

The Acton Free Press

Sports & Recreation

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 1978

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12 teams in expanded Junior "B" loop

The OHA Central Junior "B" League has expanded to 12 teams for the 1978-79 hockey season, in spite of a unanimous protest by league reps last summer that Orillia, Barrie, Oak Ridges and Thornhill should not be allowed into the league.

The four new teams were left without a group to play in when Owen Sound, the fifth team in last year's Mid-Ontario League, was transferred to the Midwestern League. The new season opens Tuesday, September 25, with Georgetown playing at Oak Ridges. Teams will play a 44 game schedule!

This week, Dills Publishing newspapers have pooled their efforts to present a preview of each of the 12 teams. Sports editors combining on the annual preseason look at Junior "B" clubs are Denis Gibbons of The Independent, Georgetown, Peter McCusker of The Milton Canadian Champion and Robin Inoscoe of The Acton Free Press.

Barrie Colts

Group champions of the now-defunct Mid-Ontario League, Barrie Colts have lost nine players to overage and college teams, but expect to be just as strong as they were last season, nevertheless. Colts finished second in regular season play, won the group title, but were shipped four straight in the OHA quarter-finals by the eventual champs, Stratford.

Key losses are last year's team scoring leader, Eric Cummings, who will play at the University of Guelph and Brad McDonald, a brilliant student, who has been admitted to Waterloo's Laurier University at the age of 17. First string goalie, Bob Toffan, went overage and will play at Lake Superior State College in Michigan, but Colts have their second and third string netminders back again.

Colts will rely heavily on the experience of former Niagara Falls Flyer, Rick Bowman, and Eric Guest, who is back in Barrie after attending the training camp of the Major Junior "A" Brantford Alexanders. Bowman left the Flyers to come to Barrie halfway through last season.

The Barrie club is coached by Howie Forbes, a former Senior "A" player with the Barrie Flyers, and this year will have the advantage of a woman's point of view. Carol Jermy, who has worked her way up through the Barrie minor hockey system, takes over as manager.

If they get in trouble, Colts can always call up top quality midgets and juveniles. The Barrie minor hockey Association is reputed to be one of the strongest in the province and has consistently produced OMHA champions.

Colt colors are the same as those worn by the Georgetown Gemini, green, gold and white.

Georgetown Geminis

After the Gems finished sixth last year and were shipped four straight in the group semi-finals by Streetsville, manager Bob Tost said he was convinced the team would need a full complement of seven imports in order to become a serious contender for group honors this year. All but two players on last year's roster were homebrews.

Yet, after a half dozen 78-79 training camp sessions, the Gemini have not signed a single experienced import. Good imports are either scarce or cost money and Tost now says the club will have to wait and see what's left when the Junior "A" teams made their training camp camps.

On the positive side, 15 year old Lance Doucette, just off bantam, has sparked in exhibition games and signed with the Gems, passing up an offer from the Toronto Marlborough midgets. Also inked after the club's first two preseason contests, a 4-0 loss to the Tier 2 Junior "A" Royal York Royals, and a 6-4 win over the same team, were holdovers, Marty Power, who was drafted by the Niagara Falls Flyers, Bob McCandless and Bob Allison, Georgetown juvenile grad Steve Crossman, and Mike McMenemy and Greg Thompson, up from Georgetown midgets.

Ron Dixon, returning for his second year as Gemini coach, used five goalies in the warmup games, holdovers Brad Miller and Glenn Tost, Steve Garry from Dundas juveniles and John Lunn and Mark Winner from Brampton. Forwards Paul Ancinelli and Paul Martin, both of whom have two years Junior "B" experience, are in camp, with defencemen Mark Falby, a Brantford Fincups' draftee, and John Barnes rated a good chance to make the club as rookies.

Centre Tim Turner, defenceman Mark Euteneier and goalie Bill Humphries, who all saw action with the Gems last year, were all trying out with Junior "A" clubs at press time. Humphries was drafted by Toronto Marlborough.

Gems will miss Doug Barnes, who scored over 100 goals in three seasons of Junior "B" play, centre Chris Milne, and defenceman Bill Allison, Blake Shortill and Paul Allison.

Gemini executives feel much more comfortable now that S. B. McLaughlin Associates have taken over sponsorship of the club. That may have a positive psychological effect on the team's performance on the ice.

Orillia Travelways

Although only five players are returning from last year's team which finished fourth in a five team group, manager Don Dale promises the Travelways will be ready for action when their OHA Central Junior "B" season opens in Milton, Friday, September 29.

Bill Cartmill begins his 13th consecutive year coaching Junior "B" hockey in the Orillia-Barrie area minus five players, who went overage, and several others, who will play college hockey.

Using a team of midgets and juveniles, none of whom have Junior "B" experience, Orillia posted an 8-5 victory over the Henry Carr Crusaders Secondary School team from Toronto in their first exhibition outing. Crusaders won the Metro Toronto high school championship last season. Cartmill had five more exhibition games planned in a short five day period in places like Grimsby, Kitchener and Peterboro to test his prospects.

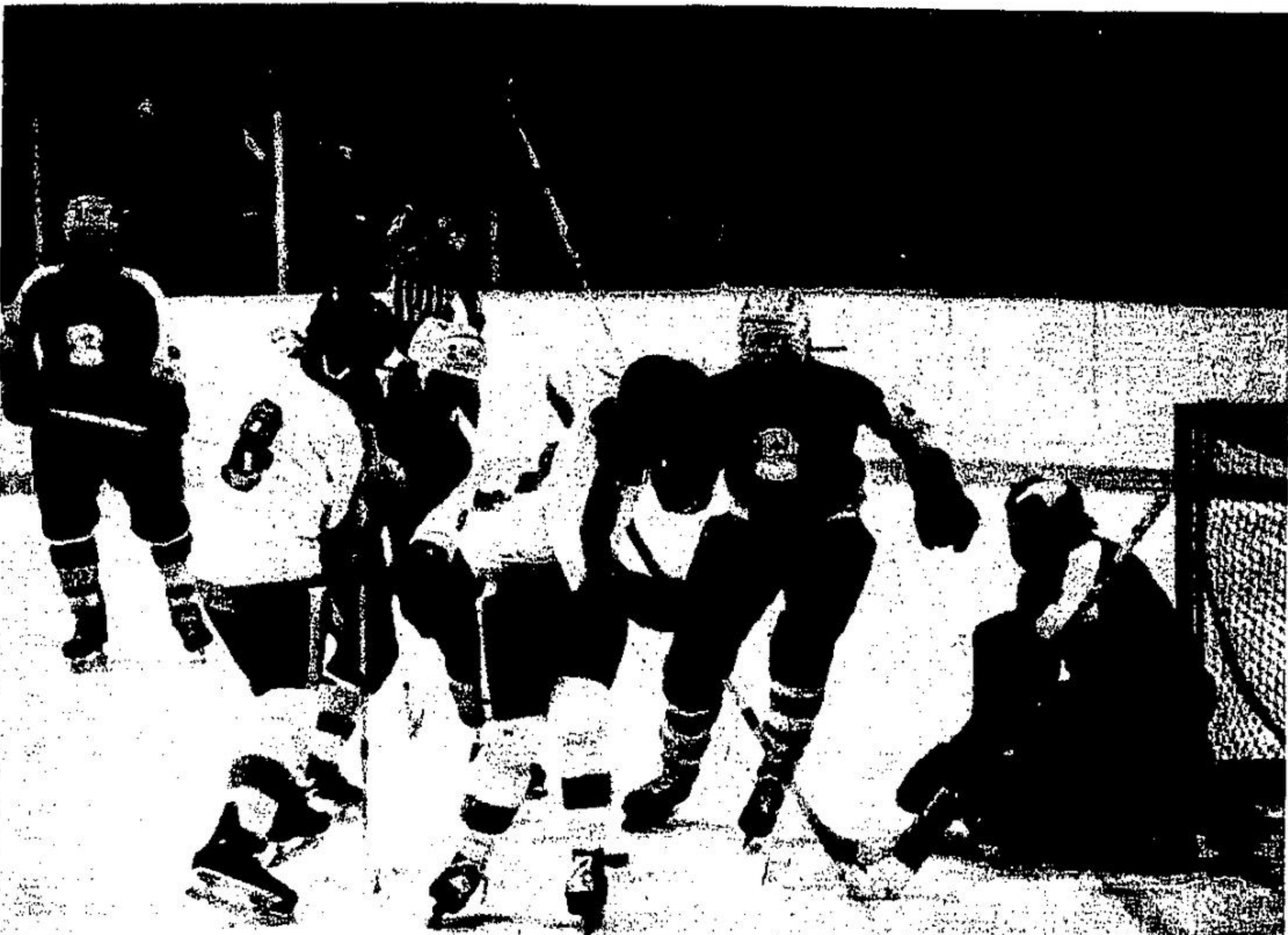
Dale says he expects the Travelways to be improved this season and that he'll bring in as many imports as necessary to make the team competitive. So far, the only two players reasonably assured of positions are 18 year old right winger, Bruce McDonough, who ranked fifth among Mid-Ontario Junior "B" scorers last season, and Stu Parmham, last year's backup goalie. Some Orillia prospects are still at Junior "A" camps, however.

Dale claims that Orillia, with a population of only 21,000 and more or less isolated from highly-populated bordering areas, has less drawing power for players than any team in the league with the exception of Acton. What he didn't say is that the Orillia midget and juvenile clubs, which Travelways will be relying on for replacements for their grads, have been doing quite well in the past two years. During that period, Orillia has won an OMHA Minor Midget championship and had a finalist in each of the major midget and juvenile categories.

Travelways colors are blue and white.

Oak Ridge Dynes

Fans who haven't heard of Oak Ridges shouldn't bother themselves about that. Bill Woloski, general manager of the Dynes, reports his club is actually an aggregation of Rich-



MILTON FLYERS GOALTENDER Hap Perrott attempts to make a stop on Streetsville attackers in game three of the Central Jr. "B" League finals last season. Flyer Rob Frame

came in to make the check but Flyers fell to Derbys four straight for the second consecutive year.

mond Hill players playing out of Oak Ridges and everybody in the Peel-Halton area is well aware of the hockey tradition in "The Hill".

Dynes are not affiliated with a Junior "A" club, but have a big recruiting advantage, as Dixie and Streetsville do, because they're situated within the boundaries of Metro Toronto, according to OHA regulations. That means they have the privilege of picking up players from the minor systems of Metro teams, not affiliated with Junior clubs, and registering them as "homebrews".

Last year, Oak Ridges finished first in the Mid-Ontario Junior "B" League before losing to Barrie in seven games in the group final. Woloski reports at least two-thirds of this year's team will be new. Six players are gone because they are either overage or have accepted college scholarships and another half dozen are still floating around Junior "A" camps waiting for their releases from the Dynes.

Dynes will especially miss Steve Sherman, who has left to play at Lake Superior State College. Sherman was the Mid-Ontario group scoring champion two seasons ago and was nosed out last year by teammate, Brant Dobson. Dobson, however, is returning, even though he was drafted by the Major Junior "A" Brantford Fincups. Other reliable returnees are Blair Lewis, David Baker and Cam Reston, who was with the team when they won the Ontario Winter Games silver medal in the 1976-77 season. Goalie David Heisey, drafted by Cornwall Royals of the Quebec Major Junior "A" League, has just returned to the Dynes' camp.

Peter Artemchuk coaches the Dynes and Hal Murphy is manager. Both are natives of Saskatchewan. In exhibition play so far, Oak Ridges has beaten Toronto Red Wings 5-3 and Etobicoke 11-2, but also lost 6-3 to Etobicoke. Team colors are green and white.

Oakville Blades

The key for Oakville's Blades this year will be experience and size. Traditionally a physically small club, the Blades will be commanding some respect along the boards this season as they picked up players that will add muscle to their style.

Eric Smith is returning to his third season behind the bench and has former Blade Ray Chisholm, fresh from the University of Minnesota, backing him up.

Blades only lost three players, Vince Ventresca, Doug Taylor and Sam Turini to overage. Todd Inouye, Shane, Payette and Willie McFarlane will be back for their fourth seasons with the club and their top scorer in 1977-78 Frank Cornavale is back.

Murray Walker, manager, said the Blades won't be changing their style of hockey because they've added size to the team. He stressed they wouldn't be going with "meatballs" or goons, but that they may be a little more physically aggressive in their game.

The Blades were eliminated from the Central League semifinals last year by the Milton Flyers after Milton outmuscled them at the blue line and in front of their own net.

Burlington Cougars

Every game from the season opener will be of great importance to the Burlington Cougars Hockey Club as they have set their sights on first or second place in the league by Nov. 7. The reason is, they want to enter the qualifying round of the Ontario games.

Cougars have their top scorer Mike Carr, their top defenceman Jim Cochran and goaltender Mitch Lovelock back with the 1978-79 squad.

Team manager Mike McCauley said the team has an excellent mixture of returning players and young talent in a balanced offense and defence. The team is physically larger than in the past and Bob Carr is taking the reins for the second term.

Carr has assistant coach Bob Ward back for another year and Don Ames from the Burlington midget reps working with the club.

Cougars opened camp with 70 hopefuls and have cut the roster to 30, but as of Monday no one was signed.

According to McCauley they have quite a few midgets worth mention and said they have impressed both the coach and himself with their abilities. Cougars will stick with their local players unless an import can display exceptional

promise. overage was Doug Elliott, who will remain with the team as assistant manager and scout.

Jack McLellan, from last year's club, is still with the Guelph Holyday Platers but has not signed.

Coach Buchanan is very pleased with the forwards he has in camp. He feels that if the Sabres shots against are cut down to around 30 shots a game the forward will pot enough goals to win hockey games.

Returnees to the Sabres camp include wingers Kelly McArthur, who played last year as a minor midget, Wade Vickery, Art Currie, and David McGilhoway, who has just returned from "A" camp.

At centre Mark Schinkel is back for another try and Jeff Shields, who spent last season with the Acton Juniors, will be with the "B" squad. Scott Malcolm is expected in camp after giving it a try with Junior "A" clubs.

Jamie Ryan and Glenn Murray, who toiled last season for the Orangeville Junior "C" Stoncrushers, have looked good on defence and have had junior experience. Bob Allison, Denis Chabbeneau and Kelly Shaw are rookies who will likely be with the club at that position.

Sabres have signed forward Neil Anderson and goaltender Rob Brenner, also from Orangeville. Orangeville folded at the end of last season.

In pre-season play Acton downed Port Colborne Junior "B's" 6-2 but fell to the London Diamonds 7-4.

Acton will have a relatively young club and with hard work and determination they feel they could win a few games.

Brampton Logan's Chevy

Brampton finished last season with a 28 points, four points behind Georgetown for the last playoff spots.

Jack McLellan will start his first season behind the Logan's Chevy bench. McLellan replaced Eric Wilson behind the bench part way through last season. Lloyd Vaughn, coach of last season's Bramalea Blues, will assist McLellan along with Gar Vasey, coach of the Caledon Junior "C" Flyers two seasons ago. Bill Held, who is associated with the London Junior "A" Knights, will look after the manager's duties.

The only Chevy to go overage at the end of last season was John van Blison. Neil Jameson, Eddy Howell and Cam Stewart will concentrate on university studies and Dave McLoughlin has signed on with Aurora of the Provincial Junior "A" league.

The main loss to the Chevy team may be Paul Cook. Cook, one of the top ten scorers in the league, has retired one year early. Team officials, according to Bill Tavener, are talking with Paul about returning.

Goaltenders Ken Martindale and Bill Held are attempting to make the squad for another year. Randy Hunt, Jim Roberts, Dave Lowcock, Dan McDonald, Mike Bricks, Gord Howe (no relation), Paul Rypka and Rob Campbell are all expected to return to the club.

Coach McLellan said John Grey and Tom Broderick from Alliston Junior "C" Hornets and Jim Cantelon from Bolton look impressive.

Brampton is likely to go with a young team, said McLellan. He believes that a player, whether bantam or midget, should play to their ability. He feels a team must be prepared to lose a few games to inexperience if they intend to produce in the future.

Brampton is not looking for any miracles this year, according to McLellan. The team is hoping to get some credibility using as many local boys as they can see said.

The Chevy's open their exhibition season September 23 against Dixie.

Dixie Beehives

Dixie Beehives were a bit of a surprise second place finisher last season. They finished 15 points behind the powerful Streetsville Derbys and 11 points ahead of third place Burlington. It was to have been a rebuilding year.

Dixie "B's" are a farm team for the Tier 2 Junior "A" squad and according to manager Bill McMahon it causes some confusion at pre-season camp. The "B's" in most cases, get the "A" cuts which leaves their line-up unbalanced until the Provincial junior season begins.

Dixie didn't lose any players to overage after last season but the "A's" have inked Randy Dupre, Gord Michaud, Mark Duck and Dave Dwyer.

The league's rookie of the year and co-winner of the most valuable player, Steve Cruikshank, will not be back. Cruikshank has accepted a scholarship at Clarkson University.

Dave Hannifin and Rob Spath have inked from last year's squad and Neil MacClen, Jerry Cantarutti, Tim Peters, Mike Palmer and goaltender Orst Okpysh are expected back. Coach Scott Watson and manager McMahon will, again be with the club.

The Beehives have signed Dave Scott and Chris Pryor from the Metro Black Hawks midgets, last years Metro champions. Also inked is Kelly Curtis. Curtis played last season with the Burnaby Blazers of the Junior "B" league in British Columbia.

Manager McMahon said size will be the biggest change in the Dixie team this year. Last season, according to McMahon, the team was on the small size and got pushed around in the corners. This season the Beehives will have a size advantage.

The Beehives topped Bramalea in their first exhibition game by a 4-1 count.

Thornhill Thunderbirds

Thornhill Thunderbirds are one of the new teams in the league this season. The Thunderbirds, according to manager Ron McKnight, did not fair too well last season against teams from Orillia, Barrie and Owen Sound, losing out in the first round of the playoffs.

This season the Thunderbirds will have a young team. Last season's minor midget All-Ontario AA champions will be the basis for this year's squad.

McKnight feels the team has an excellent goaltender in minor midget grad John Morris. Other second year midgets expected in the Thornhill line-up include Kurt Pearson, Rick Seelye, Rob Bagg, Todd McKnight, Dan Anderson, Steve Mallett, Paul Howson and Mark Wiltshire.

The players, however, won't be the only rookies in the line-up. Coach Al Morris and manager McKnight move up with the team from the minor midgets. Morris is a National Coaches Certification Program Level Five coach.

The Thunderbirds will have five or six returnees including defencemen Mark Steele, Rob Browning and forwards Bruce Clatworthy, Bob Hunter and Jamie Kennedy.

Thornhill is looking forward to the new season and meeting players and teams they haven't faced before.

In exhibition play the Thunderbirds met the Milton Flyers losing 7-3. They have exhibition games lined up with Markam, Etobicoke, North York and Milton.

Morris is a systems coach, said McKnight. Expect their team to play good, fast, positional, systems hockey and one thing they believe is you can't win games in the penalty box.

Thornhill will be one of the easiest teams in the league to identify this year. With the expected young age most players will be used to wearing the mandatory facemask of minor hockey, so the entire squad will wear the mask.

Streetsville Derbys

Two time league champions, the Streetsville Derbys promise to be bruisers again. Combining fast skating, accurate passing and more muscle than any other Jr. "B" team in the league, the Derbys promise to deliver the same punch as previous seasons.

Tom Barrett will be starting his 10th year behind the wheel unleashing Jim Bayington, Scotny Snarr, Steve Blair, Leo Briceau, Les Smith and Al Vitonas at the opposition.

A bright young prospect at the Derby camp is Jim Lockhurst who had just finished two years with Kingston Canadians. He was drafted by St. Louis Blues of the NHL, but doesn't want to play pro hockey in North America just yet.

Derbys have a pair of 16-year-olds in Fred Boistruck of Sudbury and Drew Gareau of Deep River, both will probably be drafted into major "A" clubs next year.

Nine of last year's team have split the Streetsville scene as Jim Baker, Bill Brodie, Randy Strong, Paul Bates, Rob Morrison and Mike Prestidge are off playing college hockey and Mo Mantha is at Toronto Marlborough camp. Shawn Dokrity is in Niagara Falls and Rick Laffiere is working with the Peles of Peterborough.

Russell Evans said there were 11 eligible to return and pretty well all are back in town. Their first exhibition is scheduled for Sept. 29 when they host Oak Ridges, a Central League expansion club at Streetsville's Vic Johnson Memorial Arena at 7:30 p.m.

Milton Flyers

Will Milton's Flyers be able to handle the Streetsville Derby's this year? For the past two seasons both clubs battled their way to the Central Jr. "B" league finals and Streetsville doused Flyers' flames four games straight, both years.

Coach Gerry Inglis has moved to the Georgetown Intermediate "A" Raiders and Flyers selected Doug Peters to handle the young Flyer club. Peters had led the Burlington Mohawks to a pair of Central League titles and guided the Sheridan College Bruins to one Ontario championship, two Ontario finals and the Canadian College Finals once.

Flyers have signed a dozen already with Todd Shepherd, young defenceman Mike Murray, Brett Patterson, Dave Turner, sharpshooter Paul McCann, steady Rod Gooding, hustling forward Brian Gordon, Marty Venner, Tom Chuchmach, Norm Flemington and Imports E.J. Millett of Burlington and Mike Kalapaka of Streetsville.

Flyers have had a successful exhibition schedule to date, they edged tier two Jr. "A" Royal York Rangers 8-7, tied Grimsby 4-4, defeated Thornhill 8-5 and tied the Toronto Red Wings tier two Jr. "A" club. They host Hespeler Shamrocks Friday at Milton Arena.

Flyers will be without team leader Ron Twiss, who fell to the age limit with Rob Frame, Pierre Pilote and Brent Murray. Paul Martin has gone back to Georgetown Geminis.

Ivo Zulian was put out of the running for a while after he suffered a separated shoulder in an exhibition game.

Acton Sabres

Acton Sabres have completed two seasons in the ranks of Junior "B" hockey. Over that period of time Acton has won only seven games in 84 tries. Last season the Sabres won four and tied two for a lowly 10 points.

The Sabres will head into the season with a new coach, their third in three years. Fred Buchanan is looking for a 500 season from his club. He feels the teams problem is still on defence. The only returnee at that position will be John Brunl.

Sabres lost the services of the league's scoring champion of two seasons ago, Dave Chapman. The only other Sabre to go