



Age can't stop senior hockey star

Ex-Jr. B player, 65, goes penalty-free in Stouffville league

BY JIM THOMAS
Correspondent

Bob Allison, an elder statesman in the senior division of the Stouffville Amateur Hockey League, has no plans to retire.

At age 65, he still patrols right wing with the agility of a 30-year-old, and more than holds his own in the scoring department.

"My skates may retire before I do," he says, noting one blade must soon be replaced. "My gloves and pants are also falling apart," he says. "Perhaps my equipment is trying to tell me something," he adds.

The SAHL's year-end tournament ends this afternoon at the Stouffville Arena.

A native of Elgin, Ont., near Ottawa, Allison grew up in Gravenhurst. But there was no organized hockey there below bantam. So he honed his skills playing pick-up games on Gull Lake.

The town would clear the snow to permit ice-cutting for the railroad. This provided a ready-made rink for the kids.

Allison moved up through the minor ranks of bantam and juvenile, then graduated to junior B with the Kingston Frontenacs while attending Queen's University. At the time, the National Hockey League only had six teams which made turning professional difficult.

"I really had no aspirations to advance to that level anyway," he says.

Prior to joining the SAHL, Allison played in Pickering. Following a move to Musselman's Lake, he found it more convenient playing in Stouffville, first in the 40-plus



BOB ALLISON: Enjoys social aspect and exercise while playing hockey in Stouffville league.

retaining all his teeth.

One of his linemates is ex-mayor Wayne Emmerson. The team, he says, relies to a great extent on the puck-stopping skills of goaltender Larry Penny.

Starting times are flexible. Some teams, including his own, take to the ice as early as 6 a.m.

With little physical contact, Allison says guys his age can last longer.

"Once in awhile someone will give you a smack but it's usually by accident," he notes.

Since joining the league, he's never had a penalty.

"We're all getting a little older," he explains. "We've calmed down quite a bit. Besides we all know each other."

Allison says he plays now just for fun.

"The fellowship is great," he adds.

"Sure, I get a little winded but I recover quickly."

STAFF PHOTO/BILL ROBERTS

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Nicholas Rabito, 6, gathers a full head of steam en route to scoring a goal during a Whitchurch-Stouffville Minor Hockey Association house league practice at Stouffville Arena last Saturday.

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