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HOCKEY

Spruce Kings almost ready to roll

Citizen staff

The Prince George Spruce Kings 1998 training camp opens Monday afternoon (4:30 p.m.) at the Coliseum.

See Monday's sports section for a full preview as Citizen B.C. Hockey League writer Brian Drewry checks out who's new and who's coming back to help the Kings in their trek for a Royal Bank Cup championship.

BOWLING

Bowling season opens Sept. 12

Citizen staff

Fifth Avenue Bowling Centre is now accepting registration for its fall/winter leagues.

The season officially opens Saturday, Sept. 12 and 10 different leagues for kids, adults and seniors are being offered.

Mixed leagues go Sunday to Friday at 6:45 p.m. Ladies nights are Monday and Wednesday nights at 7 p.m.

The men's league runs Wednesdays at 8 p.m., while Saturdays are reserved for the three-18-year-olds from 10 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Seniors will bowl Sundays at 6 p.m. and Tuesdays and Thursdays at 1 p.m.

The 200-plus hotshots meet Thursdays at 9 p.m. and money leagues meet Tuesdays and Fridays at 7 and 8 p.m. For more information call 564-6434.

HOCKEY

Flames sign Roche

CALGARY (CP) — Left-winger Dave Roche has signed with the Calgary Flames, the NHL club announced Friday.

The former Pittsburgh Penguins player spent last winter in the AHL at Syracuse, N.Y., scoring 12 goals and assisting on 20. The six-foot-four, 235-pound forward also amassed 307 minutes in penalties.

Terms were not disclosed.

BASEBALL

\$250,000 for 62nd home-run ball

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The fan who catches the baseball that breaks Roger Maris's home run record will get \$250,000 from a television shopping network — unless there's a fight over it.

"We are aware that there could be vigorous pursuit of the ball, but our company will not make the award if a fan obtains the ball through violent behavior," Kent Lillie, president and chief executive officer of the Shop at Home network, said Friday.

He said the company will use the ball for unspecified "business purposes," then donate it to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N.Y.

"That's where it belongs — where fans can see it for generations to come," he said in a written statement.

The reward is 50 times the amount paid to Sal Durante, a 19-year-old from Brooklyn who caught the ball Maris hit in 1961 to break Babe Ruth's record of 60 home runs in one season, Lillie said.

SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL

CFL

Montreal 40 Calgary 32

BASEBALL

American League

Toronto 7 Minnesota 6
Texas 6-7 Chicago White Sox (5-8)
Anaheim 7 Boston 6
Tampa Bay 4 Detroit 3
Oakland 14 Cleveland 6 (10 inn.)
Kansas City 6 Baltimore 5
NY Yankees 10 Seattle 3

National League

San Diego 12 Montreal 8
Houston 2 Pittsburgh 0
St. Louis 5 Atlanta 4 (11 inn.)
Chicago Cubs 10 Colorado 5
Arizona 6 Milwaukee 3
NY Mets 5 Los Angeles 4
Philadelphia 4 San Francisco 3

Croatia gets Rec Cup berth

by **TED CLARKE**
Citizen staff

If there were any doubts P.G. Croatia is the best team in the North Cariboo Senior Soccer League, they were left on the field Friday at Exhibition Park.

The guys that wear the blue jerseys for Honda North/Citizen certainly weren't arguing, having absorbed a 3-1 loss to Croatia in the final of the Northern Region Rec Cup qualifier.

Croatia used a smothering first-half defence to put them in position to take a 2-0 first-half lead and hung on to weather Honda/Citizen's storm in the second half to advance to the 1999 Rec Cup tournament, to be held in Prince George next June.

Ante Cirko got the call at sweeper to replace the suspended Jeremy Thomas and Croatia seemed to rally around him, especially in the first half when they held Honda without a legitimate shot on net.

"We were missing key players like Jeremy and Dennis (Rukavina) and we really came through and played a great game," said Cirko, who normally plays midfield.

"They had us on our heels most of the second half but we ended up keeping it out of the net."

Peter Tsoutsouras opened the scoring for Croatia at the 28-minute mark when he lobbed a high chip shot from about 25 metres out that carried into the net beyond the reach of Honda goalie Jeff Rakochy.

With about four minutes to play in the half, Johanne Lemoine proved the concussion he sustained this past week at the BCHL's Burnaby Bulldogs' training camp was no detriment on the soccer field. Lemoine threaded a nifty pass up the middle to Tom Brkich, who con-

tinued in unmolested and scored to make it 2-0.

"They beat us to every ball and they deserved to be up 2-0," said Honda coach Iain Flannagan.

"They're a great team and their defensive team play won it for them. The first half, the only option we had was the long ball and they shut us right down."

It was a different story in the second half as Honda's playmakers got the handle on their ball control and began making the right decisions passing. As a result, the breaks started coming Honda's way.

Graham West was finally rewarded when he got his chest on Sonny Pawar's long feed up the middle. As West broke through the crease in front of Croatia goalie Ivan Brkich, the ball bounced off West's body again and rolled into the open net.

Honda dominated the play but couldn't find the net whenever they had a solid chance.

Tom Brkich capped the scoring when he found an empty net in the dying seconds of the game. Ivan Brkich's high goal kick bounced off the back of a Croatia player and came free to Tom with Rakochy well out of his crease trying to push the ball ahead.

The teams played even for the first 10 minutes. Croatia coach said it took his team a few minutes to forget its 11-2-2 record this season and the fact they are defending league champions and just get down to business on the field.

"We were a bit nervous because we were expected to win," Vukovic said. "We're way ahead of everybody else and the expectations are from us to do



Citizen photo by Dave Milne

Midfielders Tom Brkich of Croatia, left, and Tavis Bowie of Honda North-Citizen battle for the ball during the northern region Rec Cup final Friday. Croatia clipped Honda-Citizen 3-1.

it so the guys put extra pressure on themselves."

Croatia finished as runners-up in last year's Rec Cup qualifier. There's

still a chance Honda will qualify for the tournament if one of the other zone winners decides not to make the trip north.

Cats ready to test preseason waters

by **TED CLARKE**
Citizen staff

The dog days of August are still here but it'll feel like winter Sunday at ice level at the Riverside Coliseum in Kamloops.

That's where the Prince George Cougars will meet the Kamloops Blazers to open the Western Hockey League exhibition season for both teams.

As many as eight veterans could see the ice Sunday but Dempsey says the purpose of the game is mostly to give Cougars' staff a look at the rookies in action.

"For sure the teams you'll see Sunday will be a lot different from the ones you'll see (at the season-opener in Kamloops) on the 25th of September, Dempsey said.

"Exhibitions are for evaluating the players you have on hand and maybe what you have to do to fill some holes. Every rookie we have in camp will be playing." Dempsey has had a full week to watch the battles

going on in camp for open positions and is satisfied with the overall progress of his players.

"The veterans have really come back in good shape and have worked hard at trying to solidify their positions.

"On the other hand, the younger players have come in with a real hungry attitude and have been playing hard to try to make the team."

On defence, 16-year-old Smithers native Dan Hamhuis looked impressive and has a legitimate shot at making the team.

"We all knew he would be a good player but none of us thought he'd be this far along in his development," Dempsey added.

Dempsey is also high on the play of Tim Wedderburn, a 17-year-old who played last year for Olds in the Alberta Junior Hockey League.

Forwards Jonathan Parker, Travis Eagles, and Joseph Mrena all appear good bets to make the Cats' final roster.

Ryan Driedger, a rookie from Oakville, Man. who played midget in Portage la Prairie last season, has done what was expected for Dempsey to put him into the race for the No. 2 goaltending spot behind incumbent starter Scott Myers. Dempsey also likes what he's seen from last year's backup, Kevin Swanson.

"Scotty's confidence is really up after the world junior camp and Kevin has played very well also. He knows what's at stake and has accepted the challenge."

Swanson will start Sunday and Driedger will play the second half. After that, Dempsey plans to give his goalies full games in the preseason to show what they can do for the team.

On the injury front, Cougar forward Tyler Brough is on the shelf resting an injured shoulder and right wingers Mike Dewar and Mike Olynyk are both recovering from sprained ankles sustained in Monday's intrasquad game.

East L.A. bout on tap for P.G.'s Price

by **TED CLARKE**
Citizen staff

Trent Price is in for the fight of his life.

And it will all take place in East L.A., to boot.

But this ain't no street fight. It's the Blue and Gold tournament and the 19-year-old Panther Boxing Academy welterweight can't wait to step into the ring.

"It's the second-largest tournament in North America," Price said. "I hear on average there's about 35 or 40 guys in each weight category and I'm totally pumped."

The last Prince George boxer to go through the Blue and Gold was Alan Bayne, who went on to fight in the 1994 Commonwealth Games.

Price spent the past week preparing for the tournament at a camp at the national training centre in Lodgepole, Alta.

"They trained us really hard down here and just beat us into shape and I'm just in killer condition right now," said Price, a veteran of 23 amateur bouts who last fought April 11 when he lost to Gary Kopus of Regina at the Commonwealth Games trails.

"It's been awhile since my last fight. I'm a little bit nervous again but it will probably keep me on my toes. I'm getting my old skills back and I'm confident I'll do the best I can do. I might not win it this time but I'm not focusing on winning, I just want to go down there and get lots of experience."

The 147-pound, six-foot Price spent the first few days of the camp sparring heavyweights and had the black eyes to prove it. Members of the Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba provincial teams all showed up at the camp to raise the calibre of Price's daily practice opponents.

The daily format of running, speed bag work, ring training and sparring proved draining but worthwhile to Price.

The Blue and Gold runs Sept. 3-7. Price knows to expect to see the old style of boxing with three, three-minute rounds and conventional scoring.

"I've heard you run into real tough customers down there but it's not nothing to be afraid of. Even if I make it to the second or third round I'd be happy."

After 23 fights, Price says he has no thoughts of giving up his amateur status to turn pro if an offer came his way.

"Everything I do now is all part of a plan to make it to the 2000 Olympics," he said. "My whole focus is the Olympics and it always has been. The Blue and Gold, win or lose, it won't make or break me. It's just an experience-builder."

Doug Bolianatz, a national team coach, is taking three Alberta fighters and Price to Los Angeles. He said it's important for his fighters not to feel inferior just because they'll be facing fighters from all over the U.S. which has 10 times the population of Canada.

"Just because we're crossing the line and going into the U.S. doesn't make any difference — those kids put their pants on the same way and out guys have to realize that," Bolianatz said.

Bolianatz like Price's attitude and work ethic and thinks he could give his first American opponent a rough ride.

"He trains hard and he's got good skills and good potential," Bolianatz said. "He's the kind of guy you have to kick out of the gym. He's not here for a free ride, he's here to achieve a goal and that's the kind of guy you want."

Nohra heads back to B.C.

HAMILTON (CP) — The Hamilton Tiger-Cats traded rookie running back Mark Nohra, the '97 Heisman Trophy winner who guided the UBC Thunderbirds to last year's Vanier Cup title, to the B.C. Lions on Friday for slotback Trevor Shaw.

Nohra, was a fourth-round pick of the Ticats in 1997, but the Toronto native decided to return to school last year. Then Nohra signed as a free agent with the NFL's Buffalo Bills, but was released last week.

Shaw, a Hamilton native, has played in four games this season with B.C., including Thursday night's 18-8 loss to the Ticats at Ivor Wynne Stadium.

The six-foot-three, 215-pound receiver is in his fourth CFL campaign and was the Lions first-round pick in the 1994 Canadian College Draft from Weber State University.



Friesz leads Seahawks past 49ers

SEATTLE (AP) — John Friesz, the forgotten man in the Seattle Seahawks' exhibition season, made sure coach Dennis Erickson remembered who he was.

Friesz passed two yards to rookie Bobby Shaw for a touchdown with 25 seconds left as the Seahawks came back to beat the San Francisco 49ers 21-20 Friday night.

Todd Peterson kicked the extra point to give the Seahawks a 4-1 record for the preseason. San Francisco ended up at 2-3.

Friesz, overshadowed by young quarterback Jon Kitna in training camp, drove the Seahawks 89 yards in 10 plays for their winning touchdown. He completed seven of nine passes in the march that took 1:29.

Friesz set up the winning TD with a 25-yarder to Ronnie Harris, who was pushed out of bounds

at the 2.

Seattle lost to the 49ers 24-21 in Vancouver three weeks ago.

Wade Richey, a rookie from LSU who was picked up on waivers from the Seahawks this week, kicked two field goals for the 49ers in the second half, but was way short on a 63-yard try as time ran out.

With 1:02 left in the third quarter, Richey booted a 45-yard field goal to put the 49ers in front 17-14. He then kicked a 53-yarder with 5:35 on the clock to give San Francisco a 20-14 lead.

Ironically, Richey was in a Seattle uniform the last time the teams played in Vancouver when John Becksvoort won the game for San Francisco with a 31-yard field goal with two seconds left. The 49ers cut Becksvoort to sign Richey.

WHL to follow NHL's lead on obstruction

CALGARY (CP) — The Western Hockey League said Friday that strict enforcement of obstruction penalties will begin in its exhibition season.

The league will use the same guidelines the NHL adopted following the 1998 Olympics in Nagano, Japan.

Obstruction penalties will be called for the following infractions: holding, holding the opponent's stick, hooking, interference and tripping. Referees will focus on fouls in the neutral zone. The WHL hopes this will open up the play and prevent clutch and grab tactics.

"All 18 WHL teams were unanimously in support of adopting the NHL obstruction standards at our Annual Meeting this past summer," said Richard Doerksen, the WHL's vice-president. "The WHL will be using the exact same standards in our games. We are positive that this will be a major step for our League."