



## Sports beat

By DAVE ROWNEY  
Herald Sports Editor

### On referees

Mention the word 'referee' around any hockey rink and there is bound to be a conflagration of words from all corners representing different viewpoints.

During this season in Georgetown there have been mumblings from behind the plexi-glass from certain members of both the Gemlins and the Raiders that a shift upwards by referees to the Ontario Hockey League from the Ontario Hockey Association has caused problems.

Gemlin general manager Bob Webster says only one or two games this season have been well refereed. What is most surprising to Webster who is a Minor Support Group hockey veteran is the inconsistency in the calls.

**SUSPENDED**  
During a game against Thornhill in the last week of November the Gemlins lost 10-1 but the referee handed out penalties to Georgetown on a 3:1 ratio. Webster said the referee was later suspended for a number of games for calling Georgetown on one-sided penalties.

To prove that it just isn't sour grapes coming from a team who has lost more games than they've won, the Raiders also have their complaints.

The Raiders, with a 15-4-0 record, are unhappy. "We've seen a real deterioration in our refereeing," Raider president Bob Hooper says.

Two weeks ago in Port Elgin the Raiders won 7-6, but the referee was from Port Elgin and he didn't call a good game, Hooper says. It showed poor judgement in using a Port Elgin ref, he says.

At a recent Intermediate A league meeting everyone was complaining about the referees, Hooper says. There were a few games this year the Raiders would have lost because of the refereeing, if they were not a stronger club he says.

**YOUNGER**  
Hooper feels there is a direct relation between the loss of referees and linesman to the OHL from the OHA. Former Gemlin general manager Bob Tost says the move meant younger linesmen and younger referees in the league.

To preface some remarks in defence of our referees, here is a background to the OHL-OHA split:

In August the OHL offered the OHA a final financial figure that wasn't accepted which led to the splitting of the two associations. One of the things the OHL wanted was more control of their refereeing assignments and supervision. They felt it was beneficial to their league to have more control, says Herb Morell, Referee Co-ordinator and Director of Information.

The OHL then went ahead and lined up their own referee staff. They have a total staff of 51 officials. Eight referees and 17 linesmen decided to join the OHL from the OHA ranks.

Herb Morell of the OHL feels, however, that the absence of eight referees creates a void, but a very small one that shouldn't affect the OHA. Those eight referees were interspersed between Windsor, Kingston, London, Guelph, Milton and Kitchener, Morell says.

#### TOP RANKED

It is acknowledged that the eight referees who left were top ranked in their profession. But Morell says come Junior B playoff time, especially in the finals, the OHL referees will help out with some games.

Late in the season it is also acknowledged the better OHA referees are scheduled to officiate the tighter races between the top teams.

Gary Wilson, executive director of the OHA, told The Herald those eight referees represented a drop in the bucket for their 458 members of their officiating staff.

Wilson argues that there was an opening created for younger officials to advance into the OHA and the development process was speeded up.

"I can't see it (OHL split) affecting either Georgetown team," Wilson says.

#### SUPERVISORS

There are 14 supervisors who look after the 458 officials in their various assigned regions, with Brampton being our region for the Gems and Raiders.

Officials under the Brampton supervisor are graded to work either Junior A, Junior B, or Intermediate A. Intermediate A is graded equal to College hockey or Junior A hockey with Junior B rated a step down.

With the ratings of each official, their schedule is assigned for 203 refereeing assignments per week, Wilson says.

General Manager of the Oakville Blades, Murray Walker is chairman of the referee disciplinary committee for the OHA. Walker believes there are a number of good officials and they all go out and try to do their job to their best ability.

Walker prefers an official who is low key and recognizes that an official who wants to "steal the show" can be detrimental.

#### STEREOTYPE

We tend to stereotype officials and get on their backs, he says. A lot has to do with how the game develops, he says. If a game does become rough and chippy and the official doesn't have control then that can cause problems, he says.

While it seems the OHL split had a minimal effect on our local teams, there does still seem to be ample frustrations regarding our officiating. The final word seems to be that the hockey seasons never change.

There will always be those defending and browbeating our officials for the job they do. We can only hope they're doing their best and realize that until officials can score goals, good teams can still make their own breaks and win games on their own.

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