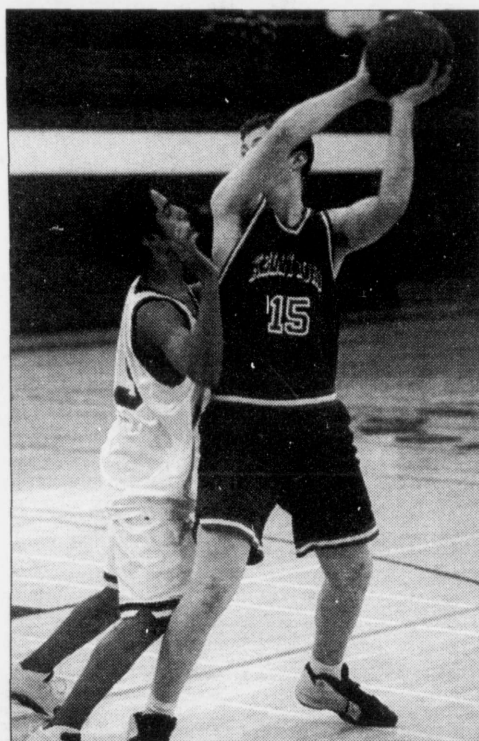


Defence/Stifles



The D.P. Todd Trojans, white uniforms, shut down Kelly Road en route to winning their own tournament on the weekend. JOHN MCKENZIE/FREE PRESS

Pacific Western helping out B.C. rugby players

Pacific Western Brewing is helping out rugby in British Columbia.

The Prince George-based brewery, along with Victoria's Vancouver Island Brewery, have teamed up to support the B.C. Rugby Union with a \$20,000 scholarship and three draft beers for the use of the Union and its fans.

Three drafts will be called Scrum Dark, Propkick Pale Ale and Lineout Lager.

The sponsorship will help to provide needed equipment and funds for international competition. It will also enable the Union to provide better technical services to teams, increasing the quality of rugby in BC.

"Rugby is an important sport in B.C., but it is seriously under-funded," says Pacific Western Brewing's general manager Harry Mayor. "As one of the few remaining B.C.-owned breweries, we are pleased to be able to assist B.C.-based sports."

Rugby in Canada is predominantly an amateur sport that is becoming professional at the top levels. Canada is considered to have one of the top 10 teams in the world. In 1995, BC supplied 80 percent of the players for Canada's World Cup team.

Kings take show on road

Seven wins in a row bring PG in sight of first place

The Prince George Spruce Kings won't see the cozy confines of the Coliseum for a quite while.

Riding a seven game win streak, the Kings will be riding the bus and seeing most of B.C. for the rest of the month.

This weekend the team hits Merritt, Chilliwack and South Surrey. The following weekend they visit Penticton and Vernon.

"We're playing pretty consistent right now," says Kings head coach Glen Watson. "And our road record is pretty good, we're one game above .500."

The Kings are racking up wins against quality teams — two each against Vernon and Penticton. Watson attributes the surge to an increasing confidence and team chemistry.

"They get along really well and they're committed to what they need to do to win," says Watson.

The team suffered through some injuries and Watson says that helped bring up the confidence of younger players, who needed to step up their play.



Prince George's Bill Collins has plenty of company down in front of the Viper net during Saturday's overtime win. JOHN MCKENZIE/FREE PRESS

"Guys like Fisher and Henderson have really stepped up their play," says Watson. "And having Steve Wiljeto has really helped improve confidence."

But the one thing Watson would like to work on is ending the slow start to periods — like the third period against Vernon. "We just kind of sat back and they got a couple

of goals and then we wake up. It's just a mental thing we need to work on."

As the team prepares to become road warriors, Watson is looking forward to the test.

B.C. Best Ever coaches picked

Forty-six of the top young hockey players in the north will be coming to Prince George for the Team North selection at the start of April.

That team will then travel to Osoyoos at the end of April to compete in the Best Ever Under 17 B.C. Cup.

From that team, 10 players will be picked to play on Team Pacific.

Coaching the team will be Dave Smith. His assistant coach will be Jason Tansem.

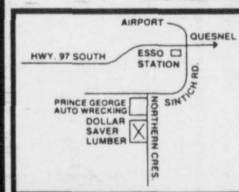
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