

Sports

Basketball



A Latecomer!

The roots of basketball are firmly embedded in Canada. In 1891 the game was invented by Dr. James Naismith, a Canadian who hailed from Almonte, Ontario.



Needing to create a new indoor sport for his physical education class at the YMCA training school in Springfield, Massachusetts, Naismith designed what we now call basketball. The original game involved 13 rules and a peach basket

hung ten feet above the floor. At least ten of the players who participated in the first-ever game were university students from Quebec.

In Cobourg, the sport was limited to the schools until 1962. There was one high school then, in two buildings under one principal. Facilities were limited to a new gymnasium at the East and two tiny ones at the West. **It was difficult for adults to pursue the game** once they had graduated or when they moved to Cobourg.

But in 1962, **teachers John Gradish and Dennis Clarke secured Principal Col. Gordon King's help** in freeing up a gym at the East for practice and play. Then they got an invitation from the thriving Bay of Quinte Basketball League. **All that was needed now were players** who would commit and referees who would be fair. Enough were soon found, and Cobourg's *Sol's Team* (sponsored by Sol Margles - the Men's Shop) was created.

Local newspaper sports writer extraordinaire, **Layton Dodge, created excitement with his stats and photos.** A second Cobourg team was soon added, *Kelly's AC* (Athletic Club).

Over time, the league grew to include Peterborough, Brighton, and sometimes Bowmanville and Picton. Meanwhile the two high schools, West and East, trained more players and young men could now continue to play the game after high school.

In 1971 and again in 1972, **Cobourg's Sol's Team won the Bay of Quinte Basketball League title!** It had taken 10 years! The two Cobourg teams, *Plaza* (former *Sol's Team*) and *Kelly's AC*, continued to play in the Quinte League until 1975. In that year, **Plaza won the OBA intermediate D title** in North Bay. All twelve players were graduates of the West High. This was the first and only time that a Cobourg team won an Ontario basketball title.

The Quinte League folded in 1975 and a new organization was founded - the Lakeshore Men's Basketball League (LMBL). There was now a large enough player base to have **6 to 8 teams playing double headers** in Cobourg and

Port Hope on Mondays and Wednesdays. The LMBL has now been operating for four decades.

As an added bonus, men who played in the LMBL were instrumental, as coaches and officials, in the organization of the children's league. **There are now more than 200 youngsters participating.**

Looking to the future of basketball in Cobourg, the main concerns are the lack of publicity and the growing costs. **To continue growing, the sport of basketball needs the support of our community.**



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