

Our salute to minor hockey

Our colorful hockey past

It's Minor Hockey Week in Canada. Tell that to your neighbor and he might say "which week?"

Less than a month ago The Herald phoned the Ontario Minor Hockey Association to confirm the date (Jan. 22-28). Their office staff couldn't answer the question. It took an embarrassing call from the OMHA two hours later before we had the information we wanted.

And so it goes. Halton Hills has one of the highest per capita involvement of minor hockey players in Canada. There are literally hundreds of families who breathe, sleep and eat hockey during the winter months.

Hockey in Georgetown has a particularly eventful and colorful past, claiming the title: "The Home of Little NHL" which began in 1936.

Gordon Alcott was able to coax Maple Leaf Gardens president Conn Smythe into sending some of his Leaf stars like Charlie Coacher and Joe Primeau to town to referee games.

The Little NHL was the first organized minor hockey league in Canada to be based on NHL teams with each little player wearing the sweater number of their favorite star. The idea

blossomed around Ontario and out West.

Smythe's original offer to sponsor a minor hockey tournament for Georgetown in the late '30s has been called the granddaddy of all minor hockey tournaments.

Since then, the town has been known as a hockey hotbed, as each year we send out our little ambassadors to other communities while hosting a number of hockey tournaments ourselves.

The sport is a character-builder and should be seen as such by parents, players and coaches. Everyone benefits by participating.

We offer a word of encouragement to parents to not only support their child, but ask your minor hockey executive what you can do to help. Volunteers for minor sports are hard to come by and there is always an annual plea for parents to organize practices, look after sweaters and do a bit of phoning.

We agree with former house league president Tom Davidson who once said, "there are a lot of people out there (in minor hockey). If we can all pull together everyone does have fun - it's a community effort and it's a learning experience."

A hockey family

Mom manages peewee team

Some days, being a hockey mom is on par with being a chauffeur. It seems that all you're doing is hauling the kids to and from the arenas.

With two boys who are active hockey players, Irene McCauley of Georgetown knows what that's all about.

"With practices and games, we're out to the arena practically every night



Staff Comment

By ANI PEDERIAN

of the week, and sometimes they have two things a night for them," she said.

Despite the demands it makes on her time, Mrs. McCauley looks at hockey positively.

"I think hockey's a very good sport for children. It teaches them how to get along with other children - their teammates - and it teaches them competitiveness and sportsmanship. It's a good character builder for when they're older," she said.

Wes McCauley was six when he was started off in the North Halton Hockey School. Now he's 12 and playing in the minor peewee age division. Wes' team hasn't been beaten yet this year in rep league play.

Brother Blaine, 7, plays on the novice team with eight year olds. He started his hockey schooling when he was four.

ENCOURAGED

They've been encouraged and helped by their dad John who was only 14 when asked to be the goalie for the St. Catharines Junior A team. Mr. McCauley has refereed for the National Hockey League for a number of years and is currently director of NHL officials.

With mom acting as manager for Blaine's team, the whole McCauley family except for nine-year old Bridget

won't allow her to," Mrs. McCauley said. Bridget gets to play with her brothers on the neighbor's backyard is involved in hockey.

"She'd like to play, but her father rink. They let her play goalie. On her own, she's into competitive swimming with the Halton Hills Blue Fins, following in the footsteps of her aunt Winnie Roach Leuzler who was the first Canadian, in 1951, to swim the English channel.

At home, there's a lot of talking about hockey, Mrs. McCauley said.

SPORTS BIT

"I'm a sports nut myself, you know. Sports is a big thing in our family," she said.

With so much time being devoted to hockey, it's not surprising Mrs. McCauley is concerned about the academic life of her children.

"I think sometimes the hockey expects too much of the children," she said. "The hockey sometimes wants to be an exclusive club. I think the coaches could be a little more flexible in allowing for children who have obligations to school activities also."

Mrs. McCauley doesn't want hockey to dominate her children's lives.

"What happens to the child, then, at 12, 13 or 14 who isn't making it to the minor midgets, like maybe he had talents elsewhere," she said.

Wes, like many boys his age, would like to make the NHL. Keen on hockey, he identifies a lot with Wayne Gretzky, Mrs. McCauley said. Blaine is just as keen.

However, the McCauley's are stressing the university route for their children. They don't want them left out in the cold after, without the doors an education provides. A sports career is not forever, they realize.

Being mom means keeping the balance between hockey and school and other activities in the family's life - even though some days it seems just to be chauffeuring the children to hockey practices and games.



Lessons to be learned from minor hockey: Pilote

It wasn't until he was playing Junior 'A' in St. Catharines that former NHL great Pierre Pilote first realized the important role minor hockey can play in skill development.

Pilote, for the record, would go on to greatness in a 13-year career with the Chicago Black Hawks. He was awarded the James Norris Trophy as the NHL's premier rearguard on three occasions, and in 1975 he was inducted to the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto.

Prior to arriving in St. Catharines, however, Pilote had managed his way strictly on the superior natural ability God had blessed him with.



Staff Comment

By GERRY TIMBEIS

At the Junior 'A' level, however, he was forced to compete with and against players who had advanced through what was then arguably the best minor hockey set-up in the province.

Having grown up in rural Quebec, Pilote hadn't benefited from the teachings of organized minor hockey. The shock of that first Junior 'A' camp was such that he still recalls it today.

"Looking back, that's where I could really see the difference," Pilote, who at age 62 now owns a Toronto luggage-manufacturing firm and is a Halton Hills resident, said in a recent interview. "That team had some of the best midget and juvenile players around, and they had been well-coached. They knew about positional play, how to take a pass, and how to take a man out."

"All I had was ability. I had to learn to skate and pass, because they were better than I was. And I was 19. They were only 17, and some of them 16."

Because he enjoyed such a distinguished career, it is easy for Pilote to look back on yesterday. His comments, observations and comparisons are objective, and provide a true insight into the worth of organizations such as the GMHA.

"Hockey players are better today, because of minor hockey," Pilote says. "They are more skilled, with better equipment. The biggest

difference is in the way they shoot the puck, though.

SHOOTING

"When I played, you had maybe four guys on your team who could shoot. Now you have 15 guys who can really whiz it. Because they have been taught."

On a more personal level, Pilote believes that he spent almost three seasons in the minors at the beginning of his career because he lacked a minor hockey background.

"If I had been exposed to minor hockey, I would have jumped directly to the NHL," he assures.

Aside from skill development, though, Pilote feels that minor hockey has much to offer

all youngsters; not just the talented few. There are moral lessons that can best be learned while participating in team sports, he believes, that stand a lad well in future life.

Both of his own boys, Pierre Jr. and Dave, played minor hockey. Dave, 20, played in the GMHA rep system with most of the young men that currently comprise the line-up of the Junior 'B' Gemini.

The elder Pilote is proud of the way his boys turned out, and he doesn't overlook the importance of the role minor hockey played in their lives. "There are so many forks on the road for a youngster," Pilote said, "so many things that a young man can be influenced by."

"Minor hockey takes a boy off the street, where those diversions are. If a boy is playing hockey, he's going to look after his body so it will perform better. He's not going to bed at 5 o'clock in the morning, after boozing it up all night."

Minor hockey, Pilote continues, can be an opportunity for a youngster to learn about winning and losing, about the importance of physical fitness, and about working with others to see a project through to its completion.

In short, minor hockey helps a lot of youngsters grow up - the right way.

Business sponsorships help keep minor hockey alive

My first assignment as a reporter was to cover a Junior B hockey game in Blind River.

I was barely an hour old as a scribe for the Elliott Lake Standard. My engine was still hot from the long haul up from Toronto, my editor's instructions hasty and vague and I was scared because, two weeks earlier, I'd never heard of Blind River.

So, my first inklings on what made the local economy solvent - the movers and shakers of business - were written on the backs of about 15-broad-shouldered Blind River hockey players.

Blind River may be a small town, with a fraction of Georgetown's population, but it's not "hockey poor" thanks to dedicated sponsors.

Hockey sweaters in Halton Hills provide an industrial directory of their own, too. For large and small businesses, the value of sponsoring an entire club or a sweater extends beyond the advertising impact.

Barrager's Cleaners support a number of minor hockey, ball and soccer clubs, and actively support the Georgetown Gemini.

"Sure we get a lot of good public relations benefit from it," owner Dave Barrager said. "But it makes us feel good when we do something for the kids."

Team sponsorship has been a tradition with the business. Dave's father, Don, was a founding member of the Little NHL, a predecessor to the current minor hockey set up. Dave can fondly recall playing minor hockey.

"The way I look at it somebody paid my way then," he said. "Now it's my turn to put something back."

Large corporations, like Georgetown's Standard Products are involved in minor hockey and a list of other youth-oriented sponsorships as long as one's arm.

Standard Products' Karl Brundle said the

company doesn't count on sponsorships to drum up business; it's done strictly with good "corporate neighborliness" in mind.

Lloyd Nellis of Acton's Nellis Construction (the sponsor of the Nellis Construction Major Atoms) said sponsorship is important because it



Staff Comment

CHRIS AAGAARD

keeps sports alive and growing.

"Hockey is the best recreation going for young kids," Lloyd said. "It teaches them good sportsmanship. If some guy is willing to spend a few hours with these kids coaching them, the least we can do is help financially."

Georgetown's A.E. LePage office also sponsors soccer and ball clubs, and house league and rep hockey teams.

"The more sponsors," manager Finn Poustrup commented, "the better the sports programs."

Sports sponsorships, he added, "create opportunities for kids to develop themselves mentally and physically."

"If I have one regret, it's that I don't get out to see the games as much as I'd like to."

In the heat of the game, sponsorships are sometimes forgotten by the budding young Parks, Gretzky and Robinsons.

But think of how dull organized hockey would be without them.

Halton's History

15 YEARS AGO

Georgetown's Paul Popiel popped his first goal as a Detroit Red Wing in Montreal last Wednesday when the Wings rolled over the Habs 4-0. Popiel, who has been paired with Bob Baun on the Detroit defence, was a standout Saturday when Detroit and Toronto played to a 1-1 tie in Saturday night's broadcast.

Popiel is the second Georgetowner to rise through the local minor hockey system to the NHL. Bob Goldham, best known for revolutionizing the role of defencemen in blocking shots, was the first.

Twelve teams will take part in the third annual Georgetown Midget Hockey tournament, which will occupy Memorial Arena for three days next month.

Chuck LeFley, who scored one of Canada's goals in the Russia-Canada hockey game in Maple Leaf Gardens Sunday will be remembered by many people here.

Chuck was the popular captain of West Kildonan Bantams when they took part in the Bantam Hockey Tournament in Georgetown in 1964.

His picture appeared in the Herald when he presented tournament president Red Asseltine and his wife Jean with a bronze buffalo on behalf of the team.

The Georgetown Midgets won two games in as many nights last week by dumping the host Milton club 6-0. Juri Kudrasovs opened the scoring from Ron Fogal. Jerry Neil counted from Kudrasovs and Bruce Davies, Paul Fendley from John McNally, Jerry Neil from Paul Fendley and Ray Inglis, Ron Fogal from Benny Heppes, Juri Kudrasovs from Bruce Davies and Jerry Neil and Dave Guest finished off the scoring from Ray Inglis.

10 YEARS AGO

Fendley Florists scored a 2-1 win over Depco Metal. Kevin Phillips had two goals for his team assisted by Kevin Willocks. Depco got their goal from Rick Eastwood.

North Halton Motors outdistanced the Snowmobile Club 4-2 in house league hockey action. North Halton got their goals from Terry Somerville, Scott Pentesco, Mike Jones, assisted by Scott Pentesco, Jim Redford, Mike Jones (2).

Snowmobile goals came from Peter McKinnon and Paul Monaghan, assisted by Jim Gordon.

Robert Real Estate were blanked 5-0 by Armbr Construction 5-0. Goals for Armbr came from Gord Miller, Mike Robinson, Bob Donaldson and Ross Jeffrey. The MVP for Robert was Richard Szczepaniak while the Armbr MVP was Mike Robinson.

5 YEARS AGO

The Georgetown United Rent-All Minor Pee Wees has a bad week losing both their games. The team turned in one of their poorest performances of the year losing to Flamboro 3-1 here last Tuesday.

Brent Smith, with an unassisted effort, was the only Georgetown shooter able to tally. Wayne Morrow scored Georgetown's only goal with a marker in the third period against Milton last week in a 2-1 final score.

In minor hockey house league action at the midget level Shayne Hillock notched two goals while Warren Sommers had three in Criterion Carpet's 8-1 romp over Georgetown Chrysler. Pat Primerano had the lone goal for Chrysler assisted by Hank Hamilton.

In Major Pee Wee Action Flash Taxi outmaneuvered Joe's Gulf 8-1. Brent Brass led the Taxi team with four goals while Jeff Duguay had two. Rick Jacobme and Brent Barnes scored one goal each.

In a light Minor Pee Wee contest Murray Motors edged Baz Motors 7-6. Doug Stamp scored the winning goal with 11 seconds remaining in the game after excellent passing from Andy Domingos and Matthew Remedios.

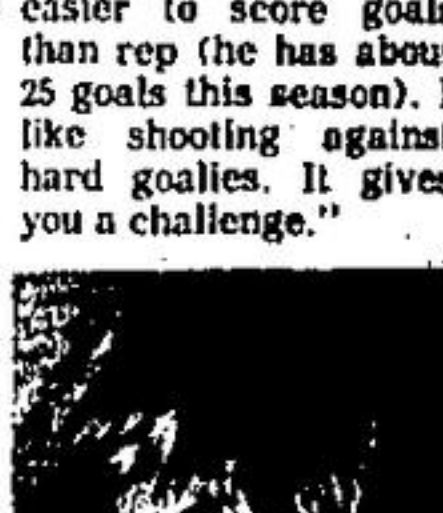
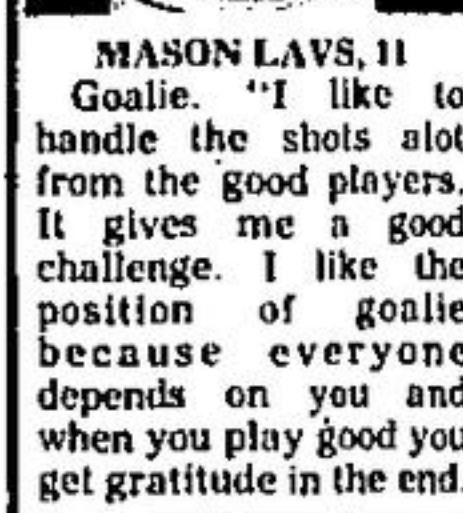
IN YOUR OPINION

Q: Why do you like playing minor hockey. Who is your favorite NHL player?



JASON BONNEVILLE, 11

Centre. "It's a little easier to score goals than rep (he has about 25 goals this season). I like shooting against hard goalies. It gives you a challenge."



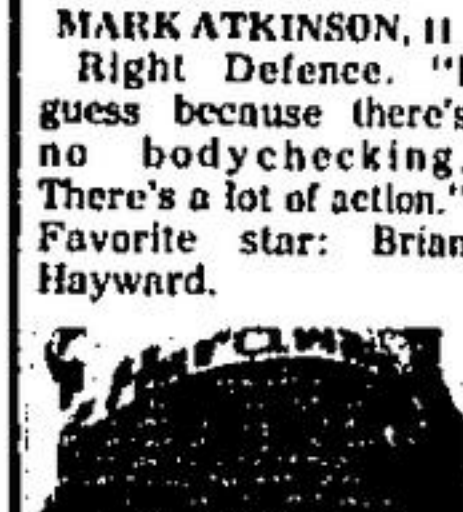
JAMIE FACCHINI, 12

Right Wing. "I like skating on the ice and getting goals. Just an interest in the sport." Favorite player: Rick Vaive.



CHRIS HOWSE, 9

Left Wing. "I like the scoring. I like the exercise." Favorite star: Mike Palmateer.



NAP BENITO, 12

Goalie. "I like the fundamentals, the action, the excitement." Favorite star: Mike Palmateer.

the HERALD

Home Newspaper of Halton Hills - Established 1866

A Division of Canadian Newspapers Company Limited
45 Guelph Street, Georgetown L7G 3Z8, Ontario

PAUL J. TAYLOR, Publisher
and General Manager

DAVID ROWNEY
Editor

BOB LIGHTBOURN
Advertising Manager

PHONE 877-3201

Second Class Mail Registered Number - 0943

Page 4 - SECTION A, THE HERALD, Wednesday, January 25, 1994