

Local sports

TODAY
HOCKEY: WHL — Prince George Cougars vs. Kelowna Rockets, 7 p.m., CN Centre. BCHL — Prince George Spruce Kings vs. Salmon Arm Silverbacks, 7 p.m., Coliseum.

SWIMMING: Prince George Barracudas Medical Northern Springs short course meet resumes at 9:40 a.m. , P.G. Aquatic Centre.

VOLLEYBALL: Northern Central double-A girls and boys zone championships resume at College Heights secondary school.

SUNDAY
HOCKEY: BCHL — Prince George Spruce Kings vs. Salmon Arm Silverbacks, 3 p.m., Coliseum.

SWIMMING: Prince George Barracudas Medical Northern Springs short course meet resumes at 9:10 a.m. , P.G. Aquatic Centre.

On the tube

TODAY
AUTO RACING: NASCAR Nationwide Ford 300 qualifying, 10 a.m., and 5 p.m., Speed (Cable 41).

FIGURE SKATING: ISU Grand Prix Trophée Eric Bombard Cashemire, men's and pairs free programs, 2 p.m., CBC French (Cable 5).

FOOTBALL: NCAA U.S. College -- Kentucky at Georgia, 9 a.m., TBS (Cable 33); Mississippi State at Arkansas, 12:30 p.m., CBS (Cable 7); Boston College at Notre Dame, 1 p.m., NBC (Cable 6); Teams TBA, 5 p.m., ABC (Cable 8).

SOCCER: English Premier League — Sunderland vs. Fulham, 6:30 a.m., Swansea City vs. Manchester United, 9 a.m., Everton vs. Wolverhampton, 8 p.m. (taped), all on Sportsnet (Cable 23). Italian Serie A — Fiorentina vs. AC Milan, 11:30 a.m., The Score (Cable 45).

SUNDAY
FIGURE SKATING: ISU Grand Prix Trophée Eric Bombard Cashemire, women's and dance free programs, 2 p.m., CBC French (Cable 5).

FOOTBALL: CFL playoffs — East final: Hamilton Tiger-Cats at Winnipeg Blue Bombers, 10:30 a.m.; West final: Edmonton Eskimos at B.C. Lions, 1:30 p.m., both on TSN (Cable 22). NFL — Oakland Raiders at Minnesota Vikings, 10 a.m., CBS (Cable 7); Teams TBA, 10 a.m., CTV (Cable 4); San Diego Chargers at Chicago Bears, 1 p.m., CKPG (Cable 3); Teams TBA, 1 p.m., Sportsnet (Cable 23); Philadelphia Eagles at New York Giants, 5:15 p.m., NBC (Cable 6) and TSN (Cable 22).

SOCCER: Italian Serie A — Juventus vs. Palermo, 6 a.m., The Score (Cable 45). English Premier League Chelsea vs. Liverpool, 11 p.m. (taped), Sportsnet (Cable 23).

Cougars fall to Rockets

Sheri LAMB Citizen staff
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It was a gutsy effort but the Prince George Cougars came up short in the first half of a weekend doubleheader Friday, falling 3-2 to the Kelowna Rockets.

The loss extended the Cougars' (6-14-0-2) losing streak to three games as their WHL Western Conference rivals improved to 7-11-2-1 this season. It was former Cariboo Cougar Brett Bulmer's first visit to CN Centre since returning to the Rockets from the NHL's Minnesota Wild and many of the 1,875 fans at the game cheered every time he touched the puck.

Greg Fraser pulled the Cougars to within a goal when he converted a Charles Inglis pass into his sixth goal of the season 46 seconds into the final period.

But it was as close as the Cougars would get, unable to capitalize on their six power plays – four of which were in the final period.

The lack of power with the man advantage stopped the Cougars' streak of scoring a power-play goal at four games. It was likely one of the best games of the season by Inglis who had a racked up

his fifth goal and an assist.

The Rockets had a 3-1 lead after 20 minutes on goals by Carter Rigby, Cody Chickie and a power-play goal from defenceman Madison Bowie. Rigby gave the visitors a 1-0 advantage early in the period when he poked a rebound past Cougars' goalie Drew Owsley. Inglis tied the game at 1-1 midway through the frame, finishing off a nice three-way passing play with Cody Carlson and Daniel Gibb.

But two late goals put the Rockets back on top.

Prince George was caught on a line change when Bulmer fed a perfect pass to Chickie, who had no trouble redirecting it past Owsley for a 2-1 lead. The assist was the 98th point of Bulmer's NHL career. The Rockets went up 3-1 on Bowie's blast from the point.

The Cougars outshot the Rockets 9-7 in the second period with eight of the shots for the home side coming in the final five minutes when both teams showed more intensity then they did in the first 15.

CAT SCRATCHES: After struggling to live up to the Cougars' expectations this season centre Tayler Thompson was released by



Prince George Cougar Charles Inglis and Kelowna Rocket Tyrell Goulbourne race for the puck in the third period.

the team this week. In 16 games this season the 18 year old had two goals and four points. Thompson's release leaves 24 players on the roster, including two goalies, 13 forwards and nine defencemen. Cougars' captain Jesse Fors-

berg missed the game with an upper-body injury, while Michael Mychreest and Linden Springer and forward Brock Hirsche also sat out. The Cougars and Rockets meet again tonight at 7 p.m. at CN Centre.

Kings look to conquer third straight game

Sheri LAMB Citizen staff

When the Prince George Spruce Kings host the Salmon Arm Silverbacks tonight they'll put a two-game win streak on the line.

The Spruce Kings beat their BCHL Interior Conference rival Merritt Centennials 3-2 in overtime Thursday to move above .500 with a 9-8-1-2 record, pulling within two points of the Chilliwack Chiefs (11-6-0-1) for fourth in the conference.

Dave Dupas, Kings' coach, said his team did a good job in beating the Centennials at their own "typical" style game.

"They play a very simple game, pressuring the puck real well and getting pucks in deep and get lots of shots," said Dupas. "As soon as they get over the blueline they took a shot and hope there's a rebound and crash in there for it. Our defence did a good job clearing pucks and Kirk [Thompson] did a good job making the initial saves. It kept us in the game long enough to score that one in overtime."

The reunited line of Michael Colantone between Paul De Jersey and Jujhar Khaira teamed up on the tying goal in the second period, with Khaira – fresh from his stint at the World Junior A Challenge where he won gold with Canada West – finishing the play.

"They probably got more inspiration just seeing him back in the lineup," said Dupas about Khaira.

"It was good for the kids to see that they're not that far away from an elite level."

Stefan Bazar tied the game at 1-1 for the Kings after Merritt led after 20 minutes on a goal by Brent Fletcher. Chad Brears also scored for the Centennials.

Colantone picked up his second assist of the game when he fed the puck to Gerry Fitzgerald in the second overtime period.

Gerry and his brothers Myles and Leo have found the back of the net a lot more often lately.

"They can finish, but they try to get too fancy a lot of the times they want the highlight reel goals," said Dupas.

"I think they just started to simplify their game. If they can continue a north and south type of a game and simplify it a little bit, I think they'll keep on scoring."

Silverbacks first visit

This weekend will be Salmon Arm's first trip to The Coliseum where they'll play a pair of games – tonight at 7 p.m. and Sunday at 3 p.m.

The Kings won the first meeting between the clubs this season 6-3, but Dupas said at the time the Silverbacks (6-9-0-5) were having a few goaltending issues and the score wasn't indicative of how close the game was.

"They have some very good players on that team and they're very dangerous offensively, so



Merritt Centennials goalie Tyler Steel keeps his eye on the puck as Prince George Spruce Kings forward Jeff Earnest keeps waits for an opportunity in Merritt on Thursday.

we're expecting a lot harder opponent here this weekend," said Dupas.

Kings' health

Dupas said Thursday was the first time this season the Kings were healthy enough to play without an affiliated player in the lineup. The only player left on the Kings' injury list is forward Sean Landrey who will be out at least two more weeks with a knee injury.

Defenceman Cody Bardock played in his second game of the season Thursday, while Jeff Earnest made his return to the Kings' lineup after suffering a broken jaw in the second game of the season.

Meanwhile, defenceman Jared Crossan is done after a second surgery to repair an MCL tear in his knee. Crossan missed the second half of the major midget Cariboo Cougars season last spring after tearing his MCL.

During the Kings first exhibition game this season the 18 year old was caught in a rut on the ice, re-injuring his MCL.



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