

Minor sports are child's play

This month hundreds of thousands of youngsters will be taking to ice rinks across the country to play Canadians' favorite game—hockey.

The ritual is Canadiana at its finest—a mother or father, chilled to the bone, sipping lukewarm coffee in a old arena at some ungodly hour while their offspring struggles to skate from one length of the rink to the other in pursuit of a piece of vulcanized rubber.

Nothing illustrates Canada better than a hockey rink at 7 a.m. in the dead of winter.

Recently, a hockey summit was held in Toronto featuring officials, players, coaches, managers, etc. from all levels of the sport to take a look at what is right and wrong with the game. While, no consensus was reached (or expected), the summit was designed to be the first step at correcting whatever problems ail hockey.

And while this wasn't intended to be a finger-pointing exercise, I can't help but agree with the view of some summit attendees that parents—hockey moms and dads if you will—are the biggest problem in minor hockey today.

While I do not have any hockey-playing kids of my own, I spent all of the 80's covering minor sports and saw, far too often, the kind of behavior some parents are capable of.

I've seen fathers have to be restrained from trying to get at referees, mothers using language that would make a longshoreman blush in describing an opposing eight-year-old player and parents cuffing their kid across the head after a game for missing a pass.

There is no doubt the vast majority of parents are there for the child's benefit and for one reason only—to see their youngster has

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John McGhie

fun. These parents don't have visions of their kid being the next Wayne Gretzky. They don't foresee a life of luxury because their boy has a booming slapshot.

The bad parents are without a doubt the minority, but, that minority seems to grow each year—and not just in hockey, but in all minor sports.

I look back on my own minor hockey days with fondness.

Every Saturday morning my father would drive me to rink then take up residence against a pillar at the far corner of the arena. For an hour I would try to keep my ankles from dragging on the ice while he would silently watch from above.

Not once did he criticize me (I was usually the worst kid on the team) or tell me to skate harder or position myself better. He'd simply listen and nod as I replayed the game for him on the drive home.

Looking back I think he was the perfect hockey parent—never critical, always supportive. Perhaps the reason he was a good hockey dad was because he didn't particularly like hockey and didn't know enough about the game to pass comment.

And perhaps that's what minor sports needs: fewer parents who *think* they know what's going on.



United Way of Halton Hills INFORMATION BULLETIN

THE CANADIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND (CNIB) HALTON/PEEL DISTRICT

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind is a private, voluntary, not-for-profit organization providing rehabilitation and library services to blind, visually impaired and deafblind persons across Canada. The CNIB is celebrating its 82nd Anniversary.

CNIB's service strategy has one primary goal to empower people who are blind and visually impaired to participate fully in a sighted world. CNIB services are designed to meet the changing needs of three major client groups: children, working age adults, and seniors.

The CNIB provides seven core service: **Counselling and Referral** which provide support and consultation to blind, visually impaired or deafblind persons and their families, to assist in their adjustment to vision loss, in addition to ensuring the client accesses the necessary services through appropriate referrals; **Library Services** which ensures that blind and print disabled Canadians have equal access to alternative formats for culture, education and lifelong learning; **Orientation and Mobility** which assists persons to (re) establish safe, independent travel skills; **Rehabilitation Teaching** which assists persons to achieve their maximum potential in developing or redeveloping their skills of daily living necessary for independence; **Vision Rehabilitation** assists visually impaired people maximize the use of their residual vision and promote the prevention of vision loss; **Career Counselling** provides a wide range of vocational, employment and business related services and programs; and **Technical Aids** provides consultants and demonstrations of a variety of high and low tech devices. These devices vary from simple needle threaders to computers with voice output, etc.

These services work together in a delicate balance to ensure the client is offered services that meet their needs and allow the individual to be independent and integrate into their own communities.

As for March 1999, the CNIB is currently serving 1056 clients in the region of Halton. Of this total 87 clients live in Halton Hills. For more information regarding this group please call (905) 275-5332 or Toll-free (888) 275-5332.

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) Halton/Peel District is one of 19 agencies funded in part by the United Way of Halton Hills. Please look for our fundraising campaign in the fall and give generously.

The cost of the above information bulletin was kindly donated by

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