

## 1940's Summary Part 1

The words of rink Manager Wake in his programme notes of May, like the summer, had faded into the serious business of War by the autumn of 1940. There had been some hockey in Scotland, a summer league run mainly out of Ayr and Glasgow. It featured some of the past Flyers such as Red Thomson and Paul Rheault and teams called the Hurricanes and Defiants competed. Indeed in a game between these two, as a benefit for Les Lovell who was still recovering from losing the sight in one eye, Rheault scored 10 times in a 15-11 win, a score which it was claimed was the highest scoring hockey game in Scotland to that date in history. Not a fact that I can substantiate at the moment.

Closer to home there was precious little news in the local paper about ice hockey, the closest mention being a match that was to be arranged between the 9th Fife Sea Scouts and the 9th Fife Gordon Scouts, to be held when the frost sets in. Team members so far were; Jock King, Jim King, John Reid, James Brown, Jack Bissett and Jack Easson. Maybe one of those guys is still out there today ? People clung to hockey through the 30 minute Foster Hewitt programmes on the Forces radio station updating on the latest NHL action, invariably of the Leafs.

1941 commenced with the sobering news that Billy Fullerton had been killed on active service. He was the first Scot to pass the Civil Air Guard examinations shortly before the outbreak of war and when hostilities broke out he joined the R.A.F. and trained as a pilot. He quickly qualified as an officer. The game at that point didn't matter.

In April the rink hosted its first 'big' match since the end of the 1939-40 season. It was a junior match between Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline in the semi-final of the Scottish Cup. The first leg at Dunfermline had ended 4-2 for the home team and although they put up a plucky show on their own ice in the return game, they went under by the only goal of the game and thus passed out of the competition by an aggregate score against them of 5-2. It was noted; "those who have been in touch with junior ice hockey this season would not be very surprised at the fine show put up by the teams, but to anyone who had not seen a junior game since last season then the fast and robust play was nothing short of a revelation. The Kirkcaldy juniors, wearing the Flyers' jerseys, seemed to have inherited not a little of the fighting spirit of the former senior favourites and despite the fact that the opposition had the heavier team the local lads put up show that did them the utmost credit. All the lads on the ice were under 18 years of age but some of them were pretty hefty youths and on the reduced size of rink (a dance floor had been constructed at one end of the rink) they served up a game that kept the spectators and themselves lively. Les Lovell, the Kirkcaldy coach, has done a good job working with his lot." A sign of times ahead as the pick of the bunch was a right wing by the name of Jimmy Mitchell.

For the remainder of the war the juniors would continue to play a fairly regular schedule of games whilst the rink hosted a variety of exhibition games on the new "two zone" sized ice where crowds in excess of 3000 would regularly attend. The list of games during 1941-42 which featured a number of the ex-Flyers, as well as other 'weel kent' Scottish hockey players, was as follows:

|                            |                               |    |                                       |    |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|----|---------------------------------------|----|
| Sept 18 <sup>th</sup> 1941 | East (wearing Flyers jerseys) | 15 | West (wearing Perth Panthers jerseys) | 12 |
| Nov 6 <sup>th</sup> 1941   | Scottish Select               | 7  | Royal Canadian Horse Artillery        | 2  |
| Dec 11 <sup>th</sup> 1941  | Scottish All Stars            | 7  | Canadian Army Unit No.3               | 6  |
| Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> 1942   | Scottish All-Stars            | 7  | Royal Canadian Horse Artillery Unit 2 | 3  |
| Jan 15 <sup>th</sup> 1942  | Scottish All-Stars            | 8  | Canadian Army Unit No.3               | 4  |
| Jan 29 <sup>th</sup> 1942  | Scottish All-Stars            | 7  | Canadian Army Unit No.4               | 4  |
| Feb 19 <sup>th</sup> 1942  | Scottish Select               | 8  | North Nova Scotia Regiment            | 6  |

|                                      |           |    |                              |    |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|----|------------------------------|----|
| Apr 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1942             | Scotland  | 6  | Canada                       | 4  |
| in aid of the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund |           |    |                              |    |
| Apr 16 <sup>th</sup> 1942            | All-Stars | 3  | Royal Canadian Artillery     | 8  |
| Apr 30 <sup>th</sup> 1942            | All-Stars | 10 | Royal Canadian Medical Corps | 10 |

Perhaps the most noteworthy game however took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of February 1942. It was a Sunday, it involved a charity gala to raise money for the Kirkcaldy Hospital and saw the Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline Juniors meet in a game won 3-0 by Dunfermline. What a stooshie it created with the local kirk. The action of Kirkcaldy Magistrates granting permission for an Ice hockey match to be held on the sabbath brought forth a vigorous protest from Kirkcaldy ministers, whose action was endorsed by Kirkcaldy Presbytery who described the holding of such an exhibition on a Sunday as "an outrage on the feelings of many of the most responsible people of the burgh and a violation of the best traditions of our Scottish life". The war of words continued in the newspapers for a number of months with the organiser Bailey Jeffrey having a final say in May when he stated "In connection with the recent ice hockey match at Kirkcaldy Ice Rink, I have no regrets and if the ministers termed it organised sport then I have another name for it. I will answer for my acts to my God and my own conscience and not any particular body in this town". Loud applause interrupted him when he asked what the churches were doing for young people in these dark days of war and if the ministers were "afraid for their church attendances".

In the autumn of 1942 there was an optimistic view taken by Mr Wake when he stated "Everything seems to be pointing the right way for the Kirkcaldy public to see some outstanding ice hockey matches during the coming season. Attractions will be the semi-final and final play-offs of the Canadian Army Championship, which is to played in Scotland this year"

The matches that took place were as follows:

|                           |                                 |   |                                  |   |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|---|
| Oct 22 <sup>nd</sup> 1942 | Royal Canadian Horse Artillery  | 5 | Royal Canadian Artillery         | 2 |
| Nov 12 <sup>th</sup> 1942 | Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders | 5 | North Shore Regiment             | 3 |
| Jan 7 <sup>th</sup> 1943  | Scottish All-Stars              | 6 | Fort Garry Horse (Canadian Army) | 7 |
| Feb 18 <sup>th</sup> 1943 | Scottish All-Stars              | 7 | Canadian Military HQ             | 7 |
| Apr 1 <sup>st</sup> 1943  | Scottish All-Stars              |   | Canadian Navy                    |   |

Not the anticipated programme of games that Mr Wake had predicted and it may just have been coincidence but the frequency of skates for sale in the local paper had dramatically increased as the year progressed. Someone was even parting with their Flyers scarf!

## Part 2

In June 1943 it was reported that Pilot Officer Art Grant was missing in action. He had just married a local girl in the past September. Then in November 1943 Mrs A. G. Grant received confirmation of the death on active service of her husband. To Kirkcaldy ice hockey fans Pilot Officer Grant was better known as Art Grant the netminder of the most successful team Fife Flyers had. This was the team which played in the 1939-40 season coached by Nelson McCuaig, and carried off most of the season's honours. Grant had been in the Royal Canadian Air Force for two years.

There was a sizeable hiatus in the exhibition games and it wasn't until the following December that hockey needs were whetted. It was quite the prospect too with the Royal Canadian Air Force meeting the Royal Canadian Navy, the RCAF advertised as boasting the entire Boston Bruins famous "Kraut Line". Center Milt Schmidt, left wing Woody Dumart and right winger Bobby Bauer. As it transpired Bauer did not play but Schmidt and Dumart combined for 5 goals and it was suggested that this was the first time NHL players had appeared in Scotland. The other games played were:

|                           |                                    |    |                          |   |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|----|--------------------------|---|
| Dec 9 <sup>th</sup> 1944  | Royal Canadian Air Force           | 11 | Royal Canadian Navy      | 5 |
| Jan 18 <sup>th</sup> 1945 | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Canadian Infantry  | 3  | Canadian Based Workshop  | 4 |
| Feb 8 <sup>th</sup> 1945  | London All-Stars                   | 8  | Army Transport           | 1 |
| Mar 22 <sup>nd</sup> 1945 | Canadian Army 1 <sup>st</sup> CARU | 9  | Royal Canadian Air Force | 3 |
| Apr 5 <sup>th</sup> 1945  | Canadian Army 1 <sup>st</sup> CCOD | 8  | Royal Canadian Air Force | 4 |

Kirkcaldy Juniors beat their Dundee counterparts on 25<sup>th</sup> April by 9 goals to 1 with Jimmy Mitchell netting three.

Season 1945-46 was to be the last under the grey clouds of war but not without a degree of uncertainty. The exhibition games were as follows:

|                           |                      |   |                          |   |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---|--------------------------|---|
| Nov 7 <sup>th</sup> 1945  | Canadian Army Select | 7 | Canadian Based Workshops | 3 |
| Dec 20 <sup>th</sup> 1945 | Bruins               | 3 | Redwings                 | 3 |
| no not the NHL teams      |                      |   |                          |   |
| Jan 10 <sup>th</sup> 1946 | London Rangers       | 4 | H.M.C.S Nioble           | 4 |
| Jan 24 <sup>th</sup> 1946 | Borden Command       | 4 | Aldershot Command        | 1 |

Kirkcaldy Juniors were having a good time of things in early 1946 with home wins over Dunfermline 4-1, Falkirk 7-1, Dundee 10-0 witnessed by crowds of around 1500 and a 14-0 win against Dundee over the Tay with over 100 travelling supporters in attendance. In March 3000 packed the rink to watch them lose 2-1 to Dunfermline. The thirst for senior hockey was obvious. The following was reported in March 1946.

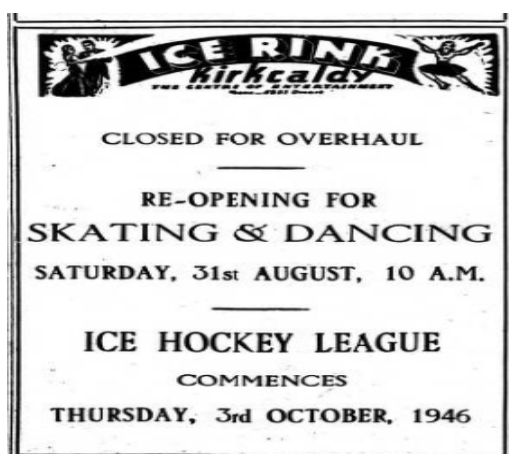
“Whether Kirkcaldy can take part in the senior ice-hockey league next season depends entirely on the Ministry of Works. According to Mr Wake it will be impossible for the Flyers to enter into competitive hockey unless the rink is extended to its previous length. If this is done the dance floor will have to be removed. To overcome these difficulties the directorate have decided to apply to the Ministry of Works to build a Ballroom over the restaurant. With reference to senior ice-hockey players Mr Wake said that Kirkcaldy had a representative in Canada at present with a view to signing some players if necessary. It has recently been disclosed that eighty Canadian players are coming to Scotland for the senior ice-hockey competitions which are expected to start to October. The league is likely to consist of seven teams. That of course is provided that Kirkcaldy can make the necessary alterations by then. The following teams are likely to take part the league; Kirkcaldy, Dunfermline, Dundee, Perth, Ayr, Paisley and Falkirk.” It was suggested there could even be a team representing Glasgow.

There was a passionate plea from a local supporter in a letter to the Editor at the Fife Free Press.

“On all sides one hears of the great ice hockey “boom” that is anticipated in Scotland next season when competitive senior play will be resumed. Local ice hockey enthusiasts may have their hopes dashed by news of the “difficulties” in regard to our local Ice Rink, which apparently may result in Kirkcaldy not being able to take part in the ice hockey revival. It is obvious to anyone that if Kirkcaldy is to take part in senior ice hockey next year the ice surface will have to be restored to its normal size removing the dance floor which has occupied the bottom of the rink for several years. But why on earth should the removal of the dance floor be subject to approval being given by the Ministry of Works for the erection of another ballroom over the restaurant? There are dozens of places in Kirkcaldy where dancing can be indulged in but there is only one Ice Rink. After all it is an Ice Rink first and foremost and if a choice has to be made between dancing, which can be enjoyed in various halls throughout the town, or ice hockey, which can only be played in this country on an expensive ice surface such as we have in the Ice Rink, surely the dancing and not the ice hockey enthusiasts should be sacrificed. If, for the reasons given Kirkcaldy does not take part in the ice hockey “boom”

next season, then I am afraid senior ice hockey in Kirkcaldy will be doomed. After all ice hockey enthusiasts have some common-sense, and if they see that ice hockey is a secondary consideration with the Ice Rink they will know what conclusions to draw. But I hope wiser counsels will prevail and the interest shown in Junior ice hockey should act as pointer to those in authority. Yours 2-4-6-8".

The scribe would have been heartened by the news on June 15th where Mr Wake confirmed that despite the fact that they could not get a permit to extend the rink for the purpose of dancing, ice hockey would take place this season. The intention of the directorate was to acquire a retractable dance floor, which would be laid for the purpose of dancing, which could then be withdrawn to allow full ice for the hockey matches. A solution to keep everyone happy and with the following advert in the Fife Free Press on 19<sup>th</sup> August everyone knew that hockey was back in Kirkcaldy.



## 1940's Summary Part 2

ICE HOCKEY TO RESUME - Preparations for the new season were underway. Disturbed by the outbreak of war after a short introduction to the Scottish public, ice hockey had continued during the first year of the war and then had to give way to more urgent matters, although the Junior teams and occasional games played between Canadian Service sides kept the game alive. It was good news to local enthusiasts to know that organised senior ice hockey was due to start up in October, for there was no doubt that despite its newness the game had made a strong impression on sports lovers and was ready to experience a great boom all over Scotland when the war intervened. Mr Festus Moffat, secretary of the S.I.H.A. was unable to go to Canada to arrange for the Canadian contingent to come over and join up with the Scottish clubs but this duty was willingly undertaken by the Canadian Amateur Ice Hockey Association and they found a tremendous response. Hundreds of Canucks were eager to come to Scotland and take up the game and a series of trial games had to be arranged to determine which of the aspirants would make the grade. Of this number 80 were selected and were due to make the trip early in September. On arrival they proceeded to the clubs to which they had been allocated through the pooling system. So far seven clubs were ready to take the ice, Fife Flyers, Dunfermline Vikings, Paisley Pirates, Dundee Tigers, Falkirk Lions, Ayr Raiders. and Perth Panthers. This would make a satisfactory line-up for the opening season and there were prospects that the number could yet be increased to eight, a situation that could easily be met in view of the number of Canadians who were coming over. The fixtures took the form of two leagues, the Scottish Flag Competition and the Scottish National League followed by the Canada Cup competition, making in all a 30-week season. It was noted that the local talent pool had benefitted

from the Junior programmes in the war years and that, in particular in Kirkcaldy, those youngsters should be able to qualify for spots on the senior teams in the very near future.

Who were those first post war Flyers?

New coach Al Rodgers was a familiar name to all ice hockey enthusiasts, the 32-year-old Canadian came to this country with the first batch ice hockey players, and sported the colours of Brighton Tigers for two years before he came to Scotland to join Dundee Tigers in 1938. Rodgers started his hockey career at the age of 16 and after he had gone through all the intermediate stages he played his first senior ice hockey with the Saskatoon Quakers. In season 1933-34 his team were Western Canadian Champions and during that season he succeeded in gaining a life-long ambition when he was chosen for the right-wing position of the Canadian Olympic team to compete at the Games in Milan. The following season he toured Japan as player coach of the Battleford Hillers.



According to Jack Wake, who remained as Ice Rink manager, the players allocated to the Flyers would bring an accent on youth with the oldest player being just 21 years of age.

Netminder: **Don Dougall** - 18 years, 5 feet 7 inches, weight 155 lb. One of eight Kingston Ontario graduates to come over. The Kingston lads, wanted to play together but this was found impracticable. He played for Kingston "B" clubs, Kingston Falcons and Kingston Victorias. A good blocker with safe hands.

Defence: **Bob Londry** - 19 years, 6 feet 1 inch. Another Kingston boy and team-mate of Dougall. A left-hand shot with NHL prospects. Sound defensive play combined with speedy rushes.

Defence: **Floyd Snider** – 20 years, 5 feet 9 inches. Kingston Victorias teammate of Dougall and Londry. Another left-hander of the aggressive type.

Defence: **Harry O'Connor** - 19 years, 5 feet 8 inches, weight 160 lbs. Hailed from Galt Ontario and passed up a chance to play for Galt Red Wings, Junior championship favourites, to come to Scotland. Was a sensation with Galt Junior Bees last season.

Centre: **Bob Lantz** - another Galt Ontario product. Played for Woodstock Junior Bees in 1945 then recalled to Galt and headed the team scoring. Extremely fast and dangerous.

Left Wing: **Earl McCrone** - 19 years, 5 feet 10 inches, weight 175 lb from Toronto, Ontario. Smooth skater with size and speed, he is a finished wing performer.

Right Wing: **Jim McKenzie** – 18 years, 5 feet 10 inches. From Galt Ontario. Played for Woodstock in 1945 and on recall to Galt made a great hit.

Centre second Line: **John Drummond** - 19 years, 5 feet 8 inches, weight 162 lb from the famous Oshawa Generals school and due to play with the Generals after a successful season with the Colts.

Left Wing second line: **Howard Duffield** - 19 years, 5 feet 8 inches, weight 151 lb. Three years as a Junior with Grimsby Peach Buds and last year with Grimsby Peach Kings. Left-hand shot.

Right Wing second line: **Harold 'Bob' Scrutton** - 21 years, 5 feet 9 inches, weight 152 lb. Veteran of the team. Flaming redhead with speed to burn. Sent to Scotland by Mike Bodden, sports editor of the Kingston Whig-standard. Mike a former NHL referee claimed "this boy will be in the first five in Scottish scoring". This turned out to be hugely prophetic.



Back Row left to right: Floyd Snider, Earl McCrone, Jim McKenzie, Bob Londry, Bud Scrutton  
Front Row left to right: Johnny Drummond, Bob Lantz, Don Dougall, Harry O'Connor, Howard Duffield

On 25<sup>th</sup> September these young new Flyers got the season underway in Falkirk and early season optimism seemed founded when they returned home after a spectacular 10-4 victory in the Flag Competition. McCrone top scored with four, Drummond two and singles from Lantz, Scrutton, Duffield and O'Connor. It was to be a false dawn. The following night in a soldout Kirkcaldy Ice Rink they crashed 7-2 to Paisley Pirates, the team would lose six on the bounce and from the twelve Flag Competition games would only record three wins to finish bottom of the seven team table. It turned out to be the one and only season of this competition.

The National League campaign got off to a much better start with five wins in the opening six matches and indeed they remained in the hunt for the title before eventually finishing third, 6 points behind the victorious Perth Panthers. The top four teams played in the post season playoff for the Anderson Trophy. In their semi-final the Flyers knocked off the Panthers 16-9 on aggregate, winning the home leg 9:2 and then met the Dunfermline Vikings, who had defeated the Paisley Pirates, in the Final. The Flyers lost both games to go down 7-2 on aggregate to their Kingdom rivals. The Canada

Cup didn't go well as they finished second from last however they nearly secured their first post war silverware in the Airlie Trophy when they finished runners up to Dundee Tigers.

In January it was decided by the SIHA to scrap the pool system and allow each team to determine their own procurement of the permitted eleven Canadians. As a final act each team were provided with an extra player and the Flyers picked up Pat Ratchford, ex-Harringay Racers. Before the war he played with Sudbury, a junior "A" combination and then joined the R.C.A.F. On his return from the Air Force he played two months with Sudbury Legion, a senior combine. Harringay picked him up and brought him over in October. 24 years of age and played left-wing and centre.

A statistical review of the season saw the "Bad Boy" honours go to the Dundee Tigers who racked up 651 PIMs with the Flyers runners up with 484 'cooler' minutes. Dunfermline who were criticised every game for their robust play by the Flyers fans were next with 461 PIMs. The leading scorer was the Vikings Johnny Myke with 92 goals and 44 assists to total 136. The Tigers Johnny Evans was only one point behind with 73 goals and 62 assists to total 135. Third was the Tigers Farrell Gallagher with 77 goals and 54 assists for a total of 131. The Flyers captain 'Bud' Scrutton was fourth with 69 goals and 59 assists for a total of 128. Individual Flyers' scoring records were:

|          |      |      |            |           |      |      |           |
|----------|------|------|------------|-----------|------|------|-----------|
| Scrutton | G 69 | A 59 | Points 128 | McCrone   | G 67 | A 31 | Points 98 |
| O'Connor | G 44 | A 36 | Points 80  | Snider    | G 29 | A 32 | Points 61 |
| Lantz    | G 34 | A 17 | Points 51  | King      | G 19 | A 18 | Points 37 |
| Drummond | G 21 | A 12 | Points 33  | Ratchford | G 13 | A 12 | Points 25 |
| McKenzie | G 4  | A 10 | Points 14  | Londry    | G 1  | A 6  | Points 7  |
| Mitchell | G 4  | A 1  | Points 5   | Duffield  | G 4  |      | Points 4  |

Snider had the distinction of being the leading scorer amongst defenceman in the Scottish circuit. The "bad boy" of the Flyers' team was O'Connor with 90 minutes in the cooler. He was closely followed by Londry with 83 minutes and McKenzie with 73 minutes. Over the season Flyers scored 309 goals, a record only beaten by Vikings with 313, an average over 65 games of 4.8 goals per game.

#### **Scottish All Star teams – see 1947-48 Ice Hockey Annual**

The Flyers announced before season end that five players were scheduled to return, Bud Scrutton, Earl McCrone, Floyd Snider, Bob Londry and Frank King who had joined the Flyers in November. Coach Rogers said that these players were practically an automatic choice, however a few of the other players were also under consideration.

One the eve of the 1947-48 season there were some concerns regarding the Canadian players due to come over for the new Scottish ice hockey season and who were likely to be held up because of certain difficulties that had arisen at the Canadian end. Mr Festus Moffat, secretary of the SIHA was just as puzzled as any regarding the story that the Canadian players had been "frozen" by the Canadian Amateur Ice Hockey Association until the differences between the SIHA and the BIHA had been "cleared up". He immediately got in touch with "Pa" Kewley, the Scottish League representative in Canada and was, as a result, issued the following statement to clarify.

"Mr Claude Kewley, the Scottish representative in Canada, spoke on the transatlantic telephone on Thursday morning with Mr Festus Moffat, secretary of the Scottish Ice Hockey Association, concerning the statement which had appeared in the press to the effect that the Canadian Amateur Association would not transfer players to Scotland except such players who were registered by the British Ice Hockey Association. Mr Moffat was able to assure Mr Kewley that the Scottish Association

had agreed to this procedure of registration. Mr Kewley stated that irrespective of the suggestion of a last minute hitch, all players signed for Scotland would sail within the next two weeks as arranged. Mr Kewley has full authority to take such steps as he considers expedient in Canada to protect Scottish interests in any emergency. Mr Moffat concluded by saying the Scottish public need have no fear about their ice hockey next season. All games will be played to schedule and Mr Kewley says the teams will be even faster and keener than last season."

On a Thursday in mid-September at 10:10am to be precise, according to reports, a tall stranger with a decided Canadian accent appeared at Kirkcaldy Ice Rink and inquired at the office if Fife Flyers played at the stadium, the reply was naturally in the affirmative. It turned out to be Pat Good, the first arrival of Fife Flyers' new team. Pat, it was learned, did not like to be called Pat, to his friends he was known as "Goodie". He arrived at Liverpool on the Monday, caught a train to Cornwall to meet some friends and was quite unaware of the anxiety he had caused the management in Kirkcaldy with his disappearance. Goodie was a 19-year-old youngster from Kingston who started his career in the Midget League with Kingston Saints where he played two seasons before starting a team on his own which he named Flyers. It was as the result of the name "Flyers" that he became so keen to come to Kirkcaldy adding that as his own team had had such a good season he thought that it might be a good omen for his new club. Prior to appearing in the trials at Toronto he had played two seasons with Kingston Victorias and as a result he knew a number of the Flyers old and present players. A right defenceman, despite shooting left, with size and weight he was projected as a grand partner to Londry and together should be a formidable defence.

The following week the rest of the Flyers team had arrived. There were no fewer than six Kingston boys in the team, including Londry, Snider and Scrutton of last season's line-up, while all the players hailed from Ontario.

Net minder - Murrel "Babe" Sholtz 23 years old, 5ft 7 in (Collingwood Juniors)

Defence - Bob Londry, Floyd Snider, Pat Good, (All from Kingston), Ross Hochberg 19 years old 5ft 10 in (Uxbridge Juniors)

Forwards - "Bud" Scrutton, Roy Hawkins (Kingston Vics - Center) 21 years 5ft 6 in, 10st, Ted Fowler (Kingston Vics left-wing) 19 years old 5ft 11in, Cliff Ryan (Toronto St Michael's Buzzards - left-wing) 19 years old 5ft 8in 10st 5lbs, Bill Bradbury (Uxbridge Juniors - Centre) 19 years old 5ft 10in 11st 9lb, Leslie O'Rourke (Ex Royal Canadian Navy left-wing or center) 24 years old 5ft 7 in 11st

Ken Potts had not been released by Tulsa Oilers, the farm for the Toronto Maple Leafs. McCrone who was due to return decided to stay home after offers in Canada for his services.

The Flyers fortunes for the season were encapsulated within the opening week. They started the season without Scrutton who had arrived in Fife with his wrist already in plaster and it was then found that the bones had not knitted properly. Hochberg fractured his wrist when body checked in preseason practice and then in the closing minutes of their opening match Sholtz injured his wrist, played on and only when he was x-rayed afterwards was it confirmed he had a fracture. The Flyers secured Dan Deacon, a rent-a-goalie if you wish, as cover in nets and although all three players were back in action remarkably quickly the seasons fortunes appeared ill fated.

The Autumn Cup was introduced as a new competition, replacing the Scottish Flag Competition and the Flyers finished bottom on the new eight team set up, Glasgow Bruins being the new boys. The National League was played as an East and West Section, Flyers were 3<sup>rd</sup> with 24 pts in the East and so missed the playoffs with Dundee 42 and Dunfermline 31 points respectively progressing as eventual finalists. In the Canada Cup, Flyers won only two of their fourteen matches and finished dead last. The Scottish Cup was now contested as a two leg knock out and in the first round the Flyers overcame Ayr Raider 14-9 on aggregate thanks to a 10-5 home leg win. In the Semi Final

against Falkirk they won 6-5 in the away leg but the damage was already done with the Lions thrashing them 12-2 at Kirkcaldy. However, there was a silver lining in the shape of the Flyers first cup in two seasons. The inaugural Silver Jubilee Cup was contested over two nights by Perth, Ayr and Fife.

The first 3 games at Kirkcaldy ended as follows;

Fife Flyers 1 Ayr Raiders 0, Perth Panthers 2 Ayr Raiders 0, Fife Flyers 2 Perth Panthers 2

The following night at Ayr the results were;

Ayr Raiders 0 Perth Panthers 0, Fife Flyers 3 Perth Panthers 2, Ayr Raiders 3 Fife Flyers 2

This meant the final standings

|                |       |          |
|----------------|-------|----------|
| Fife Flyers    | 8 pts | 11 goals |
| Perth Panthers | 7 pts | 10 goals |
| Ayr Raiders    | 3 pts | 3 goals  |

Without being too dismissive, the Flyers had achieved being “best of the worst”.

One other notable event in the season was the inclusion of Bert Smith in the GB Olympic team. Three Scottish players were included in the line-up that travel to St Moritz on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Bert Smith was the leading scorer in the Kirkcaldy Junior team, Tuck Syme from Dunfermline and Frank Jardine from Glasgow Mohawks were the other Scots with J. Rolland, Dunfermline, first reserve. Team: Goal M. Simon (unattached); defence—G. Davey (Wembley Lions), T. Syme (Dunfermline), A. Green (Wembley Lions), F. Dunkelman (Harringay Greyhounds); forwards—J. Chappell (Brighton Tigers), J. Oxley (Wembley Lions), G. Baillie (Streatham), A. Stinchcombe (Streatham), F. Green (unattached), J. Murray (Wembley Lions), L. Baker (Brighton Tigers), B. Smith (Kirkcaldy), F. Jardine (Glasgow Mohawks). Reserves J. Rolland (Dunfermline) and D. Wilson (Streatham).

### **1940's Summary Part 3**

The Flyers were about to end the decade however as the dominant force in Scottish hockey.

The Flyers announced that only Scrutton and Snider would be retained for the 1948/49 season and there was great excitement that the top scoring centre Chick Mann was signing from bottom club Glasgow Bruins where he had tallied 63 goals and 64 assists. He had previously played all of his hockey for St Catherines up to Junior ‘A’ level.

## Sportlight No. 1.

## THE NEW FLYERS



Left to right: 'Pete' Belanger, Bob Reid, Ken Joy, Doug Smith, Bud Scrutton, Hal Moreland, Scotty Reid, Floyd Snider, Chick Mann, Verner Greger

The other Flyers new recruits were Goalie Adrien 'Pete' Balanger, Defencemen Verne Gregor, Bob Reid and Forwards Doug Smith, Ken Joy, Scotty Reid, Harold Moreland

Interesting to note that all of the Canadians playing in Scotland arrived en masse (with the exception of the Casey brothers who bound for the Lions missed the flight) and touched down at Prestwick at 11.15am after a 2 hour delay. The Flyers contingent had a tedious journey as they finally arrived in Kirkcaldy 7pm that night after the coach made calls at Ayr, Paisley, Falkirk and Dunfermline to drop the other newcomers at their various destinations.

**'Pete' Belanger** was Quebec born and played his youth hockey with the Junior Aces, he then dropped out to work in a papermill. Along came the war and he backstopped the RCAF in the Allan Cup losing in the semi-final. He then played for Drummondville and Kitchener before being selected to play in Scotland where last season he played for the Glasgow Bruins and in a number of Scottish Select games.

**Harold "Hick" Moreland** a 25 year old from Orillia was a natural right winger but would play on Flyers left wing and he knew Scotland quite well as during the war he had been stationed in Inverness when he was serving with Royal Canadian Engineers. He had intended to come to Scotland last season but a last-minute snag prevented him from doing so but while playing with one of Tulsa Oilers farm teams he had met Earl McCrone and through him contacted Mr Kewley who invited him to take part in the trials.

**The Reid brothers** from Oshawa, Bob a 23 year old 5ft 8in defenceman and Scotty who was the same height, a 24 year old left winger were certainly not going to be lonely in Scotland as they had a number of relations in Glasgow. Scotty had a girl in Greenock and although he had not seen the lassie they had been corresponding for quite some time and it was his intention to visit her as soon as possible. 70 years on and online dating hasn't changed that much!

**Vern Greger** a 23 year old from Orillia, at 6ft was the tallest player in the team and played two seasons before at Streatham.

**Ken Joy** was a 5ft 9in 21 year old center from Kirkland Lake

**Doug Smith** was a 23 year old 5ft 8in defenceman from Espanola who won the North Shore Hockey league championship the previous season.

The format for the season was now becoming familiar. The Flyers opened with a couple of challenge matches against the Tigers and Raiders before starting the Autumn Cup. The Canada Cup then commenced and upon conclusion the National League got underway and the season ended with the Scottish Cup and minor trophy competitions.

The Flyers got their campaign off to the best possible start by picking up the first silverware of the season, the Airlie Cup for winning the Autumn Cup competition. They were pushed all the way by Falkirk with whom they split the home and away series but they kept their nerve as the final table read.

|                     | GP | W | L | T | GF | GA | Pts |
|---------------------|----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Fife Flyers         | 12 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 75 | 40 | 19  |
| Falkirk Lions       | 12 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 66 | 42 | 18  |
| Paisley Pirates     | 12 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 68 | 67 | 13  |
| Dundee Tigers       | 12 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 59 | 59 | 11  |
| Dunfermline Vikings | 12 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 57 | 61 | 11  |
| Ayr Raiders         | 12 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 46 | 80 | 8   |
| Perth Panthers      | 12 | 0 | 8 | 4 | 52 | 74 | 4   |

In the Canada Cup the Lions got some measure of revenge as the table below shows and it looked as though it would be a two way fight to secure the National League Championship.

|                     | GP | W  | L | T | GF | GA | Pts |
|---------------------|----|----|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Falkirk Lions       | 12 | 10 | 2 | 0 | 84 | 44 | 20  |
| Fife Flyers         | 12 | 8  | 3 | 1 | 68 | 54 | 17  |
| Paisley Pirates     | 12 | 8  | 4 | 0 | 77 | 64 | 16  |
| Dunfermline Vikings | 12 | 5  | 7 | 0 | 59 | 63 | 10  |
| Ayr Raiders         | 12 | 4  | 8 | 0 | 65 | 79 | 8   |
| Perth Panthers      | 12 | 3  | 8 | 1 | 47 | 74 | 7   |
| Dundee Tigers       | 12 | 3  | 9 | 0 | 53 | 75 | 6   |

A two way fight it did indeed turn out to be. The two were nip and tuck all season long and it came down to the Flyers final two games where they won 3-1 at Dunfermline and by virtue of the Thursday night fixture they played their final game ahead of the Lions knowing that a win over the Perth Panthers would secure the Coronation Trophy and be crowned National League champions. They duly delivered with a 7-1 win including a Mann hat trick.

|                     | GP | W  | L  | T | GF  | GA  | Pts |
|---------------------|----|----|----|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Fife Flyers         | 24 | 16 | 5  | 3 | 119 | 74  | 35  |
| Falkirk Lions       | 24 | 17 | 7  | 0 | 152 | 91  | 34  |
| Dunfermline Vikings | 24 | 14 | 7  | 3 | 118 | 103 | 31  |
| Paisley Pirates     | 24 | 10 | 11 | 3 | 137 | 137 | 23  |
| Dundee Tigers       | 24 | 8  | 14 | 2 | 123 | 138 | 18  |
| Perth Panthers      | 24 | 8  | 14 | 2 | 106 | 139 | 18  |
| Ayr Raiders         | 24 | 3  | 18 | 3 | 103 | 176 | 9   |

The playoff round for the Anderson Trophy saw the Flyers meet the Vikings and the Lions played the Pirates. Flyers had lost Snider for up to 6 weeks with a knee injury in an earlier Scottish Cup game

against the Vikings and it was an epic battle between the two Fife teams which after two games ended 10-10 on aggregate. The outcome would be a further two games in which the Vikings recorded a handsome 10-3 aggregate to advance but lose to the Lions.

The Lions also wrapped up the Scottish Cup honours when they pipped the Paisley Pirates by two points with the Flyers five points behind in 4<sup>th</sup> place.

Captain Bud Scrutton, in his 3<sup>rd</sup> year, became the first player to hit 100 goals in Scotland and topped the scoring charts with 107 goals and 81 assists for 188 points. He was pushed all the way though by Chick Mann who was runner up in the scoring charts with 91 goals and 94 assists for 185 points.

Flyers players were prominent in the end of season All Star awards with Snider, Mann and Scrutton selected to the 'A' Team and Belanger and Greger to the 'B' Team.

Al Rodgers who was voted the coach of the year the previous season interestingly was voted the 'B' coach of the year with his counterpart George McNeill from the Falkirk Lions voted the 'A' coach.

Unsurprisingly the Flyers moved quickly to secure the core of the team and reduce the turnover in personnel for the 1949/50 season. Belanger, Greger, Snider, Scrutton and Mann were all signed before the summer off season.

There were to be a major change in Scottish Ice Hockey for the forthcoming season. The much maligned "pooling system" was finally scrapped. It was essentially in place to try to establish a degree of parity between teams who were allocated players through the SIHA. Now teams would manage their own affairs but had to have a "fixed" team by mid December before the start of the National League competition. Until then clubs were allowed to make changes to their 12 man rosters which would include 9 Canadians and 3 local junior players. After the cut off date any replacement required would have to come from clubs in house junior players.



The 1949-50 Fife Flyers took a breather during morning practice to show off their new strip. They are, from left to right (newcomers in capitals), back row:—Chick Mann, AMES BROWN, Pete Belanger (captain), EARLE McCRONE, Verne Greger (vice-captain). Front row: — Floyd Snider, RAY BOUCHARD, MARSHALL BENTLEY, and JOHNNY VANIER.

As you can see from the line up above there was one major omission. No Bud Scrutton who decided that his future lay in North America and he decided to try out for the Chicago Blackhawks. He ended up playing the season in the Eastern Hockey League for the Grand Rapids Rockets. A familiar face however did return with Earl McCrone who had played the previous season with Detroit Jerry Lynch and Akron Americans in the international Hockey League.

The newcomers were:

**Marshall Bentley** - 5ft 8 in, 21 year old from Western Canada, a center who had played with Greger and McCrone and played with North Sydney Vics.

**Ray Bouchard** – 5ft 7in, a 20 year old forward who had played with Winnipeg Monarchs where he won the West Canada Championship.

**Ames Brown** – 22 year old utility player mixing right wing and defence, he played the previous season with Boston Olympics

**Johnny Vanier** – 24 year old right wing who was familiar to fans as one of the Paisley Pirates “Flying Frenchmen” from last season. He previously had played for the Canada Legion when they won the Northern Ontario playoffs.

The Flyers got the defence of their Autumn Cup title off to a shaky start with a 6-6 tie with Ayr Raiders at Kirkcaldy. Coach Rodgers had already seen enough and Bouchard and Brown were to be shipped home. This allowed Bert Smith more ice time and saw he return of the unsigned Scotty Reid. 30 year old defenceman Ray Dinardo was also recruited, he had previously played with Haringay Greyhounds.

At the halfway stage of the competition the Flyers were on target to repeat but then were shocked in Ayr by a 5-3 Raiders win, this opened the door for Dundee Tigers who stole the honours by a point thanks in the main to a stunning 12-6 win over the Flyers in Dundee in their final game.

|                     | GP | W | L | T | GF | GA | Pts |
|---------------------|----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Dundee Tigers       | 12 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 77 | 55 | 18  |
| Fife Flyers         | 12 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 68 | 54 | 17  |
| Falkirk Lions       | 12 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 57 | 50 | 13  |
| Ayr Raiders         | 12 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 58 | 63 | 12  |
| Dunfermline Vikings | 12 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 54 | 47 | 11  |
| Perth Panthers      | 12 | 3 | 8 | 1 | 51 | 73 | 7   |
| Paisley Pirates     | 12 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 58 | 81 | 6   |

The Flyers quickly shrugged off the disappointment and won their first silverware of the season by landing the Canada Cup.

|                     | GP | W | L | T | GF | GA | Pts |
|---------------------|----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|
| Fife Flyers         | 12 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 67 | 40 | 19  |
| Dunfermline Vikings | 12 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 65 | 38 | 16  |
| Dundee Tigers       | 12 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 61 | 57 | 12  |
| Paisley Pirates     | 12 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 60 | 65 | 12  |
| Falkirk Lions       | 12 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 43 | 59 | 10  |
| Ayr Raiders         | 12 | 4 | 7 | 1 | 46 | 64 | 9   |
| Perth Panthers      | 12 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 57 | 76 | 6   |

It was now on to the defence of their National League crown, could they become only the second team, after the Glasgow Mohawks in the mid 1930's, to repeat?

There was a significant 6-3 win against Dunfermline in mid January. This was then reversed a month later when the Vikings ended a run of 16 consecutive home victories for the Flyers. The two Fife

teams were going hammer and tongs for the title. The Flyers looked as though they would falter with a three game skid and only 8 points in 10 games but steadied the ship when they scraped past Paisley by an odd goal in 13 and hammered Ayr Raider 12-0. In the penultimate game of the season the Vikings drew level on points with the Flyers after a 3-1 home win over them. Perth Panthers would possibly decide the outcome of the Coronation Trophy as they played the Flyers at Kirkcaldy on the Thursday and two days later the Vikings in Perth. There was much angst towards the SIHA by Flyers who understood that their superior goals scored tally would see them win the cup in the event of both teams beating the Panthers. The SIHA insisted there would be a playoff if the teams were tied on points. The Flyers did their part by winning 10-4 and had to wait. Incredibly bottom of the table Panthers defeated the Vikings 4-3 so the trophy stayed in Kirkcaldy.

|                     | GP | W  | L  | T | GF  | GA  | Pts |
|---------------------|----|----|----|---|-----|-----|-----|
| Fife Flyers         | 24 | 15 | 7  | 2 | 128 | 80  | 32  |
| Dunfermline Vikings | 24 | 15 | 9  | 0 | 109 | 92  | 30  |
| Paisley Pirates     | 24 | 13 | 9  | 2 | 116 | 104 | 28  |
| Falkirk Lions       | 24 | 12 | 9  | 3 | 104 | 84  | 27  |
| Ayr Raiders         | 24 | 10 | 13 | 1 | 100 | 125 | 21  |
| Dundee Tigers       | 24 | 7  | 14 | 3 | 110 | 135 | 17  |
| Perth Panthers      | 24 | 6  | 17 | 1 | 94  | 141 | 13  |

In the playoff for the Anderson Trophy the Flyers faced Paisley Pirates in the semi final and narrowly advanced 9-7 on aggregate to meet the Falkirk Lions. The Flyers won the opening game 4-1 at Kirkcaldy and looked good for the double but were stunned 6-1 by the Lions who retained their title.

There was a new league type tournament called the Association Cup which was only played for this season. The Flyers were well off the pace to Vikings the eventual winners. The Scottish Cup was replaced with a knock out format over two legs with the Flyers receiving a bye to meet Falkirk in the semi final. The Flyers won 11-8 on aggregate to then meet the Vikings in the final. A small measure of revenge for the west of Fife side who won 12-11 over the two legs.

Chick Mann was the scoring leader with 74 goals and 96 assists for 170 points, he pipped Dundee Tigers 'Rookie of the Year' George Sinfield by a single point.

Belanger, Snider and Mann all made the 'A' All Star team whilst Greger made the 'B' team. Coach of the year was reversed from the previous season with Rodgers the 'A' winner and McNeill the 'B'.

The Flyers left the decade riding the crest of a wave, were the troubles in Scottish hockey a thing of the past and would the 1950's continue to see the obvious growth in the game? What do you think!