



Sports Views

by Ron Johnson

On golden ponds (or rinks)

BY RON JOHNSON

With the advent of the Silver Stick hockey tournament at the Centennial Arena, I find my mind filled with the remembrances of youthful hockey played at many different levels, and in many different locals.

It is not with the quality of the hockey played that I wish to deal with here, but the intangibles involved in the sport which time cannot diminish.

The game of hockey can be played anywhere and at any time and still provide basically the same joys and thrills as if it was being played at Maple Leaf Gardens. (Maybe that's a bad example!)

The joy of breaking in on net is just as meaningful on a cleared area of frozen river, or a backyard rink, as it is to be cheered on to such a feat in a noisy arena. The inner emotions stirred by skating alone with stick and puck on a deserted rink after everybody else was called home to supper, or perhaps before anyone had yet arrived, cannot be duplicated under the pressures of an organized league game.

At these times a boy can be any player he desires, or maybe just himself. He can do numerous "spinaramas", a la Serge Savard,

or he can rush end to end like Bobby Orr. No goalie could ever stop those "cannonading drives" which were unleashed when no one else was around.

How about just playing "Showdown" in your drive way with your brothers? The variations were too numerous to count. My brothers and I always tried to go through the lineup of the old Toronto Maple Leafs to see who would score the first goal. You would try a little harder when a favourite player had his turn. The Big M scored a lot more goals than Ron Stewart or Billy Harris, and probably more than both combined.

The neighbourhood shinny games were the highlight of many Saturdays. They were especially rewarding when you could manage a goal when your older brothers were playing. Sometimes even Dad could be coaxed into donning his skates. Even if you never touched the puck, or tennis ball, you always tried desperately to maintain your best skating style in order to catch the appropriate glance.

Minor hockey could be just as rewarding. Remember getting up in what seemed like the middle of the night to play peewee house league? Now that's dedication. On many

occasions we had to turn the arena lights on ourselves in order to start the games. It was also colder on the ice than it was outside on most Saturday mornings. Little thought was given to the conditions when the initial feelings of being a part of a team were compared.

It was while playing midget house league one season that my greatest memories evolved. Two of my brothers and I all played on the same team, thanks in large part to the leniency of the age rules. Also on the team were a couple of our best neighbourhood friends. In all, the team managed to ice only eight skaters on a regular basis. Somehow we managed to end first in the league and ended up in the championship game. This one game left us with lifelong memories.

The game was played in late March and the ice machine had either broken down or had been turned off earlier in the day. It was minor hockey night, a series of title games played one after the other with somewhere around a million fans packed into the old Parry Street Ice Palace in Woodstock.

Our side got off to a fast start, if such a thing was possible in that slush, and we took a 1-0 lead. My young brother Terry, played goal

and gave a great imitation of a stone wall, as it appeared the goal might stand up for the duration of the game. Everyone was soaked through to the skin either with perspiration or from falling into the slop. Most of our team played the whole game, as you must when you only have eight players!

Our opponents had approximately 37 guys on their bench and the tide of the game turned at about the one minute mark of the first period. However as the last minute crept closer, the score remained 1-0. As seconds ticked away, they swarmed our net and the unavoidable occurred. With but seven ticks left, the puck crossed our goal line because Terry said his eyes were too close together. (Wearing a baseball-like mask, the protective wire bars came in front of his eyes when he looked down, or some such nonsense!)

Subsequently the other team outshot us 11-1 in overtime and scored a goal to win the championship. We cared little about the loss and were totally proud of the fact that we had survived the game. The grueling task had formed bonds of friendship amongst our team that have endured over the years. Except for my brother Terry. We still hate his eyes!



This one didn't make it!

spike attempt hits net at St. Theresa's on Alumnae V-ball night

A's game set back Jan. 2 due to Silver Stick

Sunday night's OHA Intermediate A game between Midland Athletics and Durham Huskies at Centennial Arena which was originally scheduled to start at 8 p.m. has been reset for 8:30 due to the Silver Stick hockey tournament which will be holding the championship games all afternoon and into the early evening.

Motorists are reminded, school children are currently on their Christmas-New Year's holiday. Please keep an eye open for them.

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COMMITTEES
Eight committees were established at the Dec. 15, meeting of the Simcoe County Roman Catholic Separate School Board. Committees will review French as a Second Language programs, programs in French Language Instructional Units and Special Education services. Committees will continue development of High School programs, Catholic Family Life Education, and the new school in Tottenham. A special joint committee of trustees and teachers will consider matters isolated from 1982 negotiations. The 1983 Budget committee was also established.

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