

PEPP-ALK

with
Harry
Pepper

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The past weekend was a good one for the Rossland Warriors. The kids who have been the doormat of the KIJHL West Division got their act together well enough to beat their nemesis, the Beaver Valley Nite Hawks, 5-4 on Friday evening and then on Saturday they took on the second-place team in the East Division, the Columbia Valley Rockies and won again by the same score. It took overtime for them to do it and, incidentally, reversed the score by which the Rockies beat them in Invermere earlier in the schedule.

Both of the weekend games were played in the rugged style which seems to be the vogue in the league now and I can't help but think that this direction along with the more stringent rules on fighting are making for a type of game which will draw the fans away from their TV. Say what you will but I think the lounge facilities at our arena are also an encouragement to a lot of fans. I think a lot of my readers will remember the "good old days" when you went to a cold old barn and along with your blanket and foot warmer you took along a

rather flat-looking object in your hip pocket.

This weekend the Warriors again have back-to-back games, an encounter with the cellar-dwelling Grand Forks Border Bruins on Friday evening and then on Saturday they play the team that they are trying to replace in the standings, the Nelson Junior Maple Leafs. This could prove to be a real classic, the green and white-clad Leafs have fallen on hard times of late, but they have kids capable of putting the puck in the net and will certainly be no pushovers.

The Warrior coaches, Lloyd McLellan and Kenny Koshey, have their charges playing the style of hockey that can win games in this league. It just has to be that sixty-minute effort that makes it pay off and the ability to bounce back when you're down, as they did against Beaver Valley. What can one say about the netminding of Bert Brooker except he is marvellous to watch but one has to feel a little for young Darryl Lindgren who is Brooker's backup. The big Rossland youngster hasn't had much chance to play as Brooker's talents have been needed to

keep the Warriors within hailing distance of the rest.

Watching the games this season has been a pleasure for me, despite the fact the team has been struggling. New skills are beginning to become evident and the play of the kids who came up the hill from Trail — Demchuck, Cahoon, Pastro and Porcellato — has been pretty inspiring to the local youngsters like Danny Ferguson, Gordie Stanton, Terry Karenko and John Howes. While the returnees from former campaigns when they didn't have too many things to shout about — Kenny Davis, Bart Cammarata, Murray Walters, Peter McLellan, Scott Armour, Kevin McMaster, Dean Mayer and Tim McNulty — have done their best and you can see them getting better with every game.

The young fellow who came along with Brooker from Moose Jaw, Rod Diebert, has certainly held up his end on the defense and you can see his confidence growing with every game. I guess that's the key to the whole thing — confidence. It has to be in place before those skills which are needed can be acquired.

Back before Christmas I told manager Doug Buhr, that "if these kids stay together, we should have a good chance next season." Doug said, "Just don't count us out this year yet." He must have known something I didn't and it looks like he just may be not "Whistling Dixie".

Unfortunately for me I won't see the weekend games as I will be in Nakusp at the Legion spiel, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Five rinks from Branch no. 14 will make the trip. Our rink is composed of Carl Osing, Chuck Harkness, Bert Morrow and myself. George Beaudry has Ted Wiltshire, Phil Bateman and Mike Delich. Jim Schuck, Jim Bateman, Mike Kraftchick and Lee Flanders. I understand, they will try for the regular title.

Bill Leaman will have Tommy Clark, Bill Vickers and Freddy Munro while Angus Popplewell will be backed by Russ Broughton, Gil Besso and Cleve Cowland. Angus', George's and our rink will enter the seniors while the status of Bill's rink is unknown to me at this time, whether regular or seniors.

That's it for this week.