

Stouffville

Sports

Life after hockey

Root ready for a new career

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

For Stouffville's Bill Root, twilight is merely the forerunner of a new day.

And as the 30-year-old veteran of 300 National Hockey League games watches the sun set on his professional hockey career, he is already witnessing the dawn of an endeavor he feels will be just as fulfilling.

Root, the former Toronto Maple Leafs defenceman who now mans the blueline for the American Hockey League's Newmarket Saints, has spent the last year or so establishing his own general contracting business called Rootar the Renovator.

A self-professed activity-freak who says he's always working at

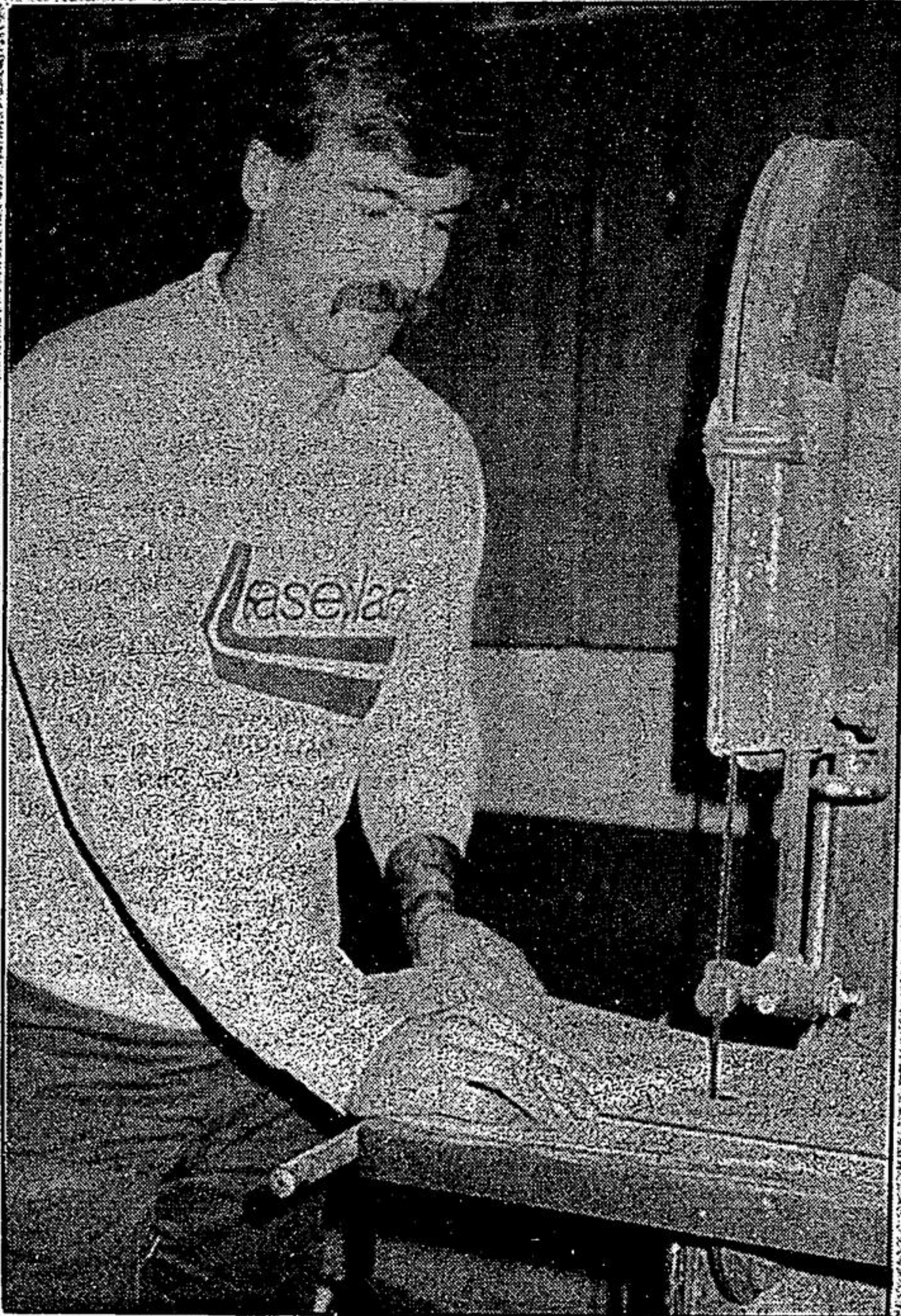


Photo: BRUCE STAPLEY

Stouffville's Bill Root is as at home behind a bandsaw as he is with a hockey stick. The veteran defenceman with the American Hockey League's Newmarket Saints is preparing for life after professional hockey by starting his own business.

something, Root said he developed his love of carpentry from his father. "Dad was very handy, and he was a perfectionist," explained Root. "It seemed he was always working on something around the house, and I learned a lot from him."

Root has spent much of his spare time learning the art of contracting for the past eight years, starting with his own house.

"It started out as a hobby. I built a deck, put down parquet flooring, built some cupboards and a bar, and put in a bathroom," he said.

"Then I started doing some work for Doug Todd, who has a pool company here in Stouffville, and he taught me how to line up people to do the things I didn't want to do myself, like plumbing and electrical work."

Root now employs two men on a full-time basis, and adds a half dozen more in the off season, when he is able to devote himself to the business on an everyday basis.

Such is the therapeutic effect of banging nails, measuring cupboards and putting up walls, that Root maintains it was his interest in carpentry that kept him from hitting rock bottom when things were going poorly in his hockey career a while back.

"A few years ago, when the Leafs were last in the league, I was very disappointed," he said. "I had come from the Montreal Canadiens with their winning tradition. I would just come home and head down to the basement to work on my projects. It was a chance for me to get away from the problems with hockey."

While he has been told he should look into a career in broadcasting when his contract with the Leafs expires at the end of next season, the journeyman-rearguard said he has no interest in working behind a microphone.

"I did some work with Joe Bowen (Leafs broadcaster) when I was injured during the 1983-84 season," said Root. "I enjoyed it and some people thought I was cut out for it, but I don't want to pursue it."

And he won't hang on when he feels it is time to say goodbye to hockey.

"I feel that when your hockey career ends, you should just put it behind you," said Root. "It's done. I would never want to be playing just because I needed the money. You have to move on to new interests."

He said that many hockey players end up disappointed at the end of their careers, and have difficulty establishing themselves in another line of work.

"A lot of players have the mistaken impression that someone owes them something," said Root. "They meet people while they are playing who make promises about future careers for them. But when they retire from hockey, they find that those people don't know them anymore."

He said he still hasn't decided whether or not to play next season, and that he may decide to retire and plunge himself right into contracting.

"I've got the same feeling for this business (contracting) now, that I had for hockey at the start."

Root enjoys the contracting work so much that he said he sometimes has to pry himself away from a job to go out and line up future business.

He said the challenge of setting up a successful contracting operation is similar to putting together a good hockey team.

"I've been working on setting it up for eight years," said Root. "Just as in hockey, where everyone has his job to do, you have to find the right people to do all the different things that must be done on a job."

A perfectionist in the tradition of his father, Root said he spends a lot of time researching and reading.

"Every job is different," he explained. "When I start a job, I'll go to the library and read up on it."

Williams leads team to top spot

Jennifer Williams scored both goals as Stouffville Bowling beat Lindy's Flowers 2-1 to clinch first place in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Girls Hockey Association's Junior girls house league Sunday night at the Recreation Centre.

Bowling and George Ross photo were tied going into the final game of the schedule. George Ross was bounced 4-1 by MPH Earthmoving, who took third place in the league with the win.

Lindy's was fourth. Stephanie Summerhill and Cynthia McCaul had assists for Bowling in their victory, with Lindsay Upton, assisted by Dawn Williamson, clicking for Lindy's.

Julie Comito had a hat trick in the MPH win, while Krista Dudley added a single. Melissa Dawson earned two assists, and Lauren Clarkson one, for the winners.

Laura Winterstein had George Ross' lone marker.

The playoffs start Sunday, with Bowling versus Lindy's at 6 p.m., and George Ross taking on MPH at 7 p.m.

Atoms stay hot

The Stouffville Boyd's Sports Atom Clippers ran their post-season unbeaten streak to 12 games last week, but watched their eight game winning string get snapped with a tie.

The Clippers faced Ajax in a home and home set during March Break week, winning 6-1 at home Monday, before playing to a 1-1 draw on the road Thursday night.

Monday, it was Ryan King leading the way for Stouffville with two goals and a pair of assists.

Dan Tardella had a goal and two set ups, with Kyle Norton, Robbie Spytz, and Kevin Hackert rounding out the Clippers goal production.

Tim Smart was credited with two assists, and Norton set up another score.

But Ajax hung tough at home for the return encounter, clinging to a 1-0 lead until Tardella clicked from King late in the middle frame.

The Boyds boys continue their exhibition season with another home and home set with Sutton this week.

SDSS hockey league puts fun back in game

While this year may have been a non-entity at the upper age bracket in Stouffville's official hockey program, things are just beginning to heat up in Stouffville District Secondary School (SDSS) Morning Hockey League playoff action.

The SDSS loop mixes and matches students and teachers on teams with somewhat unlikely names, like Bells, Ding Dongs, affording the opportunity for some good-natured competition between the two groups.

Missing are the bone crunching body checks, the cheap shots, and the total unwillingness to share ice space that so often characterizes hockey games involving teens bent upon proving their

masculinity every time out.

In fact, in the SDSS scheme of things, penalties and pugilism are a definite no-no, with severe repercussions for the perpetrators of questionable sportsmanship.

A trio of infractions in one contest nets a player an early exit, along with a one game suspension.

Four penalties accumulated in any game will also result in the player watching a game from the sidelines. And if you so much as drop your gloves, you can dust off the golf clubs because you won't be playing hockey.

As for the action packed playoff round-robin series, it's Dewell's Devils sitting atop the six team heap after three games.



Sport notes

Bruce Stapley

Zemp's Zeroes certainly aren't living up to their names, with a pair of victories and only one loss.

McKnight's Mixers have an even mix of one win, one defeat, and a tie, the same mark as the aforementioned Ding Dongs.

Willis' Warriors have two ties for their efforts, and Graham's

Crackers have managed a mere draw.

Jason Stover fired a pair in the most recent Mixers' win, a 6-5 decision over the Warriors. Ron Dempster had two scores for the losers.

SDSS Principal Alan Dickson found the range in the Zeroes 7-3 win against the Ding Dongs.

The Devils edged the Crackers 3-2 in a nip and tuck affair, despite the goal scoring efforts of Crackers' father and son combo, Howard and Richard Burkholder.

Other marksmen in these games included Bill "Mackie" McKnight, the school's former CN Tower electrical contractor-turned-tech teacher, volleyball guru "Fletch" Fletcher, and ex-Student Council prez Julian Franklin.

The games continue this week, with the players dragging themselves out of bed for seven a.m. face offs.

The big day, the game to decide who gets all the marbles, is slated for Friday, March 30.