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Small players, big fun for new Timbits coach

Positive parent feedback and smiles on kids' faces a winning combination for Nowoselski

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Brian Nowoselski doesn't gauge his coaching success on wins and losses. Instead, his effectiveness can be judged solely by the number of smiles seen both during and after the Yellow Timbits take to the ice each Saturday.

"That's my only measuring stick. If the kids leave the rink happy every week and want to come back next season, then I'll have had a successful year," said the 42-year-old Miltonian, after a practice and subsequent scrimmage with the Timbit Whites. "The smiles on their faces, that's what it's all about."

Currently coaching his son Adam and about a dozen other rink rats, Nowoselski said he had an extremely enthusiastic coach for the bulk of his rep hockey career in Etobicoke, and now's his chance to give back.

And while still only a rookie — having donned the coaching mantle just this past fall — the amount of positive feedback received on a weekly basis suggests he's doing something right.

"He's a good coach, and I love when he shows us how to play real hockey," said Peter Chiappino, whose family nominated Nowoselski for The Champion's Coach of the Month.

Added mother Kathy, "Brian has gone out of his way to make my son's first year of hockey a very memorable one. My son comes off the ice with a smile each week, and asks how many more days until the next time he gets to play."

And by no means are the Chiappinos' comments unusual.

"My husband and I have nothing but great things to say about Brian. He's very positive, patient and encouraging for all the boys," said mother Natalie Kaszycki. "Our son Jack is one of the smaller boys out there, and he's come such a long way since the start of the season."

So what does Jack think of coach Brian?

"I really like him. He's taught me a lot. He helps me with my drills, even when I'm slow."

In hockey-crazed Canada, it can be a mighty bizarre concept to watch a hockey game and not be concerned with who's winning — and by how much.

But with the nation-wide Timbits program, scores and goals are never tabulated. And that suits Nowoselski just fine.

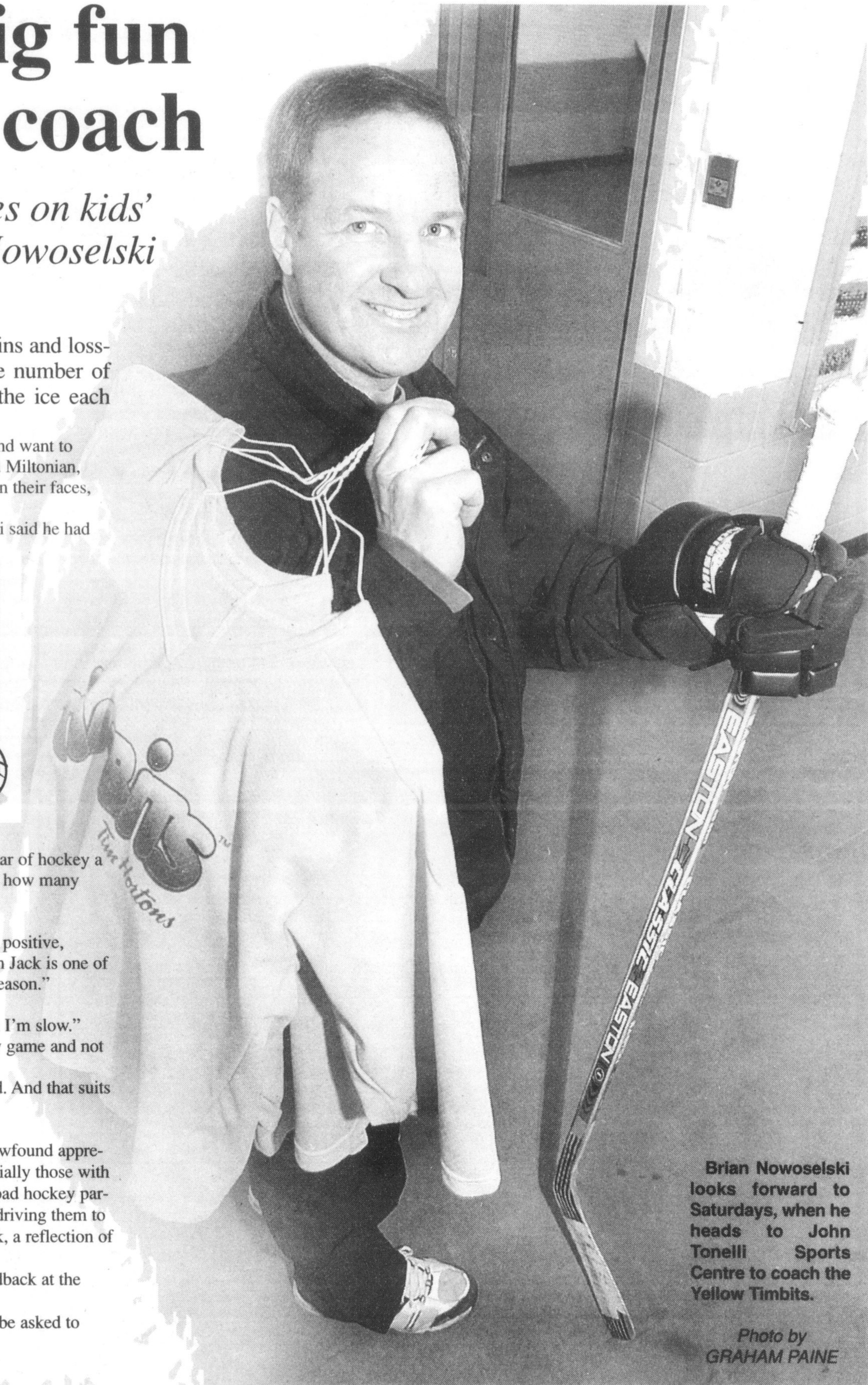
"It's all about giving them a positive introduction to the game," he stressed.

Since joining the coaching ranks this past year, Nowoselski seems to have a newfound appreciation for the time commitment parents make to their hockey offspring — especially those with two or three players in the family. "There's so much in the media about the few bad hockey parents out there, but most of them are really great and put so much into their kids, driving them to games and practices three or four nights a week. What kids get out of it is, I think, a reflection of the parents.

"And the parents on this team have just been great to me, offering positive feedback at the arena or through e-mails pretty much every week."

So with such a rewarding year now nearly over, will Nowoselski even have to be asked to return for 2005/06?

"Oh yeah, I definitely want to continue this," he said.



Brian Nowoselski looks forward to Saturdays, when he heads to John Tonelli Sports Centre to coach the Yellow Timbits.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

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