

New Year celebration

# Sabres nip Hornets

Acton Sabres welcomed the new year in fine fashion, journeying to Alliston last Wednesday and edging the hometown Hornets 6-5.

The win boosted the Sabres Mid-Ontario Junior "C" Hockey League 1989-90 season record to 10-15, and moved the Acton team to within three points of second place in the league's standings.

Of more importance, the victory also moved Acton two points in front of Alliston (with a game in hand) as serious jockeying gets underway for playoff positions and home-ice advantage through the playoff rounds.

Sabre coach Ken Steen was pleased with the win considering the team had been idle for two weeks over the Christmas holidays.

"It was good to get the guys back into game condition," noted Steen. "We were a bit rusty, but the guys held on for the win and that's what counts."



Sabres led 2-1 after the first period and enjoyed a 5-2 lead heading into the final period of play.

Then Alliston came to life with three third period goals to make things interesting.

Sabres counted once in the final frame to eke out the 6-5 win.

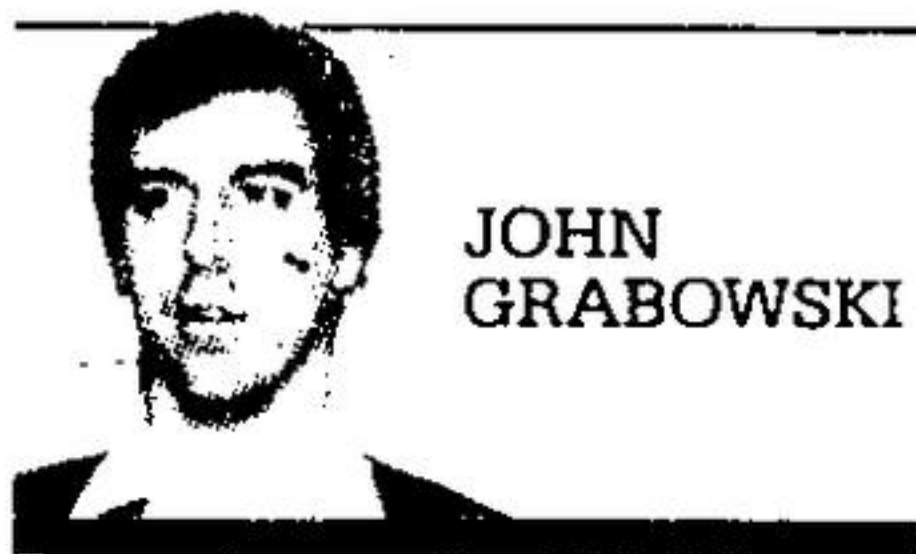
Jeff Shevalier scored three times for the Sabres with singles going to John Van Dam, Jason Lucas and Mark Boersmma.

Sabres journey to Bradford for a game tomorrow (Sunday) then play host to Caledon Flyers this coming Wednesday, 8 p.m. at the Acton Community Centre.

NHL hotshots

## Gunners firing blanks

STAT SHEET



JOHN GRABOWSKI

It's often said that the toughest job in sports is to hit a round ball squarely with a round bat. Perhaps.

Baseball Hall of Famer Mickey Mantle readily admits: "During my 18 years, I came to bat almost 10,000 times. I struck out about 1,700 times and walked maybe 1,800 times. That means I played seven years in the major leagues without even hitting the ball."

In what other sport can a player be considered a great star while being successful only 30 percent of the time?

In basketball, the top shooters regularly net better than 50 percent of their field goal attempts. The NBA career record holder — Artis Gilmore, who was pro for 12 seasons — had a mark of .599.

In football, any quarterback who does not complete about half of his passes or more will not be around for long. Ken Anderson set the single-season NFL mark by completing 70.55 percent of his passes in 1982.

Field goal kickers likewise must be successful the majority of the time in order to be assured of keeping their jobs in pro football. New Orleans' Morten Andersen has converted nearly eight of every 10 he has kicked since entering the NFL. Mark Moseley hit on 95.2 percent of his attempts in 1982.

In hockey, however, the situation is comparable to baseball.

Rarely will a NHL shooter even approach the 30 percent range in scoring percentage in "the world's fastest sport."

Currently, New Jersey's Mark Johnson and Washington's Mark Rid-

ley are the only players at the 30 percent career level, each just barely topping the mark.

But their shooting percentages may well drop as this season progresses. If so, the NHL — for the second straight year — probably will not have a ".300 hitter" amongst its regular skaters.

Last year, the leading shooter (minimum of 80 shots on goal) was Rob Brown of the Pittsburgh Penguins. Brown netted 49 of 169 shots for a mark of 29 percent. By the way, he also recorded 66 assists to give him a total of 115 points, good for fifth in the league scoring race.

Following Brown in scoring percentage was Edmonton's Craig Simpson, with 28.9 percent of his attempts converted (35 of 121).

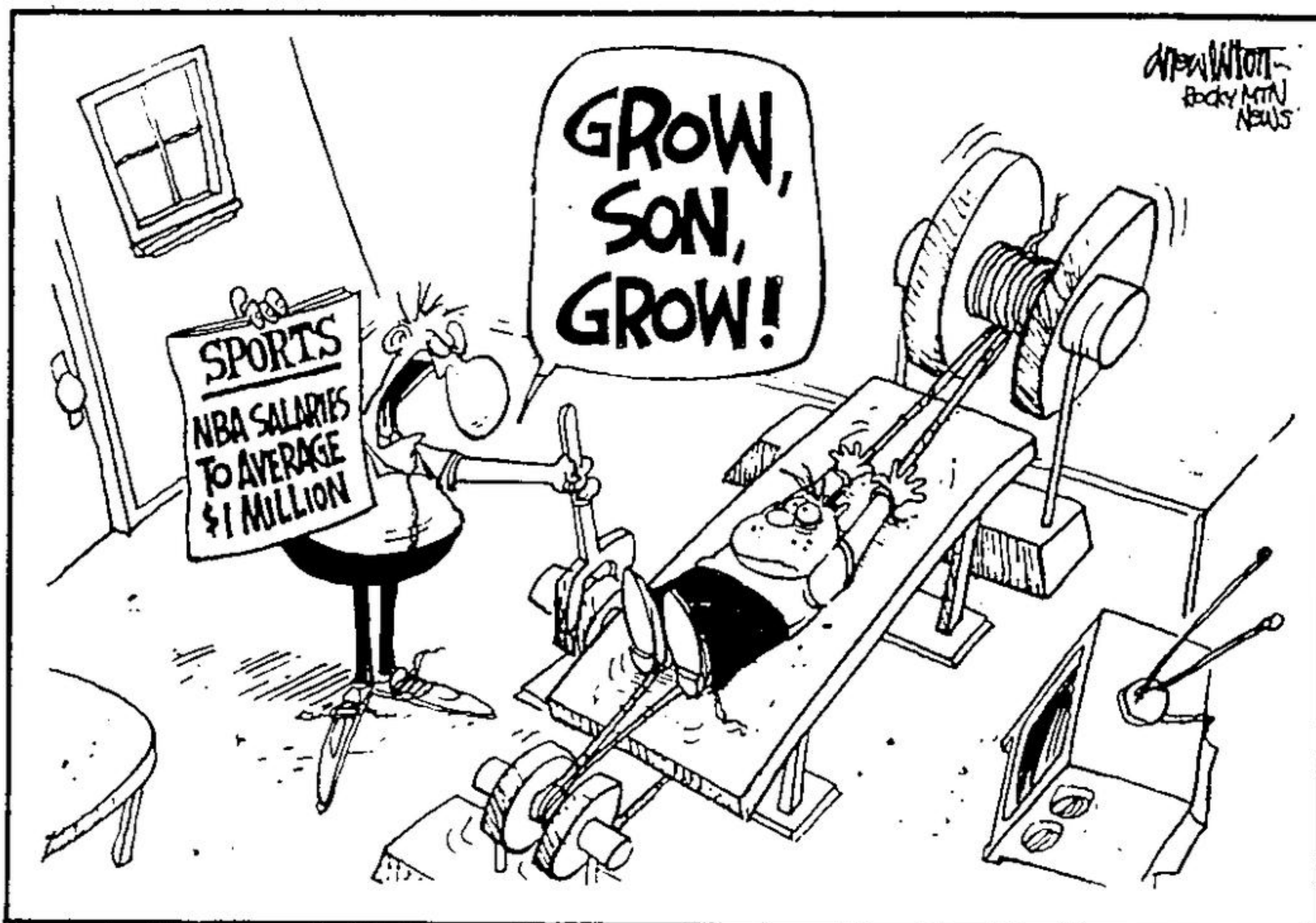
How did the big boys do? Leading scorer Mario Lemieux of the Penguins shot 27.2 percent (76 of 313) for the third highest mark in the league. But Wayne Gretzky of Los Angeles, who finished second in scoring, only netted 17.8 percent of his shots on goal (54 of 303).

Now look back at the 1987-88 NHL season: Two familiar names — Brown and Simpson — had the top scoring percentages. Brown scored on 24 of 80 shots for 30 percent; Simpson, who finished 19th in scoring, did better, converting 56 of 177 shots for 31.6 percent.

Where were Lemieux and Gretzky? Neither even made the top 10 listing two seasons ago. Pittsburgh's top point man hit on 70 of 382, for a rate of 18.3 percent. "The Great One" notched his 40 goals (19 percent) on 211 shots.

Gee, even Dave Kingman was a better hitter than that!

win, lose & DREW



Tire selection important

## Car performance on the line

By Peter Bohr  
Contributing Editor, Road & Track

What's the most confusing thing that comes to mind? The instructions for your "simplified" income tax forms? The owner's manual for your VCR?

How about tires. Considering all available brands, sizes, profiles, wear ratings, speed ratings, load ratings — not to mention prices — buying a new set of tires for your car can be one of modern life's most perplexing tasks.

But in a recent conversation with Kim Reynolds, Road & Track's resident engineer, I learned a fundamental tire truism that may help: The suspension of every car is specifically tuned for its original equipment tire. Or to put it another way, tires are often designed for specific makes and models of cars.

Now those are very significant statements. Just because you can walk into say, a Michelin dealer, and find a set that will physically fit your car's wheels doesn't mean the Michelins are the right tires for your car.

Unless your car's suspension is compatible with the design characteristics of the Michelins, they may for instance, make your car ride like Great Grandpa's buckboard.

With this in mind, the obvious solution to a tire-buying quandary is to buy the same brand, type and size of tire that the makers of your car origi-

nally gave it.

That's simple enough, but unfortunately there can be a slight rub. Although you can be certain that cars like Cadillacs, Corvettes, Mercedes or Porsches will come with proper tires, automakers sometimes shod less pricey models with inferior tires to cut their costs.

These tires aren't unsafe, and they will be reasonably compatible with the cars' suspensions, but they may not, for example, be very durable. Or they may not make the cars handle as well as they could.

Another fundamental, tire truth

says that there's no easier or less expensive way to upgrade your car's performance than buying a good set of tires.

"Tire design is fraught with compromise," said Reynolds. "Durability, grip, ride and handling on wet roads are competing characteristics. The grippiest, best-handling tires are not the most durable or the best riding tires. There hasn't been a tire designed that's superlative in every respect."

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