

Surprise, surprise... look who's in the playoffs

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As I See It

Who would have thought the National Hockey League playoffs would take the shape they have?

All the perennial favourites are gone from contention, leaving the weaker teams, by reputation only though, to battle it out for the top spot.

Montreal Canadiens and Philadelphia Flyers both have fallen and that surprised a lot of people.

One team that hasn't surprised anyone is the New York Islanders, resident champions, but it also cannot be said they are traditionally in that playoff spot, only gaining the title last year in a Cinderella win.

Surprise contenders are Minnesota North Stars, New York Rangers and Calgary Flames, the only Canadian team to withstand the competition among the more numerous American teams.

Flames' win over Philadelphia in their seven game series still has everyone talking.

Now, they have to take on Minnesota North Stars while the New York Rangers and Islanders will face off in the other semi-final series.

As far as my pick goes, it's hard to go against Islanders because they do have the advantage in that they are resident cup holders.

But, let's not count out Rangers. After all, even though they haven't won the Stanley Cup for some years now, they have shown a lot of style and ability by progressing this far.

In the other series, Calgary looks good and they should be able to defeat Minnesota, having just come from a big win over the bad boys of the NHL, Philadelphia Flyers.

Let's face it, though everyone in Canada must be secretly hoping for Calgary, being the only Canadian team in contention.

We all know Nelson Skalbania, club owner is hoping for big things too from his club.

The finals, as I see it, will be New York Islanders and Calgary Flames and from that point, it's anybody's guess what will happen.

Yet, this year, even the losers looked good.

Edmonton Oilers certainly made their presence felt on the ice with the amazing Wayne Gretzky at the head of it all.

However, many sports fans said it best when they commented, "Gretzky can't win it all alone."

On the contrary though, Oilers have some good players and they should really do well next year when the playoffs roll around again.

St. Louis Blues looked very impressive this past season, finishing second in league play.

Blues have for many years been the team most likely to claim the basement spot but all that changed this year and they will be a team to watch in the very near future.

Montreal Canadiens played good this year but they just don't seem to have what it takes any more.

What they need now is to undertake a good rebuilding program and I know that statement will irk many a Montreal fan who has that same firm belief the Canadiens will always come back.

Of course, there are still those people who believe the South will rise again!



Sailing, sailing...

Sailing is usually a refined sport but when you're talking about the Beaver Valley River Rat Races in Heathcote this past Sunday, (That's) a whole different story. Well over 400 boats took part in the race or what looked like boats as the "Rats" proved their courage by launching almost anything that would float. Boats were entered from as far away as Tononto and there were even a few from Midland and one from Elmvale.

Keegos' swim club swim-a-thon Saturday

Midland YMCA Keegos swim club will be holding their 12th annual Swim-A-Thon Saturday and Sunday at Midland YMCA.

Club members will swim Saturday from 3:30 p.m. until 6 p.m. and again from 8 p.m. until 11 p.m.

A further time from 8 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. will also accomodate club members Sunday.

Starting at 4 p.m. and running until 6 p.m. Sunday will be an added feature, the celebrity swim, this being the first year it has been held.

Local celebrities taking part in the Swim-A-Thon will include Doug Lewis, M.P. for Simcoe North, Jean Hartman, Midland YMCA president, John Gammell, former Keegos coach, Dr. Norm Grieves and Bill Barnett of Midland Secondary School.

One representative of each real estate firm in Midland and Penetanguishene will also be swimming in a contest to see who can last the longest or raise the most money.

All monies collected from the Swim-A-Thon will help pay for travelling expenses, coaching expenses and entry fees into inter-regional swim meets.

This is the only fund raising event the Keegos swim club holds.

Following the celebrity swim, a trophy presentation will be held for club members, drawing their successful season to an end.

Swimmers in the Swim-A-Thon will swim a maximum of 200 lengths of the or for two hours, whichever comes first.

Swim-A-Thon officials say there are about 50 swimmers in the event and expect to have

about 70 next year. This year's total is up 15 swimmers from last year.

Olympia victory not forgotten

In the confusion of season changes, it sometimes happens a team's victory can be overlooked.

One such win was that of Olympia Sports of Midland Minor Hockey's Novice House League for the 1980-81 hockey season.

Olympia Sports edged out Summers Trophies 4-3 in Midland Centennial Arena recently to win the championship, Gary Miller scoring three of those goals for Olympia Sports.

Miller, the high scorer of the year, scored his third of three goals in the first five minutes of sudden death overtime to give Olympia Sports the winning marker.

Also scoring for Olympia Sports was Shawn Lalonde with a single goal.

Scoring for Summers Trophies were Sean McIlravey and Doug Summers with two goals.

In the consolation round held the same day in Midland Centennial Arena, Kid's Stuff outscored Bike Shop 5-1 for that title.

Chris Bales scored a pair of goals for Kid's Stuff, both of those unassisted.

Single markers were added by Chuck Quesnelle, Brandy Spring and Steven Graham.

Bike Shop's only goal was scored by Richard Perrault with the assist going to Kevin O'Rourke.

Bike Shop deserves a lot of credit for their participation in the consolation round, having come from the bottom position in league play to earn a spot in that round.

Summers Trophies was first in round robin competition while Olympia Sports took second, putting those teams in the championship round.

Kid's Stuff claimed third spot.

Just missing out on playoff spots were I.U.E. in fifth place and Clarke-MacDonald in sixth.

Midland Minor Hockey executive would like to thank all coaches and managers involved with this year's teams, including the coaches and managers of the Novice House League.

They are Bill Graham and Jim Bales of Kid's Stuff, Bill Nicoll and Roy Cunningham of I.U.E., John O'Rourke and Lionel Magnan of Bike Shop, Bob Bourgeois and David Buttineau of Clarke-MacDonald, Bruce Murdock and Jim Summers of Summers Trophies and Rick Larmand and Charlie Reidal of Olympia Sports.

Blue Knights now in Huronia

Motorcycle riding is a fun sport and a practical way to get around but it can also be dangerous if not handled with the proper respect.

That is the main idea behind the newly formed Blue Knights Huronia Chapter operating in this area.

The Huronia Chapter is actually part of the international group, consisting of 100 international chapters with over 3,500 law enforcement and associated members throughout the United States and Canada.

The Knights' organization wants to assure the public that not all motorcyclists can be stereotyped with that rider with unkempt attire, a noisy machine and displaying indecent behaviour.

The group will be helping worthy causes in cycle safety and charities in order to cultivate this new image of safe riding habits, public awareness and concern for the general public.

More information can be obtained by calling the interim executive, President Jim Murray at 424-5247 or Vice-President Steve Graham at 737-4334.



Winning smiles

When a team is happy together, they play well together and the Penetanguishene Hotel Brule Oldtimers hockey club is proof of that. Winners of several gold medals in hockey and baseball the club won a hockey tournament this past weekend in Scarborough to finish their highly successful hockey season as winners. Back row from left: Mike Dupuis, Ed Trudeau, Jim Wright, Bill

McCuaig, Larry Leroux, Dave Stainton, Chuck Hatfield, Fred Patterson, Larry Marchand, Alvin Robillard, John Dubeau, Paul Dion. Front row from left: John Dion, Gary Ronald, Ken Davidson, Nelson Robillard, Larry Banks. Missing from photo: Coach Stan LeClair, Trainer Andre Bald, Assistant Trainer Bill Lacroix, Manager Bernita Robillard.