

# SPORTS & LEISURE

## National amputee hockey team to take on boys in blue

By **EAMONN MAHER**  
Staff Writer

Local residents will be able to get a sneak preview this weekend of Canada's Amputee Hockey Team that is set to compete in the upcoming world championships in Finland and the action just might be a little more intense than the global tournament itself.

The CAHT, which has won all five International Standing Amputee Ice Hockey Federation titles dating back to the start of the tourney in 2002, arrives Friday from towns across the nation for a selection and training camp that will determine the roster that will hit the ice in Tampere, Finland in late April.

As part of the team's two-day stay here, they'll play a fundraising contest against a squad consisting of Halton Regional Police Service staffers called the Boyz 'N Blue at the Alcott Arena on Saturday at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$5 each.

As the reigning world champions, the Canuck coaching staff will have some difficult decisions to make this weekend as the pre-camp list of 27 candidates will be pared down to 19 for the game against the HRPS.

Windsor-area resident Kevin Delaney, a forward and assistant captain on the Canadian squad who has been a part of all five world title victories, said that the competition should be fierce, with five or six players vying for only one or two available spots on the team.

"When I first started with the team, it was basically whoever showed up made it,



Josh Tremblay (53) of the Acton District High School Bearcats attempts a deke on Halton Regional Police Service Boyz 'N Blue goaltender Brad Brand in an exhibition game last Thursday at the Acton Arena. The HRPS squad won the game 6-4 and is preparing for a fundraising game this Saturday at 4 p.m. at the Alcott Arena against the Canadian Amputee Hockey Team.

*Photo by Eamonn Maher*

but there are now about 200 players in the program and there are about 40 diehards who we invited to the initial camp in the selection process," said Delaney, whose right arm was amputated at the elbow.

"We find that our most intense games are scrimmages amongst ourselves, and that's no disrespect to the other countries that'll be in Finland, because they're improving and closing the gap on us. But yes, there could be some veterans from past teams who may be left in tears when they

announce the final roster."

There will be three two-hour training camp sessions for the CAHT in Georgetown, on Friday from 2:45-4:45 p.m. and 9-11 p.m., and Saturday from 8-10 a.m.

Canada defeated Finland 11-2 in the final of the last ISHIF championship in Montreal in 2010. Prior to that, the U.S. had been considered Canada's chief rival, although Delaney noted that the sport is inching closer to inclusion at the Paralympics as more countries establish national teams.

## Hockey is in the blood for Presswood clan

By **EAMONN MAHER**  
Staff Writer

With the 75th anniversary of the Georgetown Minor Hockey Association nearing a close, another season of memories at the local rink passes for the Presswood family.

Four generations of Presswoods have played on local rinks, dating to the mid-1930s when Jack was a teenager—just when Gordon Alcott was starting up his Little NHL, which would be the basis for minor hockey organizations across the country.

"Hit 'Em Hard Presswood," as he was referred to in the local newspaper, went on to play in an industrial league for the Smith and Stone's team, as his son Rodney now remembers. (Jack Presswood died in 1998 at the age of 80).

Rod grew up on the ice at Memorial Arena, often playing with his buddies in rubber boots when the rink manager didn't feel like flooding the surface again. But sometimes the urge would become

too great.

"They would sneak into the arena at night and nobody would know they'd been there because they'd flood the ice when they were finished," laughed Rod's son Brent, who is 40.

"We'd scrape it by hand, too and play three guys a side. No machines around," Rod interjected.

Rod would become one of the famed five Georgetown midget team members from 1963 who were taken in the NHL Draft after they'd won the Ontario Minor Hockey Association championship. Presswood, a defenceman, was selected by the Montreal Canadiens seventh overall with the first pick of the second round, just behind names such as future stars Garry Monahan, Pete Mahovlich and Walt McKechnie.

"The whole line was drafted that year. I guess we made an impression on somebody," recalled Rod. "Unfortunately none of us really made it, but it was tough going back then for anybody back when there were only six teams."

Son Brent also won an OMHA title, as an atom, suited up as a Georgetown Jr. B Gemini at age 16 alongside future NHLer Adam Bennett and ended up studying and playing hockey at Acadia University. He went on to coach at Ohio University, guiding the Bobcats to a national club championship title.

Brent has three sons, with the oldest, Adam, skating for his second season as a member of the Select 6 tyke team.

"You see how much the game has changed, even since I played at a competitive level," said Brent. "Generally, you put the worst kid in net, but now the best athletes are the goalies."

When asked who his favourite NHL player is, Adam responded without hesitation, "Sidney Crosby."

Grandfather Rod looks on proudly, mentioning that he's got another grandson, 10-year-old Jack, playing house league. Brent's other two sons, James, 4, and Gavin, 3, aren't far behind.

"We'll be spending a lot of time at the rink," Rod said.

Currently, the ISHIF is recognized by International Ice Hockey Federation as a Paralympic sport, but it requires a minimum of six countries to ice competitive teams and at this point, just four or five are in the mix.

As well, the CAHT is a completely self-funded organization and the team members travel to camps such as this one at their own expense. The trip to Finland will cost each team member approximately \$3,500 to attend.

"We have to pay to even use the Canadian flag on our jerseys, but at the end of the day, the guys will do anything to advance their sport and we're proud to represent our country," Delaney added.

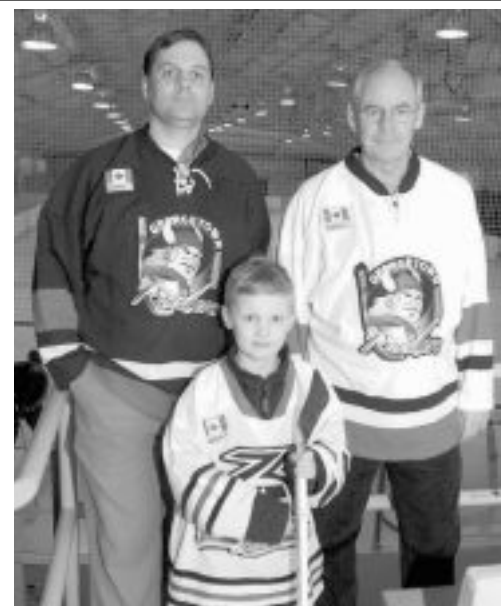
"It's unfortunate that we kind of get swept under the hockey rug as far as people knowing about us— they automatically think we play sledge hockey—so that's something we're constantly trying to overcome. I think the people who come out will be pleasantly surprised at the level we play."

Proceeds from the event will be split between the CAHT and the HRPS's annual Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics athletes in North Halton.

A game between local novice house league teams will get the festivities rolling Saturday starting at 3 p.m. and a silent auction, featuring several items autographed by NHL stars, is being held as part of the fundraiser.

Tickets for Saturday's fundraising game will be available at the door or can be purchased beforehand at the HRPS #1 District station at 217 Guelph St. in Georgetown.

For info, call 905-878-5511 (ext. 2019).



Six-year-old Adam Presswood is carrying on a family tradition that's been maintained for three-quarters of a century as a member of the Georgetown Minor Hockey Association. Adam is the fourth generation of Presswoods who've played youth hockey in town.

*Photo by Eamonn Maher*