

# A quick guide to being a hockey parent

**Fax your sports reports to Steve at 878-4943 seven days a week.**

The hockey season has started and if you're a rep parent for the first time you're going to get an education. This primer should help prepare you. Good luck.

### Before the game

Hockey parents spend an inordinate amount of time standing around. There's before the game, intermission, practices and after the game. To that end, there's little else for them to do but talk to each other. Scientific studies have shown the following as the topics normally discussed and the percentage of time spent on each:

- The weather (1 per cent)

- Personal lives (1 per cent)
- Work (1 per cent)
- What the team is doing right (1 per cent)
- What the team is doing wrong (96 per cent).

### Positioning

It's important for parents to have just the right spot to watch the game. Each person has their own way of doing that. Typically, they will be on the same side of the stands across from their team's bench. On most teams you will see a line of men standing at the back, leaning on the railing and dis-



## On the loose

with MURRAY TOWNSEND

cussing the game through its entirety, whether or not they have any clue what they're talking about. The mothers often sit in the stands as far back as they can go, and the younger siblings often run around doing anything but watching the game.

### Yelling at the players

A high percentage of parents will yell something during the game. Some will yell all game. It's just the nature of minor hockey. They're usually yelling for themselves because the players are rarely listening. For example, if a player falls down and you hear people yelling "Get up," you needn't worry that the player would forget to do this if not told from the stands. It's just parents being parents.

### Yelling at the referee

Referees are to blame for most of the evils in society, and hence pay the price during games. It's important to remember that only half of the people in the stands or on the ice ever agree with his judgment on any particular decision he makes. And even when they do agree, they might do so sarcastically, yelling something such as, "It's about time, ref." You might get the impression from all of this that referees

aren't real people, but there is some evidence to suggest the contrary.

### When there is a fight on the ice

Occasionally there are still fights on the ice, and while it's very difficult to watch your son or daughter involved in it, you may just have to bite the bullet. During a brawl in a game last year, one mother, seeing her son involved, took matters into her own hands. She went down to one of the runways and waved her arms in the air like one of those airplane guides on the runway. This, apparently was to direct her son away from the trouble, by spotting her. He told her if she ever did that again, he was going to quit hockey.

### After the game

The losing parents spend most of their post-game chatter on how the team would have won, if only they had done such and such.

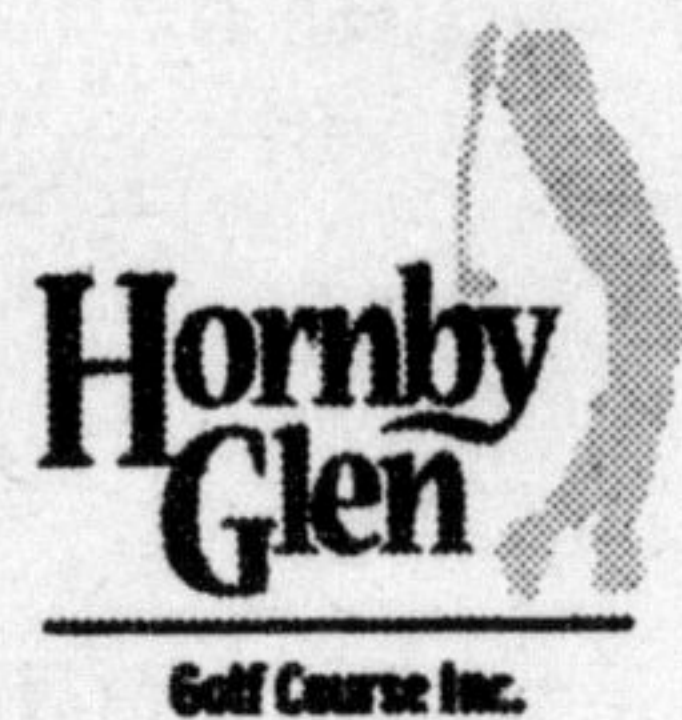
The winning parents like to talk about how they would never lose a game if the team played all the time like they did that game.

### When the players come out of the dressing room

Once the players have changed and made their way out to the lobby, they've pretty much put the game behind them until they get in the car and their parents insist on rehashing the game. They will respond accordingly when someone gives them a pat and says, "Good game." But what they're most interested in is getting to the snack bar. Don't get in their way.

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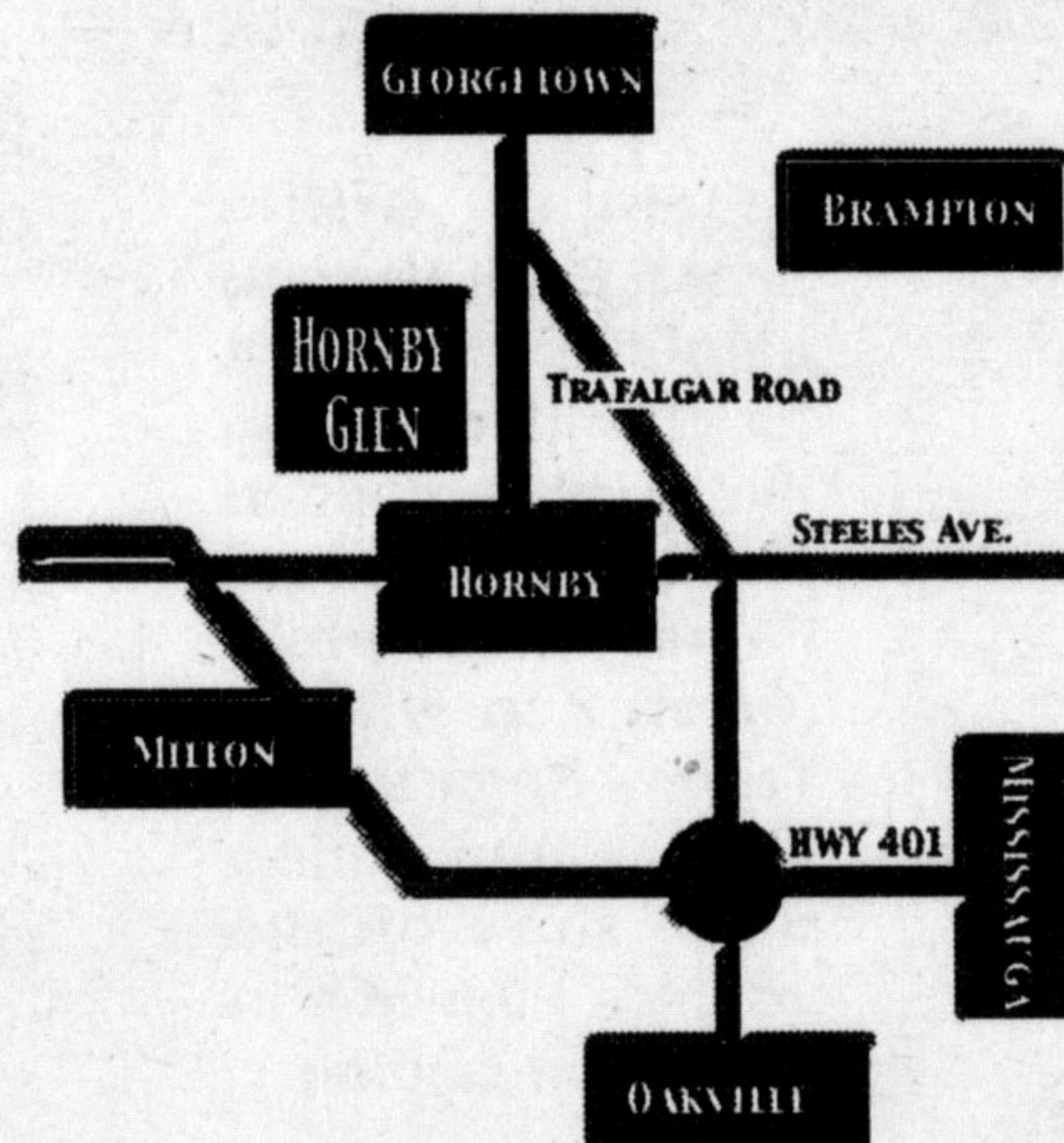
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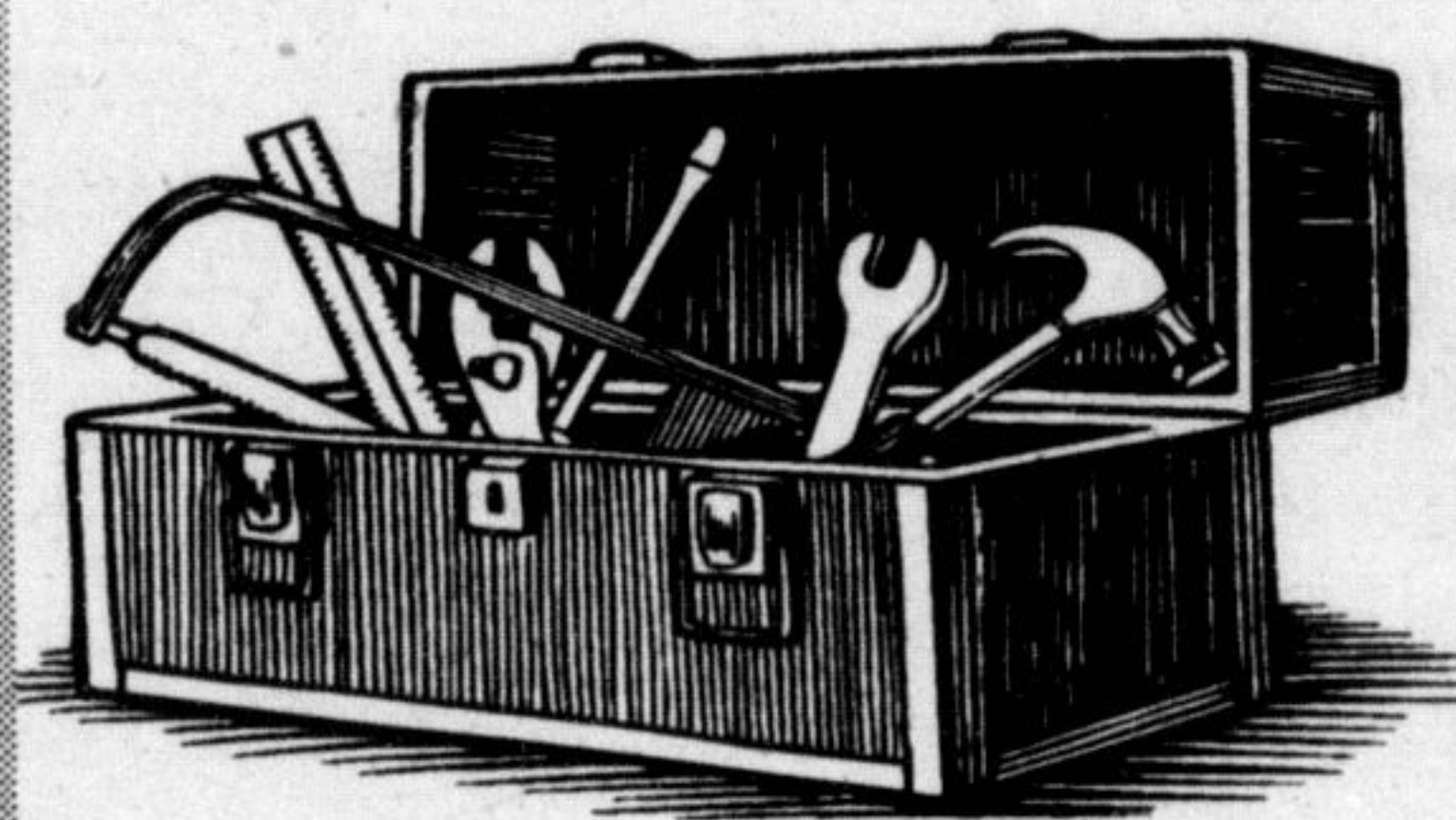
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