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Second Section

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Tuesday, December 31, 1985

Junior girls carry future

By KELLY CONNELLY
 Sports Editor

The future of the Whitchurch-Stouffville Girls Hockey League rests on the shoulder pads of about 24 junior players.

It is these girls who will eventually filter into the senior ranks and replace the veterans on the Midget, Intermediate and Senior representative squads. At least it's hoped they will.

LOW TURNOUT

The junior registration has "declined a bit" this season, noted league president Cliff Dunkeld. The junior talent department is looking a little thin these days too. The Bantam Rep squad hasn't won a major championship in five years.

and a declining junior registration could retard this embryonic cord of talent a few years down the road.

What happens when senior sharpshooters like Debbie Coxworth, Barb Goudie, Sandy Ramer and the Coppins girls are no longer around to bring home provincial championships?

Doug Gornall isn't too worried. "We've got some really good junior players," the junior houseleague coach remarked. "The only difficulty is the numbers. We could use twice as many girls."

"We have enough sponsors for four (houseleague) teams, but we only have two, so we alternate sweaters every week."

FEW PRACTICES

Still, some of the more adept junior players aren't entirely happy with the set up.

Colleen Stewart, who plays on the Bantam Rep squad, said the team practices only once a month which makes line fusion a little difficult.

As well, the 14-year-old centre admitted that playing the same houseleague team every week becomes less of a challenge.

That doesn't concern Kerry Holland as much as playing a stronger rep opponent and being walloped. She recalled an early season encounter with the Mississauga PeeWees that left the Stouffville Bantams on the losing end of a scoring blitz.

"I don't mind playing a houseleague team over and over again," said the 13-year-old left winger. "I think it's more fun than playing a team that's better than you...and you can't put any moves on them."

RECRUITING DRIVE MUST EXPAND

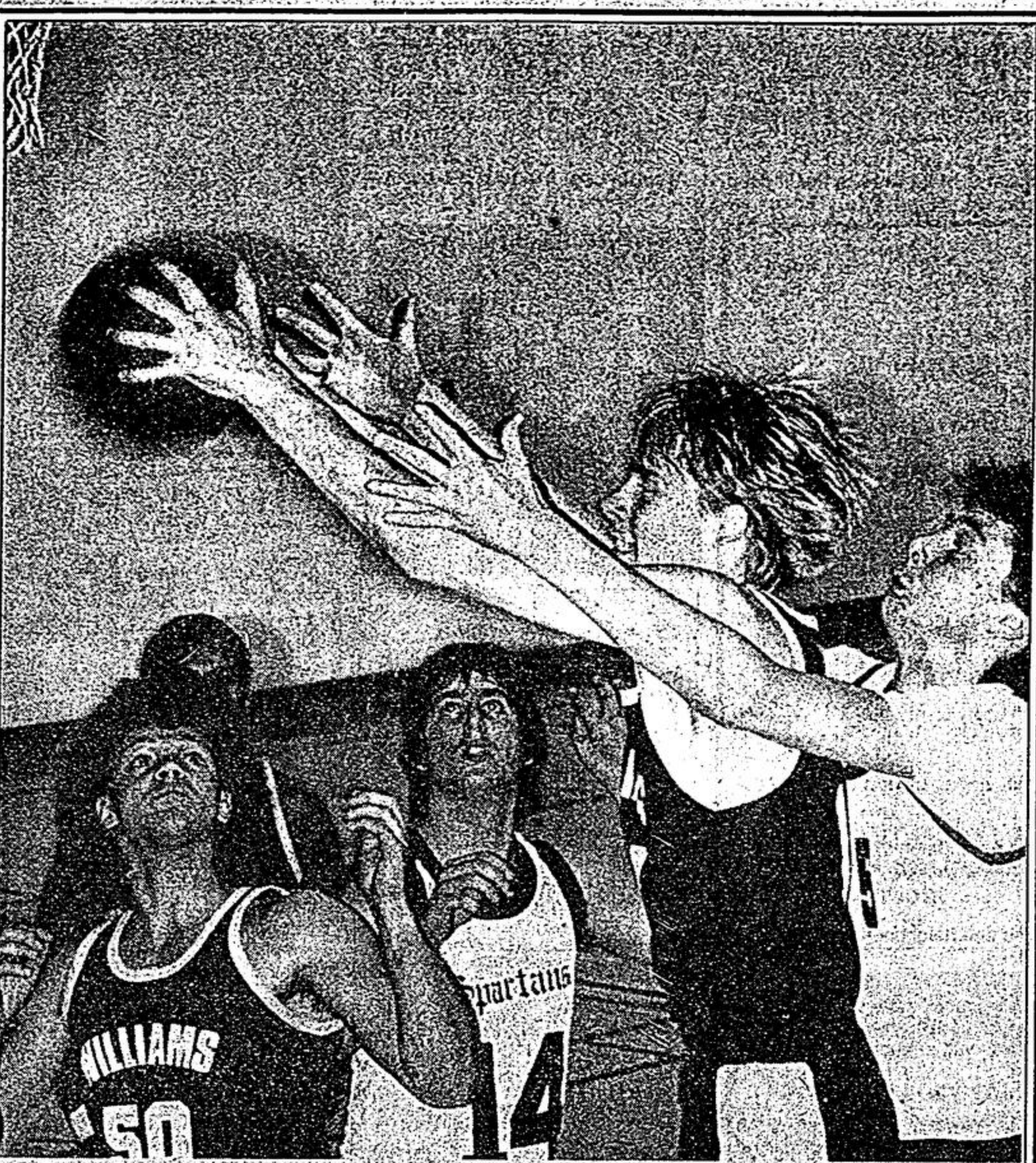
Holland blamed lack of awareness for the declining junior registration. "Maybe people don't really know about hockey before hand," noted the Uxbridge student. "I tried to get people from my school to try it, but I didn't hear any announcements on the p.a. system."

Dunkeld said league reps did visit various schools around the Whitchurch-Stouffville area prior to registration, distributing brochures and showing the film "She shoots, she scores!". He suggested the league might extend its recruiting drive to outlying areas next season.

Some junior coaches also pointed out that the Sunday evening (6 p.m.) ice time for junior games isn't always a convenient hour to play hockey. Some girls have dinner obligations, noted the Bantam coach.

Dunkeld added the Stouffville Girls Hockey League will continue to offer a free two-week trial period to any girls who want to try the sport before they commit themselves to registration fees.

NOTE: The league hosts its third Rep Night on Jan. 12. As well, the Bantams are tentatively scheduled to meet Orangeville in mid-January, Newtonbrook in February and Keene (near Peterborough) in mid-March.



The Spartans attack from behind

Senior Spartan Simon Gallop (far right) sneaks up on a Williams opponent during Stouffville Secondary basketball action last month. Stouffville's Jim Cepcever (14) looks on. The senior team hasn't been doing all that well this season.

Williams took this game by a slight 57-52 margin. Gallop and his teammates will have to try to stay in front of the action, not behind it, when the season resumes next week.

—Kelly Connelly

Clippers finally reach Denmark

Stouffville coach Grant Nesbitt phoned his wife, Kathy, Friday night, from some little naval port called Frederikshaven.

The hockey skipper had arrived in the Denmark town with his Bantam Clippers hockey team and some of their families at 3 a.m. (our time) Friday morning. Twelve hours before, the group had assembled at Stouffville arena, anxious to get started on their long journey and participation in the Scandinavian tournament.

Grant said the travelling wasn't too terrific...it got kind of rough. Kathy told the Tribune she said her husband and a lot of the hockey players hadn't slept much the night before the Boxing Day departure because of the excitement.

The group of 35 left the arena at approximately 12:30 p.m. Thursday to board a plane for New York. They then transferred to a Scan Air 747 in the Big Apple and flew to Copenhagen. There they switched to a smaller aircraft bound for Aalborg. From that destination they travelled by bus to Frederikshaven, the home of their tournament hosts.

WON TOURNEY

The Clippers won the Aalborg tournament on Sunday with a five-game unbeaten streak. Defenceman Chris Payne, one of two PeeWee players travelling with the Bantams, called home yesterday to relay the good news.

see Clippers/B3



CLIFF DUNKELD
 league president

And this season, the chances of extending that slump are pretty good. The team lacks depth, said Dunkeld.

The big problem is we're short junior players. We were set up for four houseleague teams, but we're only using two," he explained.

The result is a less than adequate Bantam Rep team, comprised of whatever half-decent talent could be siphoned from the 24-girl houseleague contingent.

And that contingent has already lost a couple of its better players to the senior division despite the Ontario Minor Hockey Association's age increase ruling which gives them an extra year in junior.

It's no surprise then that the Midget, Intermediate and Senior Rep teams promise strong performances this year. They've got four houseleague squads to draw skaters from — double the leg picking the juniors have.

JUNIORS ARE THE FUTURE

But don't let the stable senior situation at present fool you, warned Bantam coach Cam Stewart. "The junior division is the future of girls hockey in this town. The supply of players to the older division has to come from this younger age group."

It's called the Farm System —

Sideline Comment

Tooth-pick skiers



BY KELLY CONNELLY

With a squeaky clean new year upon us, and our watered down resolutions tattooed to the bulletin board, you and a lot of others might have decided to trade in the cigars for some cross-country skis.

I don't smoke, but I do carry a bit of a bias towards what I call tooth-pick skiers — my nickname for the cross-country set. Because I've been an avid downhiller for the last 15 years, my legs have become accustomed to the heavier boots, the wider laminated skis, and the exuberance of flying off moguls.

The few times I've strapped on a pair of cross-country skis, I've almost snapped my neck negotiating a steep slope at the Metro Zoo. The skis are too light, and the sport too slow for my liking.

So here's my new year's resolution: I'm going to try a little harder to develop a respect for cross-country skiing.

Seneca College Nordic Ski Centre in cooperation with the Canadian Ski Council, is developing a theme for National Ski Week (Jan. 18-26) entitled "An exposure to Motion on Skis". The concept will introduce people like myself to nordic skiing through an activity oriented session on Jan. 8 at Seneca's King Campus.

Instructors will teach me balance, coordination and the feeling of the sliding skis on snow. I think I know that feeling already (grrrr). Nevertheless, I've entered a mini obstacle ski race to prove my legs and my attitude can be trained to be versatile to other types of skiing.

FACE MASKS ARE COWARDLY??

Over the holidays, a few Toronto sports writers harped about the ever increasing eye injuries suffered by professional hockey players who refuse

to wear face masks.

Apparently the NHL will consider increasing the severity of any punishment dealt out for stick fouls. "Players penalized for slashing and high sticking would be required to serve the two (or five) full minutes, regardless of goals scored by the opposition," noted one writer.

NHL psychologists say many players refuse to wear the visor because their aggressive, I'm not afraid of anything, machismo would be tainted with "I'm afraid to get hurt" conjectures from the opposition.

I contend the cowards are those players who decide not to wear the face protection for the above reason.

MOST COMMON HOCKEY INJURIES

Canada's national coaching magazine, Coaching Review, suggested that body contact is the major cause of hockey injuries, although being struck by a stick or puck accounts for about 10 per cent.

Four major categories of hockey injuries are reported: contusions and muscle strains (23-55%), joint and ligament sprains (10-27%), lacerations (10-28%), and fractures (4-20%).

Below is an excerpt from the September/October issue which describes the various injuries:

CONTUSIONS

Contusions which commonly occur in the thigh and occasionally in the arms and lower legs, are caused by a direct blow. This contact with another player, goal post, hockey puck, stick or the boards causes rupturing of muscle fibres and breaking of blood vessels, which in turn causes fluid accumulation and swelling.

see HOCKEY/B2

Why is Stouffville OHA-less?

By KELLY CONNELLY
 Sports Editor

A Junior 'C' hockey club in Stouffville these days is as rare as a Toronto Maple Leaf scoring 60 goals in one season. But it wasn't always like that.

The last time Stouffville iced an Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) team was during the 83-84 season. The Junior C Clippers, sponsored by A & S Construction, disbanded after that mediocre year.

Stouffville has since been OHA-less.

"I heard rumours about what happened to the team," quipped OHA statistician Brian Keighley. However, he refused to elaborate, suggesting people connected with the franchise might have sounder opinions about the Clipper demise.

INTEREST DWINDLED

Stouffville resident Ken Roberts managed the ill-fated squad during its last hurrah. He said the overall interest in the club had dwindled and the fans had all but disappeared.

"The team record was about 50-50 that year...kids weren't too interested in playing for the team anymore," explained Roberts. "The crowds were small...the kids were playing in front of a few high school friends."

Roberts worked behind the bench of many teams since the early '60s and has seen the Junior Clippers come and go. Prior to the 83-84 season, Stouffville had fielded an intermediate and/or junior team depending on the age and talent available.

COSTLY REALITY

But it was during the final few years of the Junior Clippers existence that the realities began to outweigh the prestige of having an OHA team in town.

"We were trying to run an OHA team with local talent to bring out the fans...it didn't work," explained Dave Bourne, president of Stouffville Minor Hockey. "A maximum four imports (out of town players) are allowed on a Junior C team."

Bourne continued: "The big problem was there weren't enough local boys that wanted to play Junior C...a lot of the boys went on to play Junior A or B somewhere else."

Whether the talent that remained in town just didn't cut it is still open to debate.

POOR ATTITUDE

Chris Brown who now plays Junior C hockey for the Uxbridge Bruins, played for the troubled Clippers during its final year. He criticized the attitude of some of the older players and felt the team had a lot going for it in the talent department.

"The talent was there. There were some good young players (under 17) and goaltenders in midget coming up," said the left winger. "When you win only four games a year though, the morale was kind of low...a lot of the older guys from out of town really didn't care anymore. They'd get into fights and just screw around."

Brown pointed out that six ex-Clippers (including himself) moved to the Bruins after the Stouffville team folded. Those players were Mike Anderson, Ken Burrows, Lee Brown, Cliff Freckleton and Brian Todd.

Money was a big factor, he admitted. It dissuaded his teammates from regrouping on Stouffville's Juvenile club after the 83-84 experience. "Last year minor hockey wanted \$150 (registration fee) to play for the Stouffville Juvenile team. This year they wanted \$200 up front...there's no registration fee to play for the Bruins so most of the guys went there," he said.

NO REGISTRATION

That Junior C players are exempt from paying registration fees — unlike the rest of their minor hockey counterparts — can, in part, explain why the Clippers fell into financial discord with Stouffville's minor hockey committee.

Jack Watson, the last coach behind the Junior bench in Stouffville, believed minor hockey had no choice but to cut the OHA team from its budget.

"When you set up a budget and one club becomes a drain on that budget, then it's pretty hard to justify why the team should be sustained," he reasoned.

Although an OHA team can cost anywhere from \$18,000 to \$35,000 to operate, the sponsor's bucks cover only 20 per cent of that overall figure, said Watson. The remaining 80 per cent comes out of minor hockey's purse.

Therein lies the rub, explained the skipper. When one team gets preferential treatment over all the others and continues to lose money — and hockey games — something must give.

FINANCIAL BURDEN

"But you can't hang it all on minor hockey, it shouldn't have to kick in money," he emphasized. "We were stealing money from the pee-wee and bantam registrations to pay for the Junior C club!"

"The team really should be self-sufficient and have good sponsorship and organization outside of minor hockey."

That being easier said than done, the registration inequity was flanked by other squabbles. "Other teams were always complaining about the ice time we got...but look at the Oldtimers and all the ice time they get," argued Brown.

Since the early '80s, the Clipper situation went from bad to worse. "It wasn't worth it to put the impetus of funding into the team anymore," concluded Watson. "The program had deteriorated and costs were going up."

SUCCESSFUL YEARS

Still, what really happened to the Junior C Clippers of the '80s? They certainly weren't the Clippers of the '70s. In 75-76, the club was riding a winning streak; it had lost only one game all season and the fans showed their appreciation.

Granted, the players who formed the nucleus of that shortlived dynasty were ex-Ontario Juvenile champions coached by Watson and Don Macbeth. But they grew older and moved on as 1980 approached. The empty talent cellar was never replenished. The team started to nose-dive.

"We should have had midget players playing locally (to fill the gap)," suggested Watson. However, the interest waned and "now these same midgets aren't playing hockey at all because there's no Juvenile hockey in Stouffville."

The repercussions can be felt today. With no Juvenile or Junior team in existence, the safety net is down and competitive towns are "robbing Stouffville of its better players," warned Roberts.

"What are you gonna do? Tell a kid he can't play a better calibre of hockey and that he's got to stay in Stouffville."