

# It's loud - very loud - at Memorial Arena at playoff time

I've been a sardine. Then again, so have about 2,000 other locals who decided to check out the action at last week's seventh game of the Central Ontario Jr. B hockey final at Memorial Arena. Sardines, as a rule, never go it alone.

Milton hockey fans finally leaped on the Merchant bandwagon and turned out in droves. Longtime followers of the juniors couldn't help but be a tad unnerved as they had to fight to get seats, concessions and inevitably, urinals.

There were people in the aisles, on the stairways, around the glass at ice level and in virtually every nook and cranny of the rink. Being a sardine was fun. The natural tendency of such crowds is to noise.

In leaping on the Merchant bandwagon as it

## REAUME WITH A SPORTS VIEW with BRAD REAUME



careened towards a possible all-Ontario championship, some people naturally looked for ways to demonstrate their exuberance. They settled on homemade air horns.

Showing good old Canadian common sense, these were promptly banned by town officials, and then the ban was ignored by those expected to enforce it.

I received an anonymous complaint about the noise during Merchant games. The writer

referred to possible permanent hearing damage, the lack of enforcement of the homemade air horn ban and the "uncaring, defiant attitudes of those who use them."

In fact, I have seen Merchant personnel enforcing the ban. The general din at Memorial Arena isn't going to permanently damage anyone's hearing. Permanent damage requires exposure over a long period of time.

An air horn next to your ear however, isn't a general din, it's more like an assault. In this respect the anonymous writer has a point.

The general din is supposed to be loud. It's called atmosphere, and I imagine that it will continue to build through Sunday's game five of the all-Ontario Jr. B semifinal with St. Catharines. A seventh game will cause it to peak again one week from today.

With the crowded conditions at Memorial Arena, I imagine Merchants' owner Brad Grant would love to have a larger seating capacity. In fact I find it rather strange that extra space was not designed into the current structure.

How much more would it have cost to simply include 20 feet of space on the south side of the rink, behind the players benches, and a further open space at the eastern end? The space would be idle most of the time, but would allow for bleacher seating to be erected for major events and more room for the odd trade show that uses the arena.

Such thoughts however, are natural only to sardines once they have been removed from the open ocean and packed for their cosy trip to your table.



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THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 1992



Grapes, a.k.a. Don Cherry, former coach of the Boston Bruins and hockey commentator on Hockey Night in Canada, was in Milton recently to open a new Grapevine restaurant.

Win 5-1

## Merchants take 2-1 semi-final series lead

By BRAD REAUME  
The Champion

Neither coach was happy with the outcome of Wednesday's third game of the Jr. B all-Ontario hockey semi-final, though at least Milton's Rick Bince had a smile on his face.

The Merchants claimed an impressive 5-1 win at Milton's Memorial Arena, for a 2-1 series lead over the St. Catharines Falcons, but not before first line Milton left winger Clancy Seymour was hit with a match penalty for spearing. Seymour faces an automatic four-game suspension.

After a second period collision in the St. Catharines zone, Seymour disengaged from the defenceman to get back into the play. As he did the St. Catharines player screamed in pain and dropped to the ice.

"I always watch behind the play to see who's not coming back," said Bince. "After the collision in the corner, Clancy's stick ended up be-

tween the St. Catharines player's legs. Clancy just pulled away normally to get back into the play. He's only taken 12 minutes in penalties all season."

"I didn't do it," said Seymour, shaking his head after the game. "He did a good job acting. I don't know if there's any recourse to the suspension."

Seymour's match penalty wasn't the only one of the game. A brawl began in the third period when Merchant Adam Hagen took a poke from the bench at a Falcon player, who was retreating to his bench after the whistle. When the ice chips cleared Falcon Ted Kempfer was also assessed a match penalty for spearing.

"I don't care if the OHA gets mad at me," said Bince. "The refereeing was not up to snuff tonight. Greg (Kimmerly) didn't take control early and then he called it by the book, not by logic. Both match penalties shouldn't have been called."

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# Don Cherry can't help talking hockey

## Former NHL coach calls Fair Play Commission a waste of money

By BRAD REAUME  
The Champion

Don Cherry was in town recently to officially open his new Grapevine location at Milton Mall.

Cherry says that the restaurants are franchised, but that he has a lot of input into the look and feel of each one.

"I just don't lend my name," he said. "We try to avoid creating a rough sports bar. We want a place where you'd feel comfortable bringing your girlfriend or mother."

Of course, any discussion with 'Grapes' or 'Gripes' as he is also known, eventually leads to hockey. Cherry took the time for a personal edition of Coach's Corner on opening night at the Grapevine.

On a recent *Hockey Night in Canada* Cherry's broadcast better half, Ron MacLean, took a few shots at Cherry's pick of Barrie for Central Ontario Jr. B champ. MacLean reminded Cherry of his prediction in the wake of their ouster by the Aurora Eagles. Cherry countered that if Aurora could beat Barrie, they would go a long way.

"(Aurora coach) Dana Shutt told me that his team would beat Barrie," said Cherry in Milton. "He said I should be backing Aurora be-

cause they play like the Boston Bruins. I didn't even know they were playing Milton."

"I'll tell you, that's great hockey to watch," he said. "I see Streetsville play a lot. It's close to home."

Cherry's broadcast partner MacLean referees in the Jr. B loop.

"I saw MacLean referee once in Streetsville and he called too many penalties. Now he lets them play. I think he got tired of people hollering at him."

"I like to get out to the rinks and talk with the coaches," Cherry said. "They're there. I listen to the coaches. I always make a point to ask for explanations."

Regarding his shots at the Fair Play Commission, which angered local businessman, former NHL referee and commission member Bruce Hood, Cherry was unapologetic.

"The Fair Play Commission goes to the fancy Sutton Place Hotel in Toronto, not the Holiday Inn, not Journey's End, and they spend government money to determine that highsticking and fighting are bad for the game," Cherry mocked. "Wouldn't it be nice if some of that money went to minor hockey?"

"I know they don't like me and my positions on the game," said Cherry with a shrug. "What would I know about hockey? I only

played it at every level and I coached all over the place. I see more games in a week than they see in a whole winter."

Cherry said in 1979 he warned that highsticking would become a big problem. "As soon as helmets and face protection became mandatory it was inevitable." He contended that U.S. college hockey is the most vicious in the world and it has the most restrictive rules regarding facial protection.

"In the old days everybody had their stick down because they were all vulnerable. Now, they think they're impervious to injury. The problem is all the equipment."

He said highsticking and checking from behind anywhere near the boards should earn the offender immediate ejection from the game.

"The Fair Play Commission is wrong about a lot of things but their intentions are good. You know, 25 years ago broken necks and spines were rare in hockey but now there are fewer people playing and more injuries."

"With a full mask there is no respect for the stick at all. They swing the stick like a weapon and it's automatic to cross check to defend yourself from a hit."

"The guys that coach and play the game are nodding their heads at this," Cherry said. "No-check hockey for the little kids is the

worst thing in the world. They need to learn how to receive a check and it's best when they're little."

Regarding Hood's assertion that Cherry's 15-second blast of the Fair Play Commission's work did a lot of damage to their cause because of his high profile, the former coach was philosophical. "That's the way life is," he said. "I must have something going for me besides good suits and a handsome face. I predict things and they come true."

"It's the fans, the people who pay the freight that seem to like fighting," he said. "Who are the people who don't like fighting? Players? Fans, who pay \$20 to go?"

Other hockey topics were also on Cherry's mind.

"I've given (NHL president) John Zeigler lots of shots," Cherry said a week before the strike deadline, "but I might be one of the few guys who like him. So far he's looking dynamite. He's saying the right things and laying it out right."

Cherry was careful to point out the distinction between a commissioner and a league president. Zeigler is a president and works for the owners. People get it mixed up, according to Cherry, because former NHL president

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