



Sidelines by Garry Forbes

Working man's woe

OLD MURDER CITY, MICH. -- A large sign in a restaurant window suggests you say nice things about Detroit. It doesn't mention what will happen if you say otherwise.

Detroiters are defensive about the old Murder Capital tag. They say it's no longer fair or accurate. They will tell you, though, that Detroit is a tough town, a working man's town, a place built on the backs, shoulders, sweat and physical stamina of people who take enormous pride in the fact that they earn every single penny in their pay envelopes.

It is, they'll tell you, a city with character. Not pretty. Not wealthy. Not glamorous. But solid with character right out to the extended calloused knuckles of the men who call themselves, above everything else, survivors.

This town gives you a lot to think about, about pride, about character, about how it all has to do with sports.

I have a lot of time to think as I sit in Old Shellegagh's a couple of hours before the Detroit Red Wings will face the Edmonton Oilers.

Old Shellegagh's is a genuine Irish pub in Greektown, a few blocks away from Joe Louis Arena. A handbill on the bar says the place will be the site of workouts for Detroit's famous Kronk Boxing Team and the official training camp for Randy Shields and Milton McCrory before their welterweight clash at Joe Louis Arena on Saturday.

Winner of the bout could have a shot at Sugar Ray Leonard, and, of course, a shot at avenging the defeat by Leonard of Kronk star Thomas Hearns.

As I read the handbill and survey the small collection of people in the small pub, I begin to recognize some of the pride and character of this place, this city, the Kronk Boxing Team and the sport of boxing itself, which, as anyone can see, is gradually returning to its roots in the bars, streets, and alleyway gyms where it thrived -- and developed its character -- a long time ago.

Not pretty, this place, but deep with character.

The lights are bright at Joe Louis Arena, perhaps brighter than normal on this night. The announcer says this is the largest regular-season crowd in National Hockey League history, and the people cheer.

The game begins. The people cheer as their Red Wings get off to a quick start and take a

big lead. They are subdued as the Oilers come back to tie the game.

As the final whistle sounds, there seems to be an unusual and deep-seated atmosphere of disappointment among the Joe Louis throng -- certainly something more than the loss of a good lead has brought this largest-ever crowd down.

All these people in this bright new building and there is an emptiness which hangs in the air like a funeral solemnity. Something is wrong. You could see it in faces as the people filed out into the cold downtown Detroit streets, heading home for a few hours' sleep before work.

In the now-empty arena, I sit in the top-row centre and watch a few workmen sweeping among the aisles. I think about what went wrong. I think about the game that just ended and the sport of hockey and the city I'm in.

It was a simple puzzle, really. The players tonight hadn't worked. The game had been virtually no-contact. At times, it had been pretty, not unlike the very arena and complex in which it had taken place.

But it hadn't worked. They hadn't worked.

I think about Minor Hockey Week which would be getting underway the next morning in all the places where minor hockey is played. I think about how the game has changed since I played minor hockey. I remember well the gritty realism and thrill the big leagues inspired in me. It was never pretty then, but it had character.

As I sit alone in the Joe Louis stands, as the lights are dimmed, I think about how Gordie Howe -- for my money far and away the most complete hockey player to ever play the game -- never skated for the Red Wings in this building. He played down the road a few miles at the Olympia. Not very pretty, that old place.

As I leave, feeling as empty as the hallways at Joe Louis Arena, I wonder where the working man's game has gone.

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"...most promoters of good times are convinced that Super Bowl tipping will make the 1980 Republican National Convention -- Detroit's last glamour event -- look like a meeting of temperance freaks."

—The Detroit News

Tie and loss on weekend Cents sinking

The Midland Centennials are dangerously close to dropping right out the bottom of the Georgian Bay Junior C Hockey League playoff race, and a weekend loss and a tie against the league's last-place club hasn't encouraged anybody.

The Centennials, who at one point shared the league lead, scrambled to a 5-5 draw with the Oro 77's Friday in Oro before suffering an 11-6 trouncing by the same club Sunday in Midland.

The Centennials remain in sixth spot in the eight-team league, but only are one point ahead of both Oro and the Gravenhurst Indians. Both of those clubs have a game in hand on Midland.

Only the top six clubs will make the playoffs, and the Cents will have to put something together soon if they want to be one of them. A good point to start would be this weekend. The Haliburton Huskies come to Midland Friday for an 8:30 p.m. date, and the Indians will play host to the Midlanders Sunday.

Friday's game has been deemed the Centennials' Kids' Night. Kids can pick up free tickets at participating local merchants and have a chance at free prizes which will be offered during the game.

The Centennials received a prize of sorts themselves in last Friday's game when Brian Cadeau came up with the tying goal with only 38 seconds remaining in the game. Other Midland goals

Friday were had by Paul Hahn, Brian Garner, Brad Copeland and Rick Rever. Cadeau, Copeland,

Hahn, Mike Leo, Travis Bonneville and Wilson Cowan were the Midland marksmen in Sunday's game.

Gordon's goal boosts Performance

Brent Gordon came up with the winning goal as Performance Motor Sports turned in a 5-3 upset of the North Stars in Midland Recreational Hockey League action Monday at Midland Arena.

In other MRHL games, league-leading Olympia Sports clinched top spot with a 7-4 win over Duggans Polar Kings and Hebner's Taxi ran over the Roadrunners 10-5.

Other Performance marksmen were Earl Scott, with two, Wayne Simpson and Ken Hamelin.

Ken Edgar, Brian Phillips and Harvey Benoit replied for the North Stars.

John Lemieux notched two for Olympia and singles were provided by Warren Cadeau, George Weatherall, Warren Duckworth, Earl Cousineau and Karl Todd.

Banks, Dion pace Brule

Larry Banks and John Dion scored twice apiece to pace the Penetanguishene Brule Hotel Oldtimers to an 11-9 exhibition win over the Midland Oldtimers Friday at Penetanguishene Arena.

Kim Ormiston hit twice for Duggans. Single goals were had by Tom Borsa and Mike Huffman.

Two-goal scorers for Hebner's were Jim Patchell, Pat Laurin and Brendan Crawley. Brigg Harvey, Ted Weatherall, Don Hebner and Steve McLellan each scored once.

Dennis Pelltier had two for the Roadrunners. John Bell, Gord Paul and Gerrard Lachappel each chipped in singles.

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Ladouceur turns off Tilson

Norm Ladouceur scored an unassisted goal to lift Chalet Sports to a 2-1 decision over Tilson TV in Penetanguishene Recreational Hockey League action Sunday at Penetanguishene Arena.

In other PRHL games, Pollard's Refrigeration took over

first place by a point with an 8-3 hammering of Commodore Hotel and Dock Lunch slipped to second with a 7-3 loss to Hindson Marine.

Mike Duval scored the other goals for Chalet, and Mike Hartley replied with Tilson's only goal.

Hindson marksmen were Marcel Vallee,

Mike Duval and Ken Cowan with two each, and Steve St. Amant with a single.

Bill McIntosh, Rick Desjardins and Ken Edgar replied for Dock Lunch.

Jamie Robitaille notched three goals for Pollard's, and singles were provided by Bill

Arbour, Moe Forget, Terry Dahmer, Louis Belcourt and Jim Pollard.

Gary Lizotte, Gary Buttineau and Jules Duquette each had one for Commodore.

Wraith tops Alpine event

Cam Wraith came up with a first-place finish for Midland Secondary School in the Junior Boys' Division of a Georgian Bay Secondary School Athletic Association Alpine Ski Meet last Thursday at Mount St. Louis.

Wraith's performance was one of several outstanding placings by MSS team members and helped the school to a third-place overall finish.

Other top MSS skiers at Mount St. Louis included Stacey Leitch, third in the Senior Girls' division, and John Lynn, third in the Senior Boys'

division. In an earlier meet at Collingwood's Blue Mountain, MSS' Girls

team placed sixth of 18 teams and Midland's Boys came up with an eighth-place ranking.

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OPEN CASH BONSPIEL

ever to be held in Midland. Beginning Thursday, January 21st at 7 p.m., the spiel will carry on Friday evening beginning at 6 p.m. and all day Saturday. Semi-finals will begin at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Sunday with Finals at 2 p.m. Some of the best competitive curlers in Ontario will be vying for the top money prize. Spectators welcome.