

## **Chapter 11**

### **The Oshawa Green Gael Dynasty Years**

The Oshawa Green Gaels dynasty of seven consecutive Minto Cup championships, from 1963 until 1969, can be attributed mainly to one man, Jim Bishop. He acted as the Gaels' coach and general manager. Bishop played junior lacrosse for St. Vincent as a goaltender and later for the Scarborough Maitlands as a forward, before his coaching debut in 1946. From that time, he was always coaching. He coached the Ontario Juvenile championship Toronto Green Gaels club in 1951 and 1952 before putting his Junior A coaching hat into the ring in 1953 with the Oakville Green Gaels club. This was the first time the Green Gael name was associated with junior lacrosse. In 1954, he moved the Green Gaels to Newmarket and in both 1954 and 1955, the Gaels managed to finish in first place, but he could not take the team any further. He moved the Green Gael club to Mimico in 1956 where again, the club finished first in the regular season but failed to make it out of Ontario.

In 1957, Bishop moved to Huntsville where the Green Gaels made it to the playoffs in Junior A. Possibly the greatest coach to grace the sport of lacrosse, Jim worked for the Parks and Recreation Department in Huntsville and coached, taught, organized, and managed minor lacrosse teams from novice to intermediate. He won eighteen Ontario championships over five years.

In 1962, Jim Bishop moved to Oshawa and started the Whitby-Oshawa Green Gaels juvenile team. Bishop was also the sports director for Oshawa's CKLB radio station at that time. Members of that juvenile team which bowed out in the Ontario finals to St. Catharines include Merv Marshall, Gary Davie, Tim Gray, Neil Armstrong, Jim Hinkson, Don Gutsol, Murray Stroud, Ron Moore, Brian Brady, Dave Houston, Bill Braiden, Bobby Watt, Stan Kolesnik, and Jerry Garrard. Marshall, Davie, Armstrong, Hinkson, Brady, Houston, and Kolesnik also played for Bishop in 1964, the second year of the Oshawa Junior A Green Gaels organization.

During Bishop's seven-year reign in Oshawa, the Green Gael club won the Minto Cup every year putting together a regular season record of 151 victories, 16 losses and one tie, a record of 77 wins and four losses during playoffs, and a record of 28 wins and nine losses during Minto Cup play.

The 1963 Oshawa Green Gael club, which finished in third place during the regular season behind the Brampton Armstrongs and the Alderwood Terriors, is the only team ever to win the Minto Cup in its initial year of Junior A play. Of the fourteen players to play during the playoffs in that inaugural season, eight of them followed Bishop from the Huntsville Minor Lacrosse program. These eight players were Don Stinson, Merv Marshall, Dave Lough, Tom Conlin, Ken Thompson, Larry Ireland, Stew Wieler and Dwight Davies. The remaining six players were made up of Johnny Davis, who came from Peterborough, and local players Elmer Tran, Brian Brady, Mike Gray, Dave Houston, and Jim Hinkson.

I can remember going to a Green Gael game at the Children's Arena in 1963 when the Gaels were playing the Alderwood Terriors. The Terriors had such players as Ron "Groucho" MacNeil and big Ken Hodge who went on to fame playing in the N.H.L. for the Boston Bruins. I remember Hodge had been stripped of the ball so many times by the diminutive Gael checkers that he just walked up to centre floor and handed the ball to an Oshawa player as a sign of respect. This Oshawa team consisted of nine of its total fourteen players that had never played junior lacrosse before. They managed to win 17 of their last 19 games to sweep into the finals. The team played the Minto Cup Series in Whitby because that arena could accommodate bigger crowds compared to the small Oshawa Children's Arena. That was the first Oshawa team to bring a Canadian lacrosse championship to the city since 1929 when an Oshawa field lacrosse team won the Mann Cup symbolizing lacrosse supremacy in Canadian senior lacrosse.

There were only four graduates from that winning Minto Cup club. They include Mike Gray, Elmer Tran, Tom Conlin and Dave Lough. For Jim Bishop, it was the first Minto Cup in seventeen years of coaching. It was also the first Minto Cup for Fred Walley, a first year general manager with the Green Gaels.

The 1964 season saw the Green Gaels climb to first place with 20 wins and 4 losses. Led by superstar Johnny Davis, he set a record that season for points in Junior A with 91 goals, 93 assists for 184 points. The player who finished second in scoring that year, Jim McGrath from St. Catharines, finished a distant 63 points behind Davis. The year also saw the addition of other Huntsville minor lacrosse graduates Brian Thompson, Phil Clayton, and Larry Stahls. Whitby added a young Ross Jones, who was able to garner 23 goals for the Gaels in his rookie season. He would later go on to score 101 goals in a Junior A season (one of only two players to do that). This year also saw graduates from that 1962 Whitby-Oshawa Green Gael club, including Jim Hinkson, Neil Armstrong, Merv Marshall, Dave Houston, Bill Braiden, Brian Brady, Gary Davie, and Stan Kolesnik, join the "A" team. Even a young 16-year-old hockey defenseman from the Oshawa Generals by the name of Bobby Orr suited up with the Gaels for two games. The major acquisition of the season, no doubt, was Gaylord Powless, a 17-year-old superstar that Jim Bishop managed to secure from the Ohsweken Intermediate Lacrosse Club on the Six Nations reservation. Powless showed a quick return on Bishop's investment by winning the Jim McConaghy Memorial Trophy as the most valuable player in the Minto Cup series played in New Westminster's Queens Park Arena. That year (1964), the Gaels chalked up Minto Cup number two.

In the year 1964, I was old enough to give blood at the St. John Ambulance Clinic. In return for a pint of blood, they gave a \$2 Green Gael ticket. That was the summer you could have seen me walking around as white as a ghost from donating blood so many times. My newspaper route failed to supply me with enough money for playing pinball machines, buying baseball cards, as well as going to lacrosse games. That year, the Gaels picked up Doug Favell, Bill Armour, and Bill Young for the trip out west. Doug Favell set a record by scoring three consecutive goals in 11 seconds in Minto Cup play. Merv Marshall, Phil Clayton, Dwight Davies, Brian Thompson, Jim Higgs, and Don Stinson, who at 8 or 9 years of age had won the 1957 Huntsville Novice all-Ontario championship together, had won a Minto Cup together.

My interest in lacrosse took a big jump in 1965. The Gaels had two Minto Cups under their belt and they had now moved into the brand-spanking new Oshawa Civic Auditorium. That year, the team again finished first with a record of 18 wins, one loss, and a tie. They did not lose a single game during the playoffs, knocking off St. Catharines, Hastings, and Mimico in straight games.

Four Green Gaels players finished in the top 10 scoring; Johnny Davis (second), Ken Thompson (third), Gaylord Powless (fourth), and Jim Higgs (sixth). What really got me interested in the Gaels that year was that Fred Greenwood, Charlie Marlowe, Mike Lewis, Larry Lloyd, and Tom Vann had all suited up with the Green Gaels for at least one game that year. These were guys I had played with and against in the previous season in the Oshawa Juvenile/Junior four team league. Eight of the 1965 Oshawa Green Gaels had started as a unit playing catch outside the Huntsville Arena nine years previously. Don Stinson's bad knees had limited him to suit up for only nine games that season. This was the first year that the Green Gaels played the Minto Cup series in the new Oshawa Civic Auditorium. I can remember people hanging from the large steel railings as they played the famous New Westminster Salmonbellies, who had their own superstars with Ranjit Dillon, Ken Winzoski, and the Goss brothers, Ed and Wayne.

The Green Gaels were a tremendous boost to the City of Oshawa's sporting scene. Remember, that was the '60s, before the advent of computer and video games and the Internet. It was a good time growing up in Oshawa. It seemed like everybody owned and lived in a house, all families owned a car, and we all had big black and white TV sets in the living room. We used to listen to Oshawa Green Gaels games on the radio in those days. Those times were indeed good. I used to go down to Woodview Park in the summer time and bang the lacrosse ball off the clubhouse walls for eight or nine hours per day. I remember the ball once slipped out of my stick, and smashed out the big picture window on the parking lot side of the clubhouse. I went to see Mr. Germond, the Park President, and told him what happened. Thank heavens he understood and I never had to pay for the window because about a week later, I put another ball through another picture window on the other side of the building! Needless to say, I didn't own up to it the second time. Nowadays, if you drive by the parking lot of the clubhouse, you will notice an iron fence that has been erected so that the windows are protected and pedestrians can make it safely in and out of the clubhouse. That must have set the neighbourhood coffers back a few thousand hard-earned dollars to build the fence. This was a time in Oshawa when you could see kids carrying wooden lacrosse sticks, almost like an extension of their arms, in every part of the city. Outdoor box lacrosse bowls could be found at Lake Vista Park, Bathe Park, Farewell Park, and Valleyview Park.

In 1965, the Green Gaels lost two top scorers in Johnny Davis (49 goals) to overage and Ken Thompson (47 goals) to the new Junior A franchise in Huntsville. They however, continued to improve, winning 23 games and losing only one during the 1966 season. The high scoring was quickly replaced by Gaylord Powless, finishing first in the league with 71 goals, 120 assists for 191 points. Ross Jones finished third with 86 goals, 47 assists for 133 points. Phil Clayton was fourth with 63 goals, 63 assists for 126 points, and Brian Thompson finished eighth with 71 goals, 32 assists for 103 points. Newcomers that year included John Clayton (younger brother of Phil) and Joe Krasnaj, a local player and graduate from the Oshawa Juvenile/Junior league. The team quickly disposed of all teams during the playoffs knocking out Brampton in four games straight, Toronto Township four games straight, and Mimico four games straight before finishing off New Westminster in six games. This Oshawa powerhouse had now won 33 straight playoff games over the past three years in their home league, the Ontario Lacrosse Association Junior A series.

The Green Gaels repeated the previous season record of 23 wins and one loss in 1967. This was accomplished despite Brian Thompson moving back to play with his hometown Huntsville Hawks. That year in Huntsville, he was selected most valuable player in the league after finishing second in scoring with a record of 82 goals, 56 assists for 138 points. The Green Gaels were still left with an amazing amount of fire power as Gaylord Powless won his second straight Advertiser Trophy as top scorer in the league with 75 goals, 92 assists and 167 points. Ross Jones finished third again with 84 goals, 38 assists for 122 points, and Jim Higgs finished tenth with 45 goals, 49 assists for 94 points. The Green Gaels were finally showing the wisdom of starting their own farm system as local minor lacrosse graduates Charlie Marlowe (41 goals), Larry Lloyd (45 goals) and Mike Lewis (19 goals) showed plenty of offensive power. Two other rookie local players, Bob Goulding and Peter Vipond, managed to crack the lineup. The final all-star team reflected the talent available on the Green Gaels as no less than four of the six positions were filled by Oshawa players. These players included goalie Merv Marshall, defenseman Dwight Davies, and forwards Gaylord Powless and Ross Jones. The playoffs saw the Gaels knock off Brampton four games straight and Huntsville four games straight. Toronto Township managed to beat them one game but the Gaels finished the series winning in five games. This brought the Green Gaels O.L.A. playoff record in the past four years to an astonishing record of 45 wins and only one loss. They won the Minto Cup again for the fifth straight year with a six game series win over the bridesmaid New Westminster Salmonbellies.

It is hard to believe in 1968 that the Green Gaels could lose the talents of a superstar in the class of the Marvelous Mohawk, Gaylord Powless, to overage and still improve on their season record. Miraculously, the Oshawa team finally went undefeated in that year, becoming the first team to win all 24 games they played. Ross Jones broke the 100 goal barrier for the first time in Junior A history scoring 101 goals and winning the scoring title. Phil Clayton finished sixth in league scoring, and Jim Higgs finished seventh. Three more rookies made it to the roster as two more locals Larry Shrigley and Bill Langley made the big club ending their minor lacrosse careers. The third rookie was a 20-year-old whizkid from Cornwall who played under the name Chuck Chin. Better known as Chuck Li, he once captained the Senior B Cornwall Wildcats. Li would end his junior career as a star player with the Green Gaels and go on to a fabulous Senior A career. That career should eventually catapult him into the Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame. The Green Gaels had another outstanding playoffs again knocking off St. Catharines in four straight games, Huntsville in four straight, and taking five games to dispose of the Mississauga P.C.O.s before winning their sixth straight Minto Cup. They once again met their perennial opponents the New Westminster Salmonbellies and easily beat them in four games straight. In the last five years, the Oshawa Green Gaels had now accumulated a playoff record of 57 wins to go along with only two losses within the O.L.A. Junior A series.

This 1968 season also saw the formation of the National Lacrosse League, the first attempt at professional lacrosse since 1932. The Detroit Olympics, a team coached and managed by the legendary Jim Bishop and owned by James Norris of hockey fame, had nine players from the Junior A Oshawa Green Gaels club suiting up for them. Although still of junior age, Ross Jones played 12 games, Merv Marshall 12 games, Fred Greenwood 11 games, Larry Lloyd 12 games, Charlie Marlowe 12 games, Chuck Li five games, Terry Rowland three games, Don Stinson three games, and Peter Vipond one game. These nine players helped this team greatly as they made it all the way to the finals before losing to the eventual league champions New Westminster Salmonbellies. As well, these young players lead the Green Gaels to their sixth straight Minto Cup.

The start to the 1969 Gaels season saw the graduation of veteran player Phil Clayton. Although only losing two games in the regular season, this club may have been the strongest club of all seven to win the Canadian Minto Cup Championship. This was also accomplished despite losing perhaps one of the all-time greatest Junior A goaltenders in Merv Marshall. Although only two players finished in the top ten scorers (Chuck Li in second place with 56 goals, 95 assists for 151 points and Larry Lloyd in tenth place with 71 goals, 46 assists for 117 points), they had to be the most balanced of any team. In 24 regular season games, the Gaels scored an amazing 571 goals. They finished with 13 players scoring over 20 goals for the season; Larry Lloyd (71), Chuck Li (56), Charlie Marlowe (51), John Clayton (48), Terry Rowland (47), Bill Langley (37), Jim Higgs (35), Don Stinson (30), Peter Vipond (29), Tom Simpson (29), Ross Jones (24), Bob Goulding (23), and Dave Mosier (22). In addition, Mike Lewis (17), Tom Vann (12) and Larry Shrigley (12) hit double figures. Chuck Li, John Clayton and Don Stinson were the only three players on that team not to have started out playing in the Oshawa Minor Lacrosse system. This team also set another record by scoring 45 goals in one game, smashing their own record by whipping Peterborough TeePees 45-10 on Monday June 9, 1969. The Gaels had set the previous record in 1964 by trouncing Guelph 42-4. This Gaels team had little opposition in the playoffs and Minto Cup sweeping Huntsville, Etobicoke, and Lakeshore each in four straight games and then knocking off the South Vancouver Legion for the Minto Cup in four straight games.

As this chapter comes to a close, there is one Green Gael that stands out amongst them all. Nothing compares to the accomplishments that Don Stinson achieved as a lacrosse player throughout his lifetime. It is conceivable to assume that even the greatest athletes in any sport known to be played on this Earth would be jealous of what Don accomplished. Don joined the Green Gaels in 1963 as a 6-foot-3-inch, 14-year-old teenager. In his first regular season of play, Don finished third in team scoring with 31 goals, 27 assists for 58 points. In his first playoff series, Don placed second in team scoring, gathering 47 points in only 12 playoff games. He also led the team that year with 107 penalty minutes. (Don is considered by some, including his own teammates, to be the toughest player ever to play lacrosse). Prior to his junior days, Don had played on Ontario Minor Lacrosse championship teams in his hometown of Huntsville in 1957, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1961, and 1962 in tyke, peewee, and bantam. He was the captain on many of those winning lacrosse teams.

Wearing number 10 throughout his career as a Green Gael, Don always epitomized the hard work ethic that the Green Gaels were known for.

The following story about Don Stinson is summarized from The Toronto Star on Sept. 8, 1969.

*Don Stinson returned to Laurentian University in Sudbury today to face the job of moving five automobiles to Oshawa. Those five cars represent the major reason why the Oshawa Green Gaels have won seven consecutive Minto Cups as Canadian junior lacrosse champions. The latest triumph in that incredible string was accomplished here Saturday night when Gaels edged the Vancouver Legionnaires 11-9 to sweep the crown in four games. Stinson is the only player to participate in all seven titles. He's a second-year student at Laurentian, and the week he endured to participate in the series exemplified the Green Gael tradition. He made all classes and games, a feat of considerable endurance due to the 300 miles between Sudbury and Oshawa. Stinson flew from Sudbury to Toronto, and then was rushed to Oshawa in time for the game. "After the game, I drove back to Sudbury, about a six-hour jaunt," Stinson said. "I survived the week on two hours of sleep per night. Now, I've got five cars up there, my own and four that were loaned to me. But I didn't want to miss the series. Heck, seven championships in a row is really something for any athlete." Stinson plans to retire from lacrosse at the advanced age of 21. Bad knees are the reason. "The knees have bothered me off and on for several seasons," he added. "I'm going to have surgery on both. Doctors have told me I could be crippled if I didn't layoff for a while and have the operations. Besides, in my entire lacrosse career, I've never been on a loser. It's great to quit that way."*



Don did play a season of Senior A lacrosse in 1970 for Huntsville and a handful of games for Windsor in the major series in 1972. He played three games of pro lacrosse for Detroit in 1968 while still a junior, a team that Bishop coached to the N.L.L. league final but lost to New Westminster Salmonbellies in six games. Don played three games of intermediate lacrosse in 1962, when intermediate was comparable to today's Senior B lacrosse.

Don Stinson never finished with a losing team in any championship series. By my count, Don played parts of ten different seasons, and his record of playing on seven Minto Cup championship teams will never be equaled. It is of my humble opinion that Don Stinson should be in the Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame. He is currently not. On July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2007, Don Stinson passed away at 59 years of age as a result of a car accident in Huntsville.

This Oshawa Green Gael dynasty has been voted into the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame in New Westminster, British Columbia in the “team category” with a record of seven straight Minto Cup seasons; a record for Junior A teams that will most likely never be repeated or beaten. Of the seven years in the Minto Cup playoffs, an Oshawa Green won the McConaghy Trophy as the series Most Valuable Player six times. Jim Higgs won the honour three times (1965, 1968, 1969), Gaylord Powless twice (1964, 1967), and Merv Marshall once (1963). Ken Winzoski from the New Westminster Salmonbellies won it in 1966.