

Soon he was ready to leave the net.

"After a while I got so tired of these guys never scoring goals I went out and started scoring goals myself."

It wasn't until three years later Gravelle played in an indoor rink for the first time. He was selected to play for the Ottawa Senator Juniors when he was 16. Within a year, Gravelle was scouted by the New York Rangers and invited to attend their 1944-'45 season training camp. Because he was underage, his dad signed the contract and was paid \$600. That money became the down-payment on the first house the Gravelle family ever owned.

"The NHL was not glorified like it is today. The only people making money were the owners. Some players made \$1,200-\$1,500 a year."

Gravelle was playing ball when his Dad told him the

good news.

"My dad came over all excited and he said, 'Hey, you've just been selected by the New York Rangers.'"

His baseball teammates congratulated Gravelle, but he was the least excited.

"I used to caddy for NHL hockey players and every one of them were heavy drinkers and I didn't like heavy drinkers. I wasn't impressed by them and I wasn't impressed by making a living at it. I wanted to be a machinist. In the back of my mind was still my schooling. Because I had done it on my own, I felt I was letting myself down.

Gravelle attended four NHL training camps, and improved continuously.

In the fall of 1947, a 19-year-old Gravelle was given the chance of a lifetime. He was invited by the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association to play for Team Canada in the 1948 Olympics. Then, Team Canada played under the banner of the Royal Canadian Air Force Flyers.

"They gave me a uniform to join the Air Force because I could score goals," Gravelle laughs.

Not only was he paid to play hockey, he finished his machinist training and competed in the 1948 Olympics in St. Moritz, Switzerland.

"If they had of known I got \$600 they probably never would have let me play in the Olympics."

The team toured Europe, and Gravelle tried to land dates with gold-medal figure skater Barbara Scott. Despite his dance-floor abilities — "Man, I could swing that jitterbug" — Scott's mother kept her daughter far from Gravelle's reach.

Finally, they were off to St. Moritz.

The Canucks came up with the gold and Gravelle has the memory of a lifetime: "...playing the Canada national anthem in St. Moritz when they were giving me the gold medal.

"Being the youngest on the podium, having the Czechs on one side and the Swedes on the other, I finally got choked up and tears started coming down from my eyes. I felt more like a Canadian than any time in my life."

Later, Gravelle turned down a career in the NHL to play senior calibre hockey. Eventually he moved permanently to Trenton, where he lives — and plays hockey — today.

Intell, Nov. 20/95 P.3