

SPORTS



Citizen photo by Brent Braaten

Quesnel Kangaroos' Barry Mueller, 11, looks for an opening while Gerald Gagnon trails the play in the Savage Cup final at the Coliseum. Penticton's Paul McLeans closes in on Mueller and goaltender Ken Kinney covers the post. Penticton won 7-3.

Penticton takes Savage Cup

by ED MILLS
Citizen Staff

HOCKEY

Sometimes, heart isn't enough. All the desire in the world couldn't win the Quesnel Kangaroos the Savage Cup.

It did prove enough to give the Roos two straight victories over the Prince George Lumber Kings at the four-team tournament.

And it did get them into the third period of the Cup final Saturday night.

But it just wasn't enough to take the Cup from the Penticton Silver Bullets and their team dotted with ex-professionals.

The Silver Bullets won the provincial senior hockey championship with a 7-3 victory over the Kangaroos in front of about 1,500 people at the Coliseum.

They did it on the backs of former New York Islander Tim Kerr, former NHLer Tim Lenardon, team captain Greg Cyr, who just returned from pro hockey in Europe, and goaltender Ken Kinney, who's been part of a half-dozen Savage Cup winners.

"You can hear the cheering in there," said Cyr, pointing to his club's dressing room. "I think anytime you have guys who've played competitive hockey, anytime you win a championship, it means something. If it didn't mean anything we wouldn't have played as hard as we did."

"Those guys are just as happy as the guys who haven't played in the NHL or professional anywhere."

Cyr led the tournament in scoring with four goals and 13 points,

including two goals and assist in the final, and was named the Savage Cup's most valuable player.

Like many of the players on the Bullets and from other teams, Cyr was recruited for this tournament.

"We had a lot of offensive talent so I don't think it took a whole lot to bring us together," said Cyr, who coached the Bellingham Icehawks in the B.C. Junior Hockey League last year. "We've only played three or four games with everybody together, but I think when you have that kind of talent, it makes it awfully easy for the rest of the team."

The Roos kept it close for 2 1/2 periods, holding it at 3-3 to the midway mark of the third.

But Shane Green's goal at 10:23 of the final frame, on a nice set up from Kerr, opened the flood gates and the Silver Bullets poured in the goals.

Rob Richichi scored twice and set up two more, while Jay Glass had two goals and an assist. Kerr finished with three assists and Lenardon had one goal in his first game of the tournament.

Kinney broke the Roos' heart with save after save, making 49 stops as the Roos outshot the Bullets 52-44.

Gerald Gagnon had a goal and an assist for the Roos, who failed to recapture the Cup they last won in 1981.

"We thought we threw together a pretty good team for the tourna-

ment," said Barry Mueller, who also scored once and was named game MVP for the Kangaroos.

"We were playing better every game, but I think five games in five nights probably hurt us because they had a day's rest."

"We played our best, we showed a lot of heart, we just came up short."

Penticton, the only undefeated team in the six-day event, got a bye into the final with three round-robin victories, while the Roos had to beat the Lumber Kings in Friday's semifinal.

Roos co-coach Matt Thomas said he doesn't hold anything against the Bullets for stacking their team with ex-pros for this tournament.

"They're (the ex-pros) all done doing whatever they're going to do and there's no reason for them to stop hockey," said Thomas. "If a

couple of professionals came my way I'd sure take them. It sure helped them today."

The Bullets, who play in the Monashee Senior Hockey League, advance to Western Canadian Championship against the winner of a series between Alberta teams from Stony Plain and Innisfail.

The winner of that series goes to the Allan Cup national championship.

"We're a pretty strong team and if we play as well as we can we're going to win," said Silver Bullets co-coach Shaun Cyr.

Should they make it to the national final, it would be the first time a Penticton team has been there since they won it in 1954. That team won the world championship the next season.

The Lumber Kings' Al Loring was named top goaltender at the tournament.

Ex-NHLer target at Cup

by ED MILLS
Citizen Staff

HOCKEY

Alan Kerr may as well have painted a target on the back of his jersey at the Savage Cup.

With all the cheap shots aimed his way from opposing players at the four-team senior hockey provincial championship, fans might have thought there actually was a target hidden somewhere underneath his jersey.

Kerr knew he'd be taking a lot of flak as the name player in the Cup — the ringer with the rugged reputation fresh from the trenches in the National Hockey League.

He knew when he signed on to play with the Penticton Silver Bullets in the Cup, there would be some players who would want him to prove himself. Others would challenge him just to say they danced with an ex-NHLer.

And that's exactly what happened all through the five-day tournament, right up to the last minute of the Cup final when a Quesnel Kangaroos' player decided to take on Kerr.

"I've been in lots of fights in the NHL, so I guess that makes me fair game for some guys," said the 29-year-old from Hazelton who now lives in Kelowna.

In the final-game encounter, Kerr didn't even wait for the puck to drop — he had his gloves half-way off on the way to the faceoff circle as if to say: "why even pretend we're going to play hockey?"

"Yeah, I've played enough hockey, I knew it was going to happen," he said outside the Silver Bullets' dressing room as his teammates accepted the championship trophy out on the ice. "Rather than get hit from behind or something, you just

see the guy, face off with him and let's get her going."

As it turned out, Kerr's challenger bit off more than he could chew, as evidenced by the bleeding cut on Kerr's hand and the lump under his combatant's eye.

"Tonight it got a bit carried away, it's OK during the game if you're trying to accomplish something, but at the end of the game it doesn't accomplish anything," he said. "It was poor sportsman-

ship."

The Savage Cup was Kerr's first kick at senior hockey following a nine-year pro career that ended last season when he retired after the Winnipeg Jets bought out his contract.

"Overall, it wasn't bad," he said of the calibre of play in senior hockey. "You get a few guys, you know, but it happens everywhere."

Kerr wasn't an angel by any means in the five-day tournament. He wasn't one to shy away from the rough going and he wasn't averse to applying a cheap shot or two in the heat of the game.

But old habits are hard to break and he picked up his in the NHL, where he was never under 100 minutes in penalties in any of his nine seasons.

His best NHL season was 1987-88 when he scored 24 goals, added 34 assists and picked up 198 minutes in penalties with the New York Islanders.

Kerr, who is being paid by the Bullets for his services, will also play for the team in the Western Canadian championship set for later this month.



Citizen photo by Brent Braaten

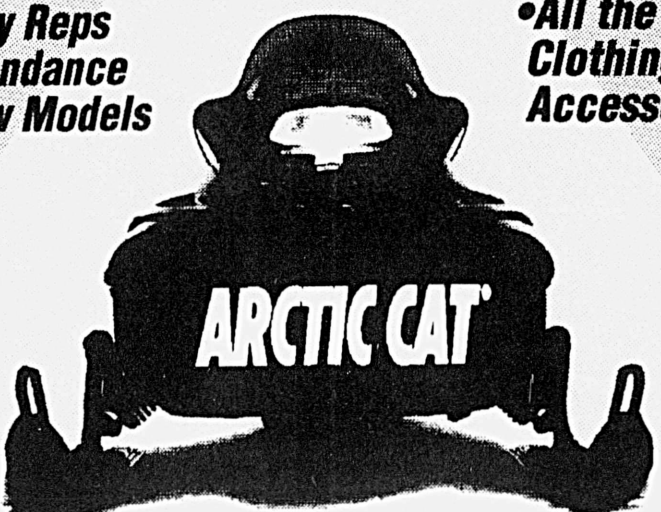
Swimmer Greg Blackburn holds up the Prince George Kinsmen's male athlete of the year award Saturday night. Debbie Ward, who's a member of the Canadian raquetball team, won the women's award. Curlers Patti Thompson, Laurie Pratt, Kim Winkel and Tracey Martin, who finished third at the junior nationals last year, won the team award.

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