

Robitaille about to tell of his career



Sports Views

by Ron Johnson
Sports Editor

by RON JOHNSON

According to writer Jim Kernaghan's column in the Dec. 2 edition of the London (Ont.) Free Press, Midland's Mike Robitaille is in the process of dealing another blow to the already tarnished image of the NHL and major junior hockey.

Mike is planning and writing a book dealing with his life in organized hockey.

You will remember that Robitaille's career was cut short by an injury to his spine which was caused by the lack of reasonable care for his safety exhibited by the Vancouver Canucks of the NHL, for whom he played when he was injured.

In various long-running court skirmishes, Robitaille was awarded the sum of \$355,000 for damages suffered through this neglect.

Robitaille has some startling revelations coming out in his book. Apparently Al Eagleson and the NHLPA never even contacted him during the ordeal. He says, "It was interesting that Al Eagleson never got in touch with me. In three years I never got a call. That will be a chapter."

Mike has been ostracized by the hockey establishment, but Robitaille has gathered his life together and holds onto it with the help of his family.

"I'm lucky in many ways," he says. "I'm doing things I never seemed to have enough time for before. My family is a big part of my life and so is my church."

Although Robitaille insists that the book will not be a bitter indictment of the league, it will show another side of the seemingly

glamorous profession.

"Pro hockey can be a circle that goes around and around—sex, drinking and back again. I was fortunate to have many friends outside hockey, too. Inside hockey, when my problems came up, even my teammates started ignoring me," said Robitaille in the London newspaper.

As has always been the case, to belong to the brotherhood of sports professionals, you had better toe the line and not speak out against the "hand that feeds you."

He also speaks about his days as one of the top junior defencemen in Canada. It was a period of trying to please parents, coaches, and himself; to garner the admiration of the fans.

"I had to please them (his parents) by being the best. I guess I was searching for love. After three or four years, I was the best junior defenceman in the country. It's hard to explain but the more I accomplished, the more love I'd get back, I felt. Everybody, I guess, wants to be stroked."

Although he possesses only a grade eight formal education, Robitaille speaks eloquently on his subject. The book is being

helped along by Berry Steinbeck, who has collaborated with baseball personalities Joe Pepitone and Earl Weaver on their books.

It sounds to me to be the most thoughtful hockey book written to date. The market is glutted with the ghost-written biographies filled with memorable goals and fun in the dressing room.

The book apparently will discuss Robitaille's career, but will also deal with several more serious incidents in hockey. He talks of his dependence on the drug Valium, and his battle with Canucks about his physical ability to continue playing while he was injured.

I for one will make it must reading when it hits the book stores. Maybe parents and hockey hopefuls should do the same. It's about time.

RANDOM NOTES....sorry to hear of the departure this week of original Blue Jay Alvis Woods to Oakland for veteran slugger Cliff Johnson....if Johnson hits for the Jays the way he always has against them, it will be profitable....I feel like baseball today....How can Floyd Bannister be worth \$4.5 million for winning only 13 games?

Sportsreport

Ron Johnson
★ Sports Editor ★

A's drop a pair

Missing players from the lineup

by RON JOHNSON

Midland Athletics have lost another pair of games, but remain in the hunt for third place in OHA Intermediate action.

After losing a nail-biter in overtime to Port Elgin in Midland Friday night, the A's dropped a 6-4 decision in Durham against the Huskies, on Sunday afternoon.

A's were shorthanded once again on Sunday as they lost to Durham, but still managed to outplay and outshoot their hosts. Missing from the lineup were both Terry and Wayne King, Bruce Guthrie, Ken Knapton, and the usual Doug McMann and Joe Butson who are injured.

Although they trailed throughout the game, the visitors held a large 50-33 edge in shots. Huskies' netminder, Rob Nixon played excellently.

Intermission scores were 2-1 and 4-2. Huskies scored with goalie Craig Watson pulled for an extra attacker in the final minute to produce the final verdict.

Wayne Dixon paced the scoring with two goals, while Doug Taylor had a goal and assist. Acting captain Paul Robillard also had a goal and assist.

A's will be further short-staffed next game as Terry Spiker drew a game suspension for his role in a scuffle with Paul Lawrence of Durham in the last 10 minutes of the game.

Friday's loss to Port Elgin also should have been a win. A's outshot the visiting Sunocos by 33-24, but couldn't find the scoring range. Dixon and Guthrie scored, and Carl Cowan had a pair of helpers to aid the cause, but Pete McDermid's goal at 4:05 of overtime ruined it for the home fans.

This was one of the best games played at home by A's this season, and it's too bad the fans couldn't have witnessed a victory.

Craig Watson was his usual unconscious self in Midland's net, and was rewarded by being chosen the game's first star.

ATHLETICISMS....A's manager Shawn

Stewart announced that Monday, the team has signed Steve Bice to a contract...he led Orillia intermediates in scoring last year, and is a former teammate of Craig Brown's when both played junior C with Gravenhurst Indians...Carl Cowan seems to be picking up his share of points, but hasn't displayed his

usual on-ice leadership...Stewart says it's because this is Carl's first year in the league...and that with school commitments, he doesn't get enough practice time...A's are in Georgetown for an 8:30 game with the Raiders this Friday, before hosting Barrie at 8 p.m. on Sunday night.

Civitans tie Collingwood

Midland Civitan peewees scored a last-minute goal Sunday at Centennial Arena to gain a 3-3 tie with the visiting Collingwood peewees.

Collingwood took a 1-0 first period lead, but Civitan's Tim Jenkinson tied it at 2:15 of the second, on an assist from Mike Larmand.

Things really loosened up in the third, as Midland moved ahead on a goal by Mike Lafreniere, set up by Chris Tannahill. Three consecutive penalties at this point hurt Midland, as Collingwood scored two goals on

the powerplay to lead 3-2.

Play seesawed back and forth with lots of good, clean action at both ends until the last minute.

Billy Meridis whipped the tying goal home with 1:01 left, after being set up by Chris Tannahill. The 3-3 tie was well deserved by both teams.

Next game for the Civitans is Friday night in Parry Sound. Sunday the team returns to Centennial Arena for a 3 p.m. game with Orillia.



They don't work better!

MPP Al McLean has just tried out one of the rocks at the Midland Curling Club. McLean helped the club secure a Wintario grant in the amount of \$1,336 to aid in putting new and better handles on 82 rocks at the club. From the appearance here, McLean doesn't appear to like the way the handles work. It's not the rocks, Al!

McLean aids MCC

Al McLean, centre, was at the Midland Curling club last Saturday afternoon to observe some of his work. Al as local MPP, was instrumental in helping the club obtain new handles for their curling rocks. The handles are the same as those used in major competition like the Brier and the Silver Broom world championships. Shown are Leighton Smith, left,