



Jock Tock

By John Bottomley

Atoms on verge of triumph

Acton's major atoms are on the verge of doing what only one Acton hockey team has ever managed before. With one more win against Milton they will become zone champions in their age group. Coincidentally, the last and only other team to take the trophy was the same age group, then called novice, exactly ten years ago. The atom series with our southern neighbors has generated a lot of interest among hockey fans in town. The Milton atoms were undefeated in Tri-County play, and the whole town seemed to figure they were shoo-ins for the title. Well, they figured without Acton. Many parents are seeing the matchup as almost a grudge series because they have listened to the Milton team being touted all season, and are, understandably, tired of the hoopla. A lot of people have claimed Acton is a one man team, dependent solely on the skill of Mike Hudson for their success. While he is undoubtedly their best player, he is not the only top-notch player on the team.

I suggested to Milton Champion editor Peter McCusker, who seemed to be blaming Sunday's result on the referees, that he should admit Acton has the better team. He replied "You mean you have the better player," echoing the common sentiment. I have never heard anybody contend that the Montreal Canadiens would be a bad hockey team without Guy Lafleur. That would be ridiculous. They are obviously loaded with talent. The same is true of the major atoms. Without strong players on either side of him and good defencemen backing him up, Hudson would not be able to do the things he does. Double team him, and Les Berry or Terry Danagher or Tony Van Dam or any one of the rest of the team will score on you.

Two areas

There are two areas in which Hudson excels. He is an excellent skater who outdistances defencemen and skates past checks, and he is a top notch stick handler. He can show you the puck and then pull it by you before you know where he is, and this was the thing about him that most frustrated the Milton defence, and their goalie. They just were not equipped to stop him. Nonetheless, all this skill is of no use unless you have somebody to give you the puck, and Hudson is surrounded by good players. The normal game plan may be "give the puck to Mike," but any one of the other boys on the ice is capable of scoring as well. He is not the only offensive weapon in the atoms' arsenal.

Defence

The Acton defence led by David Thomas is far superior to the Milton team's. The Milton players just don't have the skating ability, according to some local coaches. So it is not really surprising that Acton took Milton. Milton were not expecting to face such a strong team. Sunday's game was much closer, after they had learnt what to expect. The next could be closer still. Nobody should be counting them out yet.

In a way it is a shame that these two groups of ten and eleven year old boys are being put into the centre of such an inter-town controversy. Every time Acton did something right Saturday, there were loudly approving laughs from the Acton fans. I was being told by many people to "give it to them good" because "we're tired of hearing about how great the Milton team is."

Well, it is not the boys' fault what has been made of them. They're just kids playing hockey and winning. I'm sure the people approaching me would agree that we do not want to get the kids, we want to get the parents and townspeople who did all the bragging, but the way we are expected to do this is by making the most of the victory by Acton's ten year old boys' hockey team over Milton's ten year olds. This can only mean that I am supposed to belittle the team, and as I said, it is not their fault that people are bragging about them.

In effect, it is nice to see Milton get their come-uppance, but it is too bad that we are using ten year olds to do the job.

The shame of winning?

Last week I wrote something about the shame some people feel at losing. It seems this week that some might be feeling the shame of winning. Our novice rep team overcame a slow start on the season to become consolation league champs Saturday, yet no score sheet was submitted to the Free Press, and consequently I cannot make any sort of report about the game. I had it all planned to go on the front page this week, and now, the plan's kerflooey. I do know the game was close, and well played on both sides, but a complete report I am afraid I can't give you. Congratulations on the team's improvement over the season.

On the other hand, we still have some people who will not report losses. The minor peevees were in Ridgetown two weeks ago for a tourney and came up short. I got pictures from a Ridgetown photographer, but no report from the team. I am sure they are not the only team still playing, but I simply am not getting any game sheets in to report on.

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Second Section

Atoms one win from trophy, trounce Milton 6-0, 5-3 in finals

Acton major atoms surprised a confident Milton squad 6-0 Saturday and went on to prove the win was no fluke as they repeated with a 5-3 win Sunday in Milton to drive the Milton squad to the

edge of elimination from the O.M.H.A. zone championship finals. Third game of the best of five series is this Saturday in Milton, at 4 p.m. in the Thompson Road arena.

Milton showed up at the arena Saturday with a stuffed mascot and their own cheering section, both of which were very quiet by the end of the second period, when the atoms had taken a 5-0 lead on

the strength of four points from Mike Hudson. Hudson opened the scoring just 36 seconds into the game as he was right in position to connect on a rebound off a Les Berry shot. He scored

again at the three minute mark from directly in front of the net as he deftly pulled the puck left then fired right to beat the Milton netminder. Bruce Raine and Sandy Waites got assists on the goal.

Milton came out tough for the second game and according to manager Bob Raine, they "took Acton by surprise with their rough and tumble play. Only midway the second did Acton start playing its own game of passing the puck and hard checking."

Milton threatened with goals from Boudreau and Pollen, leaving the score at 4-3 with seven minutes to go but Hudson converted a pass from Waites to ice the win.



MAJOR ATOMS' star winger Mike Hudson outraced Milton defenceman in breakaway Saturday. Locals took 6-0 decision from highly touted Milton team.

Skating club involves more than just carnival

Two weekends from now the Acton Figure Skating Club will take to the ice for their annual skating extravaganza, the show which is for most people the culmination of the year's work by the young skaters.

The audience has a good reason for thinking this, for in one sense at least it is true. This year more than 200 skaters will participate, an increase of about 25 per cent from last year's number. The number of people working behind the scenes is also high, and the carnival is one of the

two biggest entertainment dates in an Acton year, along with the Fall Fair. This year's show promises to be as good as ever, and probably more colorful than it has ever been. The theme chosen for the production is "We wish you a Rainbow" and each of the numbers deals with a different color. One of the three pros who choreographed the show, Pat TeBochorst, said "It's coming along well. There are a lot of last minute things to work out."

There are less than two weeks of practice left to go, but there are 13 practice hours in each week to work with, meaning there is plenty of ice time to work on polishing the routines. Mrs. TeBochorst and the two other pros, Sally Leatherland and Francine Pawlowicz, could really be considered directors of Acton's own musical on skates. They all have the same duties, with skaters taking the place of actors and routines taking the place of dialogues and dramatic action.

This year's theme was developed by Sally Leatherland just after Christmas and agreed on collectively by the 18 member club executive. The show includes no guest star skaters in the program. The feeling among the organizers was that all participants of the club were stars within themselves, according to carnival chairman Simon Christensen.

Work on the show has been going on for four weeks, including not just practice for



DIANE BAGINSKI AND Cindy McGilloway do some work on a dance number for the competition side of the club's activities.



IT HAPPENS TO the best of them: Sharon Campbell found herself on the ice during practice for the carnival.

the show on the ice, but behind the scenes work on costumes and sets, most of it done by parents of the skaters in the club. It has reached a fever pitch now as ticket sales get underway.

The carnival is indeed the end result of thousands of hours of work, and audiences will agree that the hours are well spent. However, it is not the only important thing the Figure Skating Club does all year.

They are involved in competitions, both within the club and between clubs, and their main task is to improve their skaters. Competitions range from Toronto to Sarnia, and number six in all.

"The Acton Figure Skating Club is caught in the same pressure as other amateur sports have been exposed to with regards to meeting higher standards of performance within the amateur sport atmosphere," said Christensen. "All figure skating clubs who want to become a member of the CFSA must have qualified instructors. In this past year the AFSC met those standards set down" he added.

With the fitness boom that is being reported in Canada, figure skating is a likely sport to turn to for exercise or fun, or as a way to improve in other sports, notably hockey. The skating club runs a power skating clinic which has been very helpful for members of Acton's minor hockey teams.

Because good skating comes more naturally to them, they can concentrate more on their play. All this talk about improving skating brings us naturally back to the carnival, because whatever improvement a skater has made throughout the skating year will be apparent in the show, when Acton's budding stars have their chance to show off for their parents and the town.

SKATERS PRACTISE part of their routine for the skating carnival two weeks away.

