm added singles.

Colin Carlson scored twice for the Flames, who took just three minor penalties. The 'Rocks were assessed six minors.

Quinn Braybrook made 28 saves for the Irish, who got two assists from Cullen Rowan.

Said Zecchel: "That's a big game for us in Armstrong. They have a real high-powered offence."

Meanwhile, Tiger grad Steve Clark made his senior A debut Sunday in Nanaimo, helping the Timbermen clip the Maple Ridge Burrards 4-3 in Western Lacrosse Association play before a packed Nanaimo Ice Centre.

"I played most of the game until the third period," said Clark, 22. "After the first period, I kind of got rid of the butterflies. The pace is a lot quicker with a lot more movement on offence. I was playing mostly defensive."

Clark, summoned from the senior C Armstrong Shamrocks, is staying at Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo this week and will play weekend games versus the Coquitlam Adanacs (3-3) Saturday and the Burrards (3-4) Sunday.

The Timbermen (2-5) set a franchise record for fewest goals allowed in a game. Goalie Matt King, who made 37 saves for the win, didn't mind being part of one of the lowest-scoring WLA games of all time.

"Anytime you're feeling the ball and you're not digging it out of the back of your net, it's a good thing," King said. "It's definitely an easier game to play, versus a 15-14 (game) where every third shot is going in."

Prior to the game, the players who helped Washington Stealth win the National Lacrosse League Cup that was on display at the NIC were honoured. The Timbermen were Lewis Ratcliff, Chris O'Dougherty, Jamison Koesterer and coach Art Webster. The Maple Ridge players were Tyler Codron, Joel Dalgarno and Sam Cook.

TIGER TALES: The Tigers lost out to Kamloops in a bid to host the 2011 provincial junior championships. Zecchel said they lost by one vote. This year's B.C. playdowns are in Langley...“We're really disappointed,” said Zecchel. “It only comes around here every third or fourth year, depending on whether Prince George is in.”...Phillips has a goals against average of 4.93, third best in the league..

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## [TOP](#)

June 1, 2010

Bosquet buries three in third to lead Tiger attack

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

Rookie Bayne Bosquet recorded a third-period hat trick as the Re/Max Vernon Tigers outgunned the Rutland Raiders 9-2 in Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League play Saturday night at Kelowna Memorial Arena.

Trailing 2-1 after the first period, the Tigers kept pressing, playing a possession-style game to wear the Raiders down. Missing four regulars (Russel McLean, Miles Jespersen, Matt Kolb and Steve Kolasko), Cats' captain Robbie Short said it took a little lineup tweaking to get the offence clicking.

“Things were a little off to start, but we just made a few adjustments and things kind of took off,” said Short.

Vernon GM/assistant coach Rich Zecchel credited the Tigers' defence for standing tall to give the offence time to find its groove.

“It was a good effort by our defence. It took our offence a while to get going, but we opened up for six in the third,” he said.

“We had lots of opportunities in the first two periods, but we just didn't bury the ball. But we didn't get frustrated, didn't take any penalties, and we just kept giving ourselves a chance to win.”

Second-period goals by Short (2+3) and Nolan Frame gave the Tigers momentum going into the final frame where they dominated on the strength of Bosquet's hat trick.

“Bayne had a real good breakout-type game,” said Zecchel.

Added Short: “He scored his first goal right on the goal line, and I don't know how he snuck that in.”

Tyler Plante, Short and Malcolm MacPhee completed the Tigers' attack as they improved to 7-0-1.

Ryan Phillips and Jordan Urban handled the Raiders' offence. Rutland dipped to 2-5-1.

The Tigers played squeaky clean Saturday night, taking just four penalty minutes to the Raiders' 10.

Zecchel says team discipline has been a focus for the Tigers all season – they are last in league penalty minutes with 137 over eight games (17.13 average). In contrast, the last-place South Okanagan Flames are registering nearly 40 PIM per game.

“Our penalty minutes are very low and that has a lot to do with our success,” said Zecchel.

The Tigers host the third-place Kelowna Warriors (4-2-1) Saturday night (7:30 p.m.) at Wesbild Centre. Vernon shaded the Warriors 8-7 in their last meeting on May 20.

“It's an important game,” said Zecchel. “We want to get first place tied up and they're right on our tails.”

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## [TOP](#)

May 22, 2010

Short banks breakaway winner

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

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers looked to veteran Rob Short when they needed a big play Thursday night at Kelowna Memorial Arena.

After allowing the host Warriors to score four unanswered goals and equalize at 7-7, Short connected on a breakaway with two minutes left to give the Tigers an 8-7 victory. It was Short's second goal of the night.

The Tigers moved to 6-1 and five points up on the second-place Kamloops Venom in the seven-team Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League.

"It was a good back and forth game and when they scored with 30 seconds left in the second period, I was a little concerned," said Tigers' co-coach Rich Zecchel.

"Ryan Landels had a really strong game. He scored twice and had three goals called back for having a foot in the crease. Some referees call that really closely."

Landels leads the Tigers in scoring with eight goals (12 points). Brooks Christensen also scored twice for Re/Max and is third in league points with 6-12-18.

Craig Bigsby and Bayne Bosquet rounded out the Vernon scoring. Braidy Webb supplied two assists.

The Tigers held league points king Brad DeShane (12-9-21) without a point. Tyler French, with 3+1, and Luke Bailey, with two goals, led Kelowna (3-2).

Josh Phillips went the distance in the Vernon net, registering 41 saves. The Tigers led 4-1 after one period.

Vernon visits the 2-4-1 Rutland Raiders Saturday night (May 29).

Meanwhile, the Venom improved to 4-2 by brushing back the host Armstrong Shamrocks 7-4 Wednesday night at Nor-Val Sports Centre.

Dyllion Billanchuk, Cullen Rowan, Braydon Bridge and Logan Strohm scored for the 'Rocks (1-6), who host the Kamloops Rattlers (3-2) Friday night.

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[TOP](#)

May 18, 2010

Tigers tame Rattlers to take first

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

Looks like the Vernon Tigers have developed a healthy appetite for success in Junior B lacrosse. After clinching silver at the B.C. championships last year in Victoria, they have entered the 2010 season wanting more.

While the Cats lost a handful of players to graduation and other pursuits in the off-season, they have rallied around a newly developed sense of self-belief. The result is a 5-0-1 record, good enough for first place in the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League, bolstered by back-to-back weekend wins over perennial powerhouse Kamloops Rattlers.

The Tigers tripled the Rattlers 9-3 Saturday night at Wesbild Centre, and followed that with a 6-2 defensive masterpiece over host Kamloops Sunday at McArthur Island Sports Centre.

Vernon head coach Bryan Klein can't remember a stronger start to the season in the four years he has been involved with the club. It is also the first time he has watched Vernon win a game at McArthur Island.

"Kamloops has always been our major competition, so any time you can beat them three times in a row (they beat Kamloops Venom 10-6 on May 8) it's a major achievement."

The major difference between this season and previous ones lies in the Tigers' mental approach. With their sights firmly set on a return to provincials, Klein says the Cats are more mature, which has enabled them to keep things in perspective.

"Last year, we were just focused on making the playoffs; this year, we won't be satisfied unless we make provincials,"

he said.

Sunday night was a perfect example.

Vernon got first-period goals from Darren Kirby, Ryan Landels, Riley Soleway and Steve Kolasko to take early control of the game, and when Kamloops sensed things slipping away, Klein says they tried to get under the Tigers' skin.

"They were a very frustrated team. They've never lost to us twice in a row in the four years I've been here," he said. "They tried to bring us off our game, but we were focused on winning. Being a coach, that's what makes me the most proud of our guys."

Braidy Webb (1+2) and Miles Jespersen completed the Tigers' scoring in support of netminder Josh Phillips, who made 37 stops.

Saturday night, the Tigers used four-goal spurts in the second and third periods to bury the Rattlers 9-3 at Wesbild Centre.

Nolan Frame and Craig Bigsby led the Tiger attack with two goals and an assist each. Brooks Christensen (1+3), Soleway (1+2), Webb (1+2), Landels and Brennan Plante completed the Vernon offence.

"Our offence played well, our defence was solid and our goaltending was exceptional," said Tigers' general manager/assistant coach Rich Zecchel, praising first-star netminder Phillips' second 37-save performance in as many nights.

"We've been trying to keep our penalty minutes down which is helping the offence because we get the ball more."

"Overall it was a real solid effort with good discipline - all the things you need to win."

Klein says the Tigers' defensive style centres around the solid play of Phillips and goes out from there.

"As a coach I've always stressed a defensive system, but now we have the goal scoring to go with it," he said.

The Jr. Tigers' next home game goes Saturday, June 5 against the Kelowna Warriors at Wesbild.

Meanwhile, the Armstrong Jr. Shamrocks host the Venom tonight (7:30 p.m.) at Nor-Val Centre.

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May 12, 2010

Tigers hold off talented Venom

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

Ryan Landels scored twice and set up two others as the Vernon Re/Max Tigers ambushed the Kamloops Venom 10-6 in Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League action Saturday night at Wesbild Centre.

The Tigers improved to 3-0-1, while the Venom dropped to 2-1. Vernon hosts the 2-0 Kamloops Rattlers Saturday night, and expect captain Rob Short to be in the lineup after he helped the Vernon Vipers win the Royal Bank Cup.

Miles Jespersen and Craig Bigsby each supplied 2+1 for the Tigers, while Braidy Webb also scored twice. Singles came from Nolan Frame and Riley Soleway.

Brooks Christiansen counted three assists for the Tigers, while Austin Lewarne had a pair of helpers.

Re/Max held period leads of 5-4 and 9-6, getting 36 saves from Josh Phillips.

Quinn Smith and Riley Donahue each scored twice for Kamloops, who got singles from Ben Saklofsky, Jamie Forster and Steve Bordon.

"It was a really good game," said Tigers' co-coach Rich Zecchel. "They're a really strong team with two of the top-five Midget players in the junior (A) draft so we had to play at a high level."

Saklofsky and Mike Henry, both high picks in the B.C. Junior League draft, have injected even more offensive power into the Venom attack.

"We were solid on offence and we kept our penalties to a minimum," added Zecchel. "Our D was real good and the offence was really moving the ball around well. Our transition game was working well."

Meanwhile, the Armstrong Shamrocks bowed 10-9 to the host Rutland Raiders Saturday night.

Mitch Steele pulled the hat trick for the 'Rocks, while Stephen Ringdal supplied 2+4 and Jarrett Medhurst added 2+2. Logan Strohm and Mike Belanger contributed singles.

Sheldon McDonald provided 3+2 for Rutland, while Dillan MacLennan and Jordan Urban each collected 1+2. The 1-4 Raiders led 5-3 after the first period, while Armstrong pulled in front 9-8 after two periods.

The Shamrocks visit the 1-1 Kelowna Warriors Thursday night at Memorial Arena.

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## [TOP](#)

May 05, 2009

== Tigers settle for 6-6 draw ==

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

*Armstrong Shamrocks' goalie Jeremy Chard gets a piece of Vernon Re/Max Tiger Ryan Landels' shot as Landels goes through the goalie crease untouched during junior lacrosse action Saturday night at the Wesbild Centre.*

### **Roger Tepper Photo**

The Vernon Re/Max Tigers settled for a 6-6 draw with the South Okanagan Flames in Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League action Monday night in Summerland.

The Tigers surrendered three goals in the final seven minutes of the penalty-filled affair.

Miles Jespersen paced Re/Max with 2+1, while Craig Bigsby also scored twice and singles came from Riley Soleway and Steve Kolasko.

Flames' captain Tyler Prentice supplied 2+2, while singles went to Cody Cervo, Quinn Ramsay, Mitch Warton and Ben Whiles.

"We played OK," said Tigers' co-coach Rich Zecchel. "Josh Point got his first start (in goal) and was real solid. We have to get better at everything in general and the Kamloops Venom will be a good test for us Saturday night. We have a group of good kids who listen well. We have good skill and good speed and we're only going to get better."

The Tigers (2-0-1) took 33 penalty minutes, while the 0-1-1 Flames were assessed 45 minutes. Ryan Oliverius of the Tigers won a close decision over Jason Stead in a late scrap.

Vernon outshot South Okanagan 46-35 while enjoying period leads of 3-1 and 5-2.

The Tigers iced the Armstrong Shamrocks 10-6 in their home opener Saturday night at Wesbild Centre. Last year's MVP, Josh Phillips, earned the win. Brooks Christensen leads the Tigers with five goals and eight points.

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## [TOP](#)

April 29 2010

== Cats up for defence ==

By Kevin Mitchell - ["The Vernon MorningStar Newspaper"](#)

*Alternate captains Braidy Webb (left) and Blake Lewis are providing solid leadership for the Vernon Re/Max Tigers as they begin their defence of the Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League title. The Tigers host the Armstrong Shamrocks Saturday night at Wesbild Centre*

Photo by - Kevin Mitchell/Morning Star

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Their leading scorer and captain is in Manitoba with the defending Royal Bank Cup national junior A hockey

champion Vernon Vipers.

The Re/Max Tigers, however, appear to have enough depth to win while waiting for Robbie Short's return to their junior B lacrosse den.

Vernon lost just three players - Steven Clark, Pat Quigley and Jordan Jarvis - from last year's provincial silver medalist roster. The Tigers went 3-1 in the round-robin before falling 9-5 to the Port Moody Panthers in the gold-medal game in Esquimalt.

Fifth-year monster-hitter and alternate captain Braidy Webb was dripping with sweat after another high-tempo Tiger practice Tuesday night at Civic Arena. He likes the make-up of this year's team.

"It's looking good," said Webb, an apprentice electrician. "We got a lot of new guys so we're gonna work together. Defence is key this year. We still got our strong goalie (MVP Josh Phillips) from last year. We got some new guys on offence and the powerplay's been looking good so far. We just gotta stay out of the penalty box and we have a good team. Everybody's dedicated this year. We're focused."

The Tigers battle the Armstrong Shamrocks Saturday night at Wesbild Centre in their Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League home opener.

Vernon went 8-4-2 and finished third a year ago, one point out of first. They swept the Rutland Raiders and South Okanagan Flames before taking out the Kamloops Venom in a thrilling five-game championship series.

"Every season's a new season," said Webb, one of the league's toughest dudes. "You gotta start from square one again. We did great last year, but it's a whole new season and every team gets better."

Co-coaches Rich Zecchel and Bryan Klein run pro-like practices with loads of running. A 24-man roster creates healthy competition for floor time.

"We really got a lot of guys," added Webb, named the Tigers' Unsung Hero last season. "Anybody could be sitting. We gotta be focused, you gotta be dedicated. There's no screwing around. It takes something to play on this team. We did do really good last year so we're not backing down at all. We have to be even more focused than we were last year."

Blake Lewis, a fifth-year vet who won the Best Defensive Player with the Cats in 2009, figures the provincial tournament gig was a worthy education in a few ways.

"I think it taught us how to become a better team and what it means. Being a better team will take you to the next level, having that chemistry. It's more than just a bunch of skilled players. We came together as one down the stretch and it paid off."

The Tigers, who won back-to-back league titles eight years ago, are building a Viper-like legacy where class and honour are associated with their jersey.

"A guy like Robbie, playing for the Vipers, it's nice to have him on the team because he brings that competitive aspect. The Tigers is that second level for him and we're building up."

As an alternate captain, Lewis says he will ensure guys know their roles and are held accountable. He says the Tigers will be prepared for a track meet any night of the week.

"I think our platoon system really helps," said Lewis, a third-year business student at UBC Okanagan who earned the Rienie Holland Memorial Minor Hockey Scholarship a few years ago. "We got specialized guys doing the defence and offence and we work hard in practices just to make sure our press is really good for that third period so we can take it to the other team."

Zecchel, a former goaltender in junior A and senior B (national champion Vernon Tigers) back in the day, also likes what he sees.

"We've got a good group of kids again this year," said Zecchel. "There will more teams hunting us because we were second in B.C. and we are legitimate contenders again. Repeating as league champions is always tough."

Brooks Christiansen with 2+1 and Brett Hanna with 1+3, both Re/Max rookies out of Salmon Arm, enjoyed stellar debuts as the Tigers iced the 'Rocks 10-8 last Friday night in Armstrong.

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April 25, 2010

== Season Opener ==

Staff : ["The Vernon MorningStar Newspaper"](#)

...The Jr. Irish weren't so lucky as they fell 10-8 to the Jr. Cats in the early game of Lacrosse Night double-header at Nor-Val.

Armstrong coaches Pat Nelson and Glenn Mitchell had the Shamrocks fired up, as they needed just 50 seconds to open the scoring.

The defending Thompson Okanagan Junior Lacrosse League champion Tigers responded four minutes later when rookie Mac Leroux picked up a loose ball and charged up the floor on a breakaway. Former Shamrock Brooks Christensen gave Vernon the lead a minute later.

A mix of mental mistakes and solid effort made for a back-and-forth game. Vernon gave up a number of goals on bad line changes, while Armstrong gave up a number goals to the Tiger special teams.

Delaney Halifax, Logan Strohm and rookie sensation Stephan Ringdal were brilliant for the Shamrocks.

Vernon scoring was rounded out by Darren Kirby, Steve Klasko, Bayne Bosquet, Brett Hanna and Ryan Landels. The Cats' Nolan Frame showed a lot of hustle for his two goals, one of the highlight-reel variety as he fought for possession, and took some shots before diving across the crease to score early in the second period.

Vernon coach Brian Klein was pleased with the team's performance.

"Communication and line changes need to improve but the crew of talented, determined rookies will learn the Tiger systems, and their enthusiasm should elevate the veteran Tigers to another great season."

The Tigers are still waiting for the return of veterans Myles Jespersen and Robbie Short, who is in the midst of the Vernon Vipers' playoff run.

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Published: March 11, 2010

== Tiger Teacher ==

By ["The Vernon MorningStar Newspaper"](#)

Braidy Webb (left) of the Vernon Tigers goes over some stick work fundamentals with kids ages five to eight during a fun lacrosse session at Okanagan Landing Elementary. The Tigers have been helping promote lacrosse in the North Okanagan by holding similar sessions at various schools in recent weeks.

*Photo by Harold Mann*

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March 08, 2010

Tigers Make Trade

The Tigers have traded goalie Jeremy Chard to the Shamrocks for Shuswap midget grad Matt Hanna. Matt was drafted by the Jr. A New Westminster Salmonbellies in the fourth round of the midget draft. He is big, strong left hander with a huge upside. Matt was a late cut from Team BC as he was unable to make all practises on the coast.

Other tid-bits

1. Pre-camp is taking place now at the Hassen Arena

2. Ice Breaker Tournament is Saturday, April 17th, Armstrong, Nor-Val Arena
  3. Season opener is at Armstrong on Friday, April 23, 6pm start (double header), Nor-Val Arena
  4. Home opener is Saturday, May 1st, Vernon, Westbild Centre
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Februray 10, 2010

Junior league drafts local lacrosse 7-pack

Published: February 09, 2010 7:00 PM "[The Vernon MorningStar Newspaper](#)"

A total of seven North Okanagan Minor Lacrosse Association products were chosen in the B.C. Junior A Lacrosse League's Midget draft Sunday in Port Coquitlam.

Joshua Point, taken by the Delta Islanders, went the earliest, in round seven, 52nd overall. Bayne Bosquet was picked by the Langley Thunder with the first choice of the eighth round.

Austin Lewarne, Mac Leroux and Aaron Green all went to the Coquitlam Adanacs, while Mason Limb was selected by Delta and Stephen Ringdal is now property of the Victoria Shamrocks. Ringdal is from Armstrong, while the rest hail from Vernon.

"Last season's North Okanagan Midget team won a silver medal at the A2 provincial championships and because of that result, our players had a great deal of interest in them," said spokesman Wes Landels. "We have had a couple of players drafted in the past but this is the largest group to be drafted at one time."

**Steven Clark, a local product who helped the Vernon Tigers strike silver at the B.C. Junior B playdowns in Victoria, was drafted on Wednesday by the Senior A Nanaimo Timbermen of the Western Lacrosse Association.**

Minor lacrosse registration forms are available at Sun Valley Source For Sports

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