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Wednesday, March 25, 2020

Southpoint Sun - 17

Looking back to 1972

Flyers' memorable run in 1972 was one for the ages

By Mark Ribble

With photos from C. Scott Holland

Editor's note: With the COVID-19 pandemic grinding all local and national sports to a halt, we thought it might be interesting to highlight some past sports stories until we can resume regular duties.

The Leamington Flyers playoff domination of 1972 is this week's subject. The Flyers 1971-72 season is memorable in many ways to local hockey fans. Here is a synopsis of the season:

October 7, 1971 - Season preview

The accent will be on youth as the Leamington Flyers open their 1971-72 season with an exhibition game against the Windsor Royals of the Great Lakes Junior Hockey League.

Local fans will be treated to a sparkling new look at the Leamington Arena this year, with a fresh coat of paint, lively new boards and a new time clock.

With only four holdovers from last year's squad, coach Jim Butcher has his work cut out for him.

Leamington's lineup going into tonight's exhibition game: John Moore, Chuck Turner, Gary Hillier, Doug Lamb, Greg Coulter, Bill Derbyshire, Ken Piper, Art Hickson, Dave Omstead, Terry Wiper, Kris Manery, Rick Stickney, Ken Cobby, Brian Plumb, Stan Couture, Rob 'Specs' Johnston.

November 10, 1971

Greg Coulter's hat trick sparked an 8-2 Flyers' victory over the Blenheim Blades, allowing Leamington to keep pace with the first place Petrolia Jets. Kris Manery, Art Hickson, Stan Couture, Dave Omstead and recent addition Pat Ribble all scored singles.

December 16, 1971

The Flyers lost to Dresden 5-3 last Friday after falling behind 5-1. Chuck Turner took the loss in goal. Brian Plumb, Kris Manery and Bill Derbyshire got the Flyer goals. The loss came on the heels of an 11-6 win over Tilbury the previous night in Leamington. John Moore stopped 22 shots for the win, with Manery leading the way with four goals. Singles went to Cobby, Stickney, Wiper and Couture. The Flyers remain



The Leamington Flyers' Stan Couture and Rob 'Specs' Johnston converge on a rebound in front of the Bracebirdge goaltender, while linemate Brian Plumb circles behind the net. (photo submitted)

in second place behind Petrolia.

February 9, 1972

The Flyers suffered a 7-2 defeat at the hands of the Petrolia Jets Sunday in Petrolia. The first place Jets jumped out to a 4-0 first period lead and cruised from there. Omstead scored both Leamington goals. Turner started in goal but was replaced by Moore after the first period. That loss followed a decisive 13-1 win over Tilbury on Thursday. Cobby, Omstead and Stickney each scored twice and Turner made 32 saves for the win. Coulter, Plumb, Hillier and Hickson had single tallies.

March 15, 1972

The playoff run started with first place Petrolia being bumped to Jr. B, the Flyers receive a first round bye into the league final.

The Leamington Flyers ousted the Dresden Kings with a decisive 6-3 win at Leamington last Thursday. The Flyers are league champions as they head into the OHA Junior C Playdowns. Manery's hat trick paced the Leamington attack, with Brian Plumb adding two and Ken Cobby one. The Flyers now move on to play New Hamburg in the first round of the OHAs.

March 29, 1972

The Leamington Flyers advanced to the OHA Junior C semi-finals with a 4-0 win over the New Hamburg Hahns.

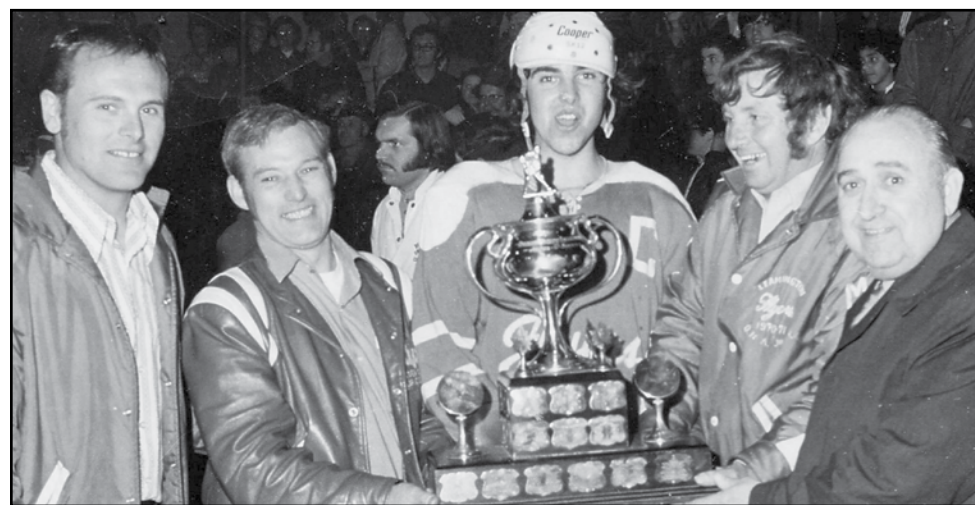
Manery had two, with singles to Cobby, Stickney, Johnston, Hillier, Omstead and Plumb. Moore and Turner shared the victory in goal. Defenceman Rod 'Newt' Bowman made his Flyers debut in this game, up from the Juveniles to replace Pat Ribble, who was out sick.

The series was marred by the tragic loss of Flyer fans Joe Cross, Harold Derbyshire and Paul Wilkinson, who were killed along with their pilot in a plane crash near Shedden, Ontario. The trio had chartered a plane to Bracebridge and encountered a snowstorm on their way back. A second plane, carrying Gord MacDonald, Bob Fox and Flyers defenceman Greg Coulter, made an emergency landing in London.

April 26, 1972

The Leamington Flyers are OHA Junior C champions. They topped off an excellent season before a crowd of 2273 at Leamington Arena, with an 8-2 win over the Cobourg Cougars. The Flyers took the series 4-1. Stickney and Omstead each scored twice to lead the charge, with singles to Plumb, Hillier, Ribble and Steve Oulahan, up from the Juvenile team. John Moore turned aside 32 shots to get the win in goal.

As fans rushed on to the ice in celebration, Captain Doug 'Bugsy' Lamb accepted the OHA Junior C trophy from OHA rep Harvey Teno.



The Flyers 1971-72 leadership contingent, from left, head coach Jim Butcher, trainer Jim Bradley, captain Doug 'Bugsy' Lamb, manager Ted Hannigan and OHA rep Harvey Teno. (photo submitted)

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