

# The Bulls were born in 1981

## From Junior "B" to Tier II to Major Junior — up the hockey ladder



Dan Quinn, a star with the Bulls in their early days, now plays for the NHL Los Angeles Kings.

By Paul Svoboda and Ady Vos  
The Intelligencer

Looking for a big day in Belleville hockey history? How about Feb. 2, 1981.

On that day majority owner Dr. Robert L. Vaughan and some fellow investors plunked about \$600,000 on the Ontario Hockey League's table and came away with an expansion franchise in what is arguably the best shinny circuit in Canada outside of the NHL.

After successful stints in Junior "B" and Tier II Junior "A" hockey, Vaughan and his supporters believed Major Junior hockey was the next logical step for Belleville. And they were right.

Since then, Belleville hockey fans have developed a special love affair with their Major "A" Bulls. And, like all love affairs, the relationship hasn't been without its bumpy moments.

For instance, local fans still harken back to the 1985-86 season when the Bulls' then five-year old franchise came of age by advancing to the OHL championship final against the Guelph (now Owen Sound) Platers. Bulls lost a heartbreaking six-game series and have yet to reach those dizzying heights since.

Sure, there have been some strong seasons in the interim. An 83-point, third-place finish (Leyden Division) in 1991 the best among them.

Last season, the club finished fourth in the Leyden and lost out in the second round of playoffs to the eventual league champion North Bay Centennials. This season, like all new campaigns at this stage of the game, the sky is the limit.

As the 1994-95 Bulls head into the club's 14th OHL season, here's a brief glimpse at some of the finest figures in franchise history:

Dave MacLean holds the best individual marks for most points (154), goals (64) and assists (90) in one season. MacLean piled up those numbers in the 1984-85 season.

MacLean was the OHL nominee for Canadian Junior Player of the Year. Jason Lafreniere was honored with the same award the following season. Three years ago Darren McCarty was named Ontario Hockey League Player of the Year.

Goaltender Mike Bishop recorded the Bulls' best all-time goals-against average (GAA) with a sparkling 3.47 mark in the 1985-86 season.

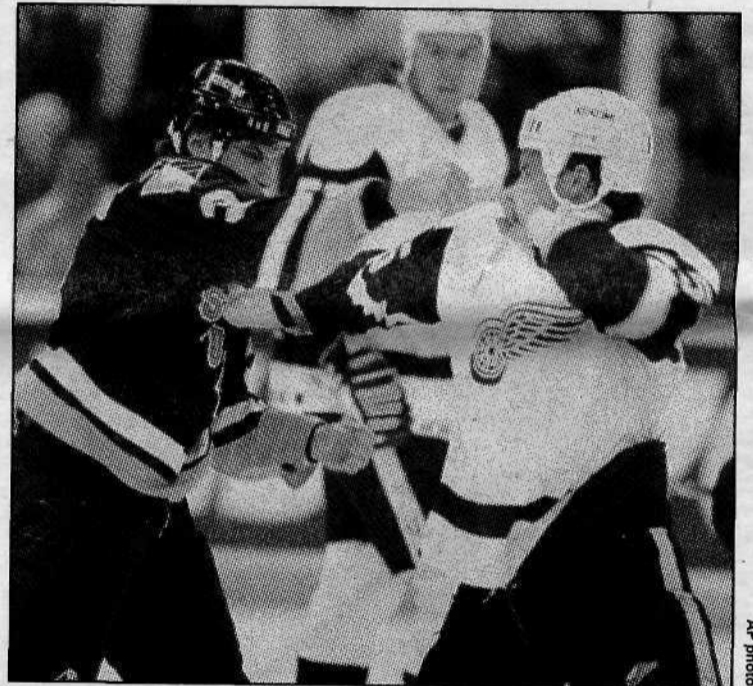
Team totals that still stand include the 84-point season of 1984-85 along with the most goals, 390. That's an average of

over five per game.

In the 1989-90 season, led by the 30-win goaltending of Jeff Fife, Belleville set a club record for fewest goals against (247).

Brent Gretzky, brother of NHL superstar and one-time Bulls co-owner Wayne Gretzky, holds the club record for most goals (five) in a game while the seven-helper effort of Dan Gratton stands in the assist department. Gratton, Dan Quinn and Jason Lafreniere share the club record for most points in a game with eight.

As in most sports, club records and benchmarks reflect the success of a hockey club and it's a good bet that players like Richard Park, Craig Mills and Kory Cooper will be gunning for some marks of their own this season.



AP photo  
Darren McCarty, right, led the Bulls, and OHL in goals with 55 three years ago. He now plays right wing for the Detroit Red Wings.

*MacLean, Lafreniere, Gratton, Gretzky, McCarty--big names from the past*

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