

Russiani's back — but not with Sabres

When Jules Russiani took on the coaching job with the Acton Junior "B" Sabres two seasons ago the Sabres were in worse shape than the Toronto Argonauts. (Remember those losing seasons?) In no time he had them ship shape and making a serious charge at the leaders in the Central Ontario Junior "B" league. Never before had the Sabres made the play-offs and in two full seasons with the northern Halton Hills team, Russiani never missed. That's what the executive of the Georgetown Gemini remembered last week when they named Russiani their head coach.

The Gems seemed to outdo the Georgetown Raiders in their bid for the service of the Sabres former coach, who had not returned to the Sabres fold this season. He cited health reasons as the main element in declining the third term as their mentor.

It seems Jules' health problems are better and just about the time he was getting itchy feet to return to the rinks the Gemini were in need of a new coach.

I've been taking it easy since the end of last

season," says Jules, "and as the season grew on I progressively missed it more and more. When the chance arose it fit in."

Bob Smulders was behind the Gem bench at the start of the season but he was finding work and family commitments were taking their toll. Instead of doing something part time Smulders decided to hand his resignation to the Gems in hopes that they could find a new man.

While Russiani is new to the Gems the 1980-81 Central Ontario Junior "B" Coach of the Year, is hardly a new figure to other teams in the area. In fact, the Georgetown Chrysler Raiders were looking at Russiani to help them out with playing-coach Gary Ford ready to return to the line-up. This time the Gems won.

When Jules had been contacted about an assistant's job with the Raiders his eyes were green. "I like coaching," commented Jules, "I like teaching, taking the youngsters aside and helping them." Russiani felt that if he said "Yes" to the

Raiders he wouldn't be able to do that. "The Raiders are older," says Jules, "and I couldn't do that with them."

Russiani's record in the past speaks for itself. Coaching in Arizona with mid-level aged players Russiani won the state championship and then after moving to Streetsville took their Major Midgets to an Ontario title.

His stats with Acton may not be as overwhelming and there may be no Ontario titles but in his first year with the Sabres they left the lower confines of the standings to battle to fifth place, just one point from fourth. In the play-offs that year (their first ever) the Sabres surprised the OHA by forcing the first placed Burlington Cougars to come from behind in the seventh game to take the series before going on to the Ontario finals.

The second season wasn't as successful. It was a rebuilding year. They finished eight of 11 teams and fell in straight games to the Oakville Blades.

The Gems are hoping Russiani's magic can rub

off with the local team.

"They've got a lot of potential," says the new coach, "they should be a lot further up. They lack direction, they're not playing as a team and there is no winning enthusiasm."

While the first half of the season has been spent trying to keep the Gems out of the cellar, Russiani doesn't even consider that. "I've studied the line-up," commented Russiani, "and we should be fourth or fifth easy." Russiani feels that he can rely on a system that is beneficial to the players and on discipline to get them there.

Assessing his talent Jules figures that players like Chris Peavoy, Lance Doucette and newly signed Bob Dean should be leaders.

Russiani is hoping that his past experience will help turn the Gemini from an also ran into a contender. He is a motivator. If he can get the best out of the talents that are there the Gems could be in for a slow ride up the Central Ontario Junior "B" ladder.



Jules Russiani

Free Press

SPORTS

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Streetsville goalie stopped this shot off the stick of Acton's Ken Franklin during action Saturday night at the Community Centre. The Derby's humiliated the Sabres 21-4.

Sabres humiliated 21-6 by Derby's

Coach benches Spear, Bates in loss to Milton Steamers

The Acton Junior "B" Sabres dropped a pair of games over the weekend losing in Milton, Friday night 5-3 and at home on Saturday night the Sabres were blown out by Streetsville 21-6.

Coach Bill Richmond felt the Sabres should have won the game in Milton, noting they outshot the Steamers in the third period 30-3.

Bill said two players, Roy Spear and Pat Bates, were benched after the second period because of their attitudes on the ice.

Richmond said Saturday night was just a blow out by Streetsville and having such a young team the players have to suffer together.

Coach Richmond said that Spear, Bates and Len Pellizzari have been benched for this Friday night's game in Burlington because of their attitudes. Bill says he's still looking at a few new players and there still could be a few more changes made on the Sabre roster.

Friday night in Milton the Sabres fired 30 shots at the Steamer goal in the third period and came away with just one goal.

Milton scored the first two goals in the opening frame at 11:34 and the 13:00 minute mark before Mike Monahan scored at 15:50 to bring the Sabres to within one. The Steamers scored with just 12 seconds left in the period to lead 3-1.

In the second period Gord McArthur scored on the power play to bring the Sabres to within one at 13:52, assisted by Ken Franklin and Pellizzari. The Steamers added two more goals before the frame was over to ahead 5-2.

In the final frame Mike Yalowica lit the light for Acton on the power play at 4:03 to round out the scoring, 5-3 in favor of the Steamers.

Saturday night the Sabres came out flying and scored at 3:18 to go ahead of the Streetsville Derby's 1-0 on a goal by Denis Kirton, assisted by Monahan and McArthur. Streetsville scored four times within three and a half minutes to go ahead

4-1 at the end of the frame. The Derby's outshot Acton in the first period 19-14.

In the second frame Streetsville scored five unanswered goals to go ahead 9-1 after two periods. The Sabres were outshot 19-13 in the second period.

In the final frame Streetsville outscored Acton 12-5. Scoring in the third period were Monahan, firing the hat trick and Paul Barrett adding a pair of goals. Bob Boldt and Randy Coverdale picked up a pair of aids each. Monahan, Yalowica, Mark Symes, and Rick Dodds earned single assists. The Derby's outshot the Sabres 19-9 in the final period and over three frames 57-36.

The Sabres are in Burlington this Friday night at 8 p.m. and are at home to the Milton Steamers this Saturday night at 8:30 p.m. at the Community Centre.

Minor hockey roundup

Hespeler scores late to tie Acton Minor Pee-Wees 1-1

The Acton Beardmore Minor Pee-Wees tied one game and lost another game in Hub League action last week.

Last Wednesday at the Acton Arena, Hespeler and Acton played to a 1-1 tie.

Steve Robertson lit the light for Acton on a pass from Jason Boose. Acton led 1-0 until late in the third period when Hespeler scored to tie the contest.

Saturday back in Hespeler the home team defeated Acton 3-1.

Greg Smith scored for Acton assisted by Sean Sears in the second period. Hespeler scored all their goals in the second frame.

Sunday in an exhibition game in Flamboro, Acton was defeated 5-2 by their hosts.

Robertson scored for Acton on a penalty shot in the second period and then Boose lit the light on a pass from Robertson to end the scoring for Acton.

The Beardmore Minor Pee-Wees are at home tonight (Wednesday) at 8 p.m. to visiting Galt.

The Minor Atoms next home game is this Saturday at 4 p.m. when Galt will be the visitors.

Major Atoms tie and lose

The Acton Laing Construction Major Atoms tied Preston 2-2 and lost to Brantford 4-1, in Hub League play last week.

Last Sunday the Acton Major Atoms traveled to Brantford and were defeated 4-1. Chris O'Neill scored Acton's lone goal assisted by Robbie Lockhurst.

Tuesday night in Acton, Preston scored with two and a half minutes left in the third period to tie Acton 2-1.

Sean Coleman and O'Neill lit the light for Acton with Lockhurst picking up two aids and Brydon Gillis earning one.

Legion hockey roundup

Novice

Oakville defeated Weston 5-1 in Novice play. Kenny Jaffray and Jeremy Marsh fired a pair of goals each with Brad Fisher adding a single marker for Oakville. Marsh picked up two assists and Mike McRae earned one aid.

David Patey lit the light for Weston assisted by Morgan Vaughan.

Dixie doubled Brampton 4-2 in Novice action. Greg Martin led the way for Dixie scoring a pair of goals with Jim Katsileris and Jamie Goy assisting.

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Coach applied for team, says was turned down

Dear Sir:

I am writing in reply to a letter written by Mrs. Norton last week. This is mainly a reference to the part of "Let's hear from past coaches."

Last year as a coach of the Minor Bantams, I ran into trouble over my roster choices and the Acton Minor Hockey executive were ready to relieve me of my duties until the parents of the team congregated in a dressing room and told the executive that they wanted me to stay on as coach. Having been involved with minor hockey for three years, I have found no problem with the parents, only the executive.

I applied for a team this year, but was refused on the grounds of too many suspensions last year. Out of the nine games I was suspended, five of them were a result of the AMHA's stupidity. I was told by president, Bruce Cargill, I could pick up a Major Pee Wee player

already signed to a Major Pee Wee card and that the AMHA would have his Major Pee Wee card destroyed by the convener and they would have a Minor Bantam card validated. I was told that this happened with increasing regularity. After having the best record amongst Acton teams last year, I feel I was unjustly denied a team.

Seems funny that two coaches in the organization are coaching the same team for the third year in a row, which is against Acton's "policy". The reason for this was because they didn't receive any other applications. Funny, I applied!

Yours sincerely,
Bill Preston,
Past Coach.

P.S. After coaching Steve Wagner last year, I found him to be one of the most gentlemanly players on the team.

Player, mother put rap on Rep. Hockey in Acton

Dear Sir:

It's time the people of Acton heard a kid's side of the problems with Rep. Hockey. Hockey is a game of fun, I thought, for all to play, not just a chosen few. I was apparently good enough to make the Rep. team, but once I was on the team I was not good enough to play.

The Rep. coaches are supposed to be some of the best coaches, but my dad has taught me the skills I know at home with a blackboard and piece of chalk. Isn't that supposed to be the coaches' job?

Kids who don't show up for practice still get all the ice time, while a player, who according to the coach "plays his position better than anyone on the team," sits on the bench until he gets so mad he quits. After he phones the coach to tell him he has quit, he discovers the coach has already told his Dad that he should go back to House League to learn to play the game. This to me seems very strange. The coach won't tell me himself, but I would have felt better had he done it. Does he feel guilty or something?

I am much happier, get my fair share of ice time and get a chance to show what I can do now that I have returned to House League. I only wish I'd done it sooner.

An Ex-Rep. League Player

Dear Sir:

My son wanted to write the letter himself. I can however add a few points myself if you'd like them.

First I do agree with Mrs. Norton, there are some fine coaches in Acton, unfortunately my son has not been involved with one since his year in Minor Atom when Bob Fraser coached.

In my son's case I had tried two weeks before he was cut to pull him from the team, because of his lack of ice time and because I had heard that the coach was cutting two children.

It was perfectly obvious to me that my son was one to be cut. I was told to leave him on the team, they would try to improve his ice time and that he, the coach, had absolutely no intention of cutting anyone. As a matter of fact, he was quite indignant to think that rumors like that were going around. It would appear to me that if a child quits rather than being cut, the coaches precious ego is at stake.

By the way, after the first house league game, he was asked by the coach to try out for the four town team. I think this only proves that my son has some talent, don't you? I think our particular coaches should see the way Mr. McCrystal runs a practice. I'm sure they would learn something from him.

A former Rep hockey mom

Manner imposed and length of suspension father's concern

Dear Sir:

Let me take this opportunity to reiterate my stand on Steven Wagner's suspension. I do not condemn the fact that Steven was brought to justice, but how it was done. If this incident happened on the main streets of Acton, as Mrs. Norton suggests, the case would have been judged by an impartial judge, and not by parents serving self-interests. Volunteer work is very commendable. However, incompetent or self-serving volunteer work, no matter how willingly donated, is detrimental. It tends to break down the credibility of the volunteer and the hardest thing to teach a child is to believe.

As a parent of three children, I take exception to Mrs. Norton's insinuations that children learn only at hockey, with the help of the AMHA, about respect and sportsmanship. These important aspects of life are taught at home, not in weekly one-hour sessions, under the watchful eyes of the AMHA at the arena. If respect and sportsmanship are absent in kids during the hockey season, it is because of the incompetence of the adults that surround them. If an other-wise respectful and sportsmanlike child turns the opposite, I can blame nobody other than the people that influence him during

the hockey season. I question the motives of any self sacrificing "parent" who donates his time and "money out of his pocket" to be involved, whereby enhancing the career of his sons, be he coach or any member on the AMHA.

The frustrations of the players and parents mentioned in the letter, can be induced only by the lack of credibility of the leadership of the AMHA. Let me also state that I don't believe in, nor advocate, fighting for fighting's sake. However, sometimes it is inevitable to circumvent physical confrontations. A 14-year-old boy does not have the maturity yet to turn his back on the tauntings of others. In such a case, justice must be brought forth; justice being punishment that fits the crime. In Steven's case, justice and how it was brought about, are the only aspects I question.

I personally have no skills that I could volunteer to the AMHA, therefore I leave that administration to what I once believed to be more competent and impartial people.

One can only hope.

Respectfully,
Andrew T. Wagner

Steve Wagner gives his side

Dear Sir:

I would like a say in this matter, since I'm the person who all the controversy is being written about. First I would like to get one thing straight. Mr. Yarochak makes it sound as if I went looking for that fight. This is wrong! I did not start the fight and feel good about it! I don't think I was wrong in fighting, since it was a matter of self-defense.

I also know that a lot of parents are behind me and want to voice their opinion, but are afraid because they have a son playing Rep

Hockey in Acton, and they are afraid that if they stand up against the AMHA, their son will somehow be reprimanded. That is not right. Why should a group of people (AMHA) influence the parents and these kids?

Let me leave you with one thing to think about, this includes everybody on the AMHA "What if this had been your kid, would he have been suspended until January 1, 1983?"

Thank you,
Steve Wagner,
age 14

Meet the Sabres



Art Kenting, 19, a five foot, six and a half inch, 150 pound; centurion who played for the Sabres two years ago is back this season wearing number 11 with the Acton Junior "B" Sabres.