

Chapter 12

The Oshawa Green Gael Remaining Junior A Years

The Oshawa Green Gaels had won seven Minto Cups in just seven short seasons, and although they were to continue play in Oshawa as a Junior A franchise for another 13 seasons, they never again made it as far to a Canadian Championship final; but they did have some good seasons and quite a few individual accomplishments along the way.

In 1970, the Green Gaels dropped to third place in league standings, but two individuals finished well up in league scoring. Diminutive Tommy Vann, in his last season of Junior A play before graduation finished second in league scoring with 73 goals and 69 assists for 142 points while big Terry Rowland managed to finish eighth in league scoring with 68 goals and 45 assists for 113 points. I can remember Tommy Vann playing on the same team as I did way back in Midget house league lacrosse. Our team had traded away four players to get the skilled dynamo from one of the other teams to help balance the minor lacrosse house league. Tommy was the best player that I had ever played with or against in my short career of playing minor house league lacrosse. The Gaels, in the first round of playoffs, managed to knock off arch-rival Peterborough 3-0 before finally losing out to the eventual Minto Cup Champion Lakeshore Maple Leafs. This was the last year that the Green Gaels were ever able to knock off Peterborough in a playoff round. I remember, as a fan, standing behind the Green Gael bench in that final game at the Oshawa Civic Auditorium tears streaming down my face in disbelief as my heroes were finally knocked to the wayside, losing the first series that I had ever seen them lose.

The 1971 Green Gaels bounced back to end up in first place during the regular season with a record of 22 wins and 8 losses. Individually, they were led by three players finishing in the league top ten scoring as Larry Shrigley finished third with 48 goals and 83 assists for 131 points, Terry Rowland finished sixth with 53 goals and 66 assists for 119 points and Pat Healy managed a tenth place finish with 34 goals and 77 assists for 111 points. Terry Lloyd, younger brother of Larry Lloyd would eventually go on to a 113 goal season in professional lacrosse in 1975 with the Philadelphia Wings, potting 70 goals to go along with 17 assists, while a young rookie Stan Cockerton added 14 goals and 13 assists. Cockerton would go on to win two most valuable player awards before his Junior career was over and would bring

back some fame to Canada in the 1978 World Field Lacrosse Championship in England by scoring the overtime goal and leading Canada to a surprising upset over the United States field lacrosse team. The Green Gaels, although finishing first during the regular season, got knocked from the playoffs in the first round of playoffs by the sixth place Etobicoke P.C.O. team.

The Gaels finally had their first sub 500 season in 1972 with an 11-17 record; however in the playoffs, they made it all the way to the O.L.A. Junior A finals before being knocked out by the eventual Minto Cup champion Peterborough P.C.O.s who had completed a perfect season record of 28-0. Things just went downhill after that. The next season, 1973 when the Green Gaels finished dead last with a record of six wins and 22 losses despite Stan Cockerton finishing third in league scoring with 56 goals and 72 assists for 128 points.

1974 saw the Gaels improve to a fourth place finish with a record of 12 wins and 16 losses. Although no Green Gael was able to finish in the top ten scorers both Tom Wreggitt (49 goals, 59 assists for 108 points) and Stan Cockerton (51 goals, 55 assists for 106 points) did manage to hit the century mark in points. Both managed to play seven years with the Junior A Green Gaels, although Cockerton only played one game in his first year with the club. Whitby C.B.C. Builders moved up to Junior A for the 1975 season making for a great rivalry between the two Durham Region clubs. In fact, Whitby finished ahead of the Green Gaels that season as the Gaels, despite Stan Cockerton finishing sixth in league scoring with 68 goals and 62 assists for 130 points and winning the most valuable player award. The Green Gaels got an early exit from the playoffs being beat out by the Bramalea Excelsiors club in straight games.

The next season, 1976, saw the Green Gaels dip to a fourth place finish in the league's Eastern Division with nine wins and 17 losses and were knocked out in the first round of the playoffs by Peterborough in six games. Stan Cockerton continued his amazing play by winning his second straight most valuable player award and finished second in league scoring with 87 goals, 81 assists for 168 points. Tom Wreggitt (66 goals, 39 assists for 105 points) and Rick Barrowlough (49 goals, 52 assists for 101 points) also crashed the 100 point barrier for the Green Gaels. A lot of improvement was shown in 1977 when the Green Gaels ended the regular season with a record of 14 wins, seven losses and a single tie, but were again knocked out of the playoffs in the first round by their old nemesis Peterborough

four games to one. Kelly Mitchell, in his first full season of Junior A lacrosse, came fifth in league scoring with 57 goals, 68 assists for 125 points. Mitchell also won the P.C.O. trophy as the best rookie in the O.L.A. Junior A series.

In 1978, there was a three-way fight for the regular season championship as Whitby C.B.C. Builders, Peterborough Munroes and Oshawa Legion Green Gaels had only six points separating them by the end of the season and Oshawa finished with a record of 20-10 for third spot. For the third season in a row, the Green Gaels were knocked out of the playoffs by the powerful Peterborough team. Kelly Mitchell finished first in overall scoring in the O.L.A. Junior A series. Tom Wreggitt (89 goals, 63 assists for 152 points) managed to finish fifth overall and Jayde Gibbs (64 goals, 57 assists for 121 points) was tenth three Green Gaels in the league top ten scoring. Goaltender Don Madole, picked up from St. Catharines, with 2 goals, 67 assists and 69 points, wasn't even the top point getter among goaltenders as Barry Maruk of Rexdale Warriors set a Junior A record by getting 86 assists during the regular season, setting a record for assists and most points in a season.

The next year, 1979, was the most explosive offensive year ever seen in the history of O.L.A. Junior A lacrosse. The Green Gaels climbed to first place in final league standings with a record of 25 wins and only five losses and set a record by scoring 597 regular season goals. During the regular season, no less than five Oshawa Green Gaels finished in the top ten point getters and it looked as if this could be the year that the Gaels would make it to the Canadian Minto Cup Championship. Jayde Gibbs tied for first in the league scoring along with Whitby's Cam Devine, and in so doing, the two of them set a Canadian Junior A scoring record, as they both were tied with an unbelievable 247 points. Gibbs' total was made up of 95 goals plus 162 assists. Coming third was Kelly Mitchell with 86 goals, 128 assists for 213 points. Derek Keenan ended fourth with 76 goals and 113 assists for 189 points. Derek was so impressive that he was picked up by the Major Series Peterborough Lakers and played in the Canadian Mann Cup finals against the Victoria Shamrocks. Derek also picked up the most valuable player award. Mike McKee potted 115 goals plus 71 assists for 186 points finishing fifth in league scoring becoming only the second player in league history to break the century mark in regular season scoring and shattering Ross Jones record of 103 goals way back in 1968. Guy Morey rounded out the top ten scorers, finishing tenth with 76 goals, and 48 assists for 124 points. Even goaltender Don Madole managed to aid in the offense as he

added 55 assists in only 11 games for his second consecutive season of fantastic playmaking by a goaltender. During the playoffs Oshawa knocked off Mississauga four games to zero, Elora four games to two before being knocked out in the league finals in seven games to the Peterborough team, the fourth consecutive year that they had succumbed by the mighty Peterborough squad.

With the regular season reduced from 30 to 20 games in 1980, the Green Gaels slipped from first to second spot behind the Whitby C.B.C. Builders. The playoffs saw Oshawa defeat Etobicoke 4-0 before being knocked out in the second round four games to two; you guessed it Peterborough, for the fifth consecutive year. The Gaels still had plenty of fire power denoted by the top four point getters, all playing for Oshawa. Kelly Mitchell (63 goals, 101 assists for 164 points), Mike McKee (107 goals, 55 assists for 161 points), Jayde Gibbs (63 goals, 88 assists for 151 points) and Derek Keenan (56 goals, 76 assists for 132 points) finishing 1-2-3-4 in league scoring for the first time in league history. Mike McKee broke the century mark in goals for the second time and it has only happened in history a total of only three times. This Gael team, over the last three seasons, had five of the best players in the entire league but they never had the balance to take them through the playoffs and so are never remembered as one of the great teams. Still the players Mike McKee, Derek Keenan, Jayde Gibbs, Kelly Mitchell and Guy Morey go down in the history books as five of the top offensive players ever to play the game while in Junior A; but the Gaels never had the balance or the defense to take them very far once the playoffs started.

With the return of Jim Bishop behind the bench for the 1981 season Jayde Gibbs decided to sit out the season. After Bishop was fired Gibbs decided to return but the move more than likely cost Gibbs a shot at eventually becoming the all-time top point-getter in the history of Junior A lacrosse as he ended his career with only 18 points behind the eventually all-time leader as Derek Keenan was to go on and end up with 1086 to Jayde Gibbs 1070 points as these two plus Whitby's Cam Devine were the only 3 players to break the 1,000 point barrier in the history of Junior A lacrosse. Mike McKee also only played a handful of games during the regular 1981 season and the Green Gaels slipped to fifth place. Derek Keenan with 57 goals and 86 assists for 143 points had another outstanding season finishing fourth in league scoring. Guy Morey had reached the 100-point plateau for the second time with 69 goals, 53 assists for 122 points but still did not crack the top ten scoring list. The

Gaels looked again like they might go far in the playoffs as they knocked off Whitby four games to one and Etobicoke four games to two but again Peterborough had their number, and, although it took the full seven games for Peterborough to knock off Oshawa they did it again for the sixth consecutive year.

Again, in 1982 saw a three-way dog fight with Peterborough, Whitby and Oshawa separated this time by a mere four points. Oshawa ended third with a 15 win five loss record but there was no getting away from the Peterborough jinx. The Green Gaels knocked off Brampton four games to one, Whitby four games to three in an exiting Durham Region semi-final before the Peterborough James Gang, the eventual Minto Cup winners, knocked them off in four games straight, an unbelievable seven consecutive years that the Green Gaels had fallen out of the playoffs to Peterborough. Jayde Gibbs with 68 goals, 71 assists for 139 regular season points won the Advertiser Trophy for the second time in his career as the league scoring champion. Derek Keenan with 67 goals and 66 assists for 133 points for third spot in league scoring and Barry Brear won the P.C.O. trophy as top rookie in the league.

With the farm system drying up, no minor lacrosse system in Oshawa and the big scorers all graduated, 1983 was the last season of Junior A lacrosse that Oshawa was going to see. It was a sad time for those who had followed the 21 year Junior A history of the Oshawa Green Gaels. It was a valiant year but stuck into the tough Major Division, the Gaels finished in fourth spot and in the cellar with a record of 11 wins and 11 losses during the season and it ended, as expected, with the Gaels being knocked from the playoffs in four straight games by the Peterborough James Gang which then went on to win another Minto Cup. It was the eighth time in a row that the Oshawa Green Gaels had their season finished off by the team from Peterborough. Although no Green Gael ended up in the top ten in league scoring or won an individual trophy or cracked the 100 point plateau many of that team went onto successful lacrosse careers. Bob Hamley spent many years of Major Series lacrosse with Fergus, Brampton, and even in the professional MILL with Buffalo Bandits, finished in the top ten scoring in Major lacrosse no less than eight times, was on two President winning teams with Fergus Thistles, got inducted into the Ontario Lacrosse Hall of Fame and then went on to coach in the professional National Lacrosse League. Glen Lay had a successful career at the Senior B level playing for the Newtown Golden Eagles and was on their Canadian Presidents Cup winning team in 2000. Jerry Fitzgerald, Jason Richards, Ken Passfield, Rob Hanna and

Jeff Garland were on Mann Cup winning teams with Brooklin Redmen, Larry "Sonny" Hill went on to two further seasons of Junior B with Six Nations where he accumulated over 100 points in each season including breaking into the top ten scoring as well as playing 2 partial seasons of Major series lacrosse with Brampton Excelsiors and several of the others furthered their careers with Whitby in Junior A as well as further years of senior lacrosse. Although the Junior A Green Gaels were gone the club would be forever remembered. Thirteen years later, the name was revived in 1995 as a Junior B franchise and has brought a lot of pride to the community as a Junior B team which has so far won four Founders Cups and continues to write further records into the record books.

OSHAWA GREEN GAELS IN SUMMARY

Oshawa Green Gaels coaches

1963-1969 - Jim Bishop
1970-1972 - Bob Hanna
1973-1975 - Ron Pither
1976-1976 - Neil Armstrong
1977-1978 - Jim Bishop
1979-1980 - Bob Hanna
1981-1982 - Peter Vipond and Jim Bishop
1982-1983 - Neil Armstrong

Players who registered seven different years in Junior A lacrosse:

Don Stinson 1963-1969
Stan Cockerton 1970-1976
Tom Wreggitt 1972-1978
Derek Keenan 1976-1982
Jason Richards *1983-1989

*Jason Richards played 1983 with Oshawa Green Gaels and the rest of his Junior A career with Whitby

**TOP 100 ALL-TIME CAREER JUNIOR A GOAL SCORERS
REGULAR SEASONS AND PLAY-OFFS COMBINED**

			GOALS	SEASONS	REGULAR SEASON			PLAY-OFFS		
					GO	ASS	PTS	GO	ASS	PTS
1	JOHN DAVIS	*	541	(1960-1965)	368	286	654	173	123	296
4	DEREK KEENAN		476	(1976-1982)	317	440	757	159	170	329
6	JAYDE GIBBS	*	451	(1977-1982)	307	402	709	144	217	361
7	ROSS JONES		433	(1964-1969)	359	181	540	74	52	126
10	KELLY MITCHELL		390	(1976-1980)	300	393	693	90	144	234
11	STAN COCKERTON		385	(1970-1976)	319	315	634	66	90	156
13	BRIAN THOMPSON	*	379	(1964-1968)	295	174	469	84	53	137
15	JIM HIGGS		366	(1964-1969)	240	272	512	126	152	278
23	TOM WREGGITT		343	(1972-1978)	304	261	565	39	73	112
34	GUY MOREY		312	(1976-1981)	228	156	384	84	46	130
39	GAYLORD POWLESS		303	(1964-1967)	212	290	502	91	117	208
48	PHIL CLAYTON	*	281	(1964-1969)	207	253	460	74	102	176
60	KEN THOMPSON	*	262	(1963-1966)	173	169	342	89	68	157
63	DON STINSON		258	(1963-1969)	163	174	337	95	113	208

* Not all Junior A goals were recorded as an Oshawa Green Gael

**TOP 100 ALL-TIME CAREER JUNIOR A PLAYMAKERS
REGULAR SEASONS AND PLAY-OFFS COMBINED**

			ASSISTS	SEASONS	REGULAR SEASON			PLAY-OFFS		
					GO	ASS	PTS	GO	ASS	PTS
2	JAYDE GIBBS	*	619	(1977-1982)	307	402	709	144	217	361
3	DEREK KEENAN		610	(1976-1982)	317	440	757	159	170	329
7	KELLY MITCHELL		537	(1976-1980)	300	393	693	90	144	234
12	JIM HIGGS		424	(1964-1969)	240	272	512	126	152	278
17	JOHN DAVIS	*	409	(1960-1965)	368	286	654	173	123	296
18	GAYLORD POWLESS		407	(1964-1967)	212	290	502	91	117	208
19	STAN COCKERTON		405	(1970-1976)	319	315	634	66	90	156
32	PHIL CLAYTON	*	355	(1964-1969)	207	253	460	74	102	176
71	DON STINSON		287	(1963-1969)	163	174	337	95	113	208
85	DON MADOLE	*	272	(1975-1979)	2	211	213	0	61	61
88	JASON RICHARDS	*	263	(1984-1989)	134	227	361	31	36	67

* Not all Junior A assists were recorded as an Oshawa Green Gael

TOP 100 ALL-TIME CAREER JUNIOR A POINT-GETTERS

REGULAR SEASONS AND PLAY-OFFS COMBINED

			POINTS	SEASONS	REGULAR SEASON			PLAY-OFFS		
					GO	ASS	PTS	GO	ASS	PTS
1	DEREK KEENAN		1086	(1976-1982)	317	440	757	159	170	329
2	JAYDE GIBBS	*	1070	(1977-1982)	307	402	709	144	217	361
5	JOHN DAVIS	*	950	(1960-1965)	368	286	654	173	123	296
6	KELLY MITCHELL		927	(1976-1980)	300	393	693	90	144	234
14	JIM HIGGS		790	(1964-1969)	240	272	512	126	152	278
15	STAN COCKERTON		790	(1970-1976)	319	315	634	66	90	156
22	GAYLORD POWLESS		710	(1964-1967)	212	290	502	91	117	208
24	TOM WREGGITT		677	(1972-1978)	304	261	565	39	73	112
27	ROSS JONES		666	(1964-1969)	359	181	540	74	52	126
35	PHIL CLAYTON	*	636	(1964-1969)	207	253	460	74	102	176
43	BRIAN THOMPSON	*	606	(1964-1968)	295	174	469	84	53	137
60	DON STINSON		545	(1963-1969)	163	174	337	95	113	208
71	GUY MOREY		514	(1976-1981)	228	156	384	84	46	130
81	KEN THOMPSON	*	499	(1963-1966)	173	169	342	89	68	157

* Not all Junior A points were recorded as an Oshawa Green Gael

MINTO CUP WINNERS JUNIOR A

1963 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1964 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1965 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1966 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1967 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1968 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1969 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS

**O.L.A. JUNIOR A CHAMPIONS
 IROQUOIS TROPHY WINNERS JUNIOR A**

* THE ORIGINAL IROQUOIS TROPHY WAS PRESENTED TO THE FIRST PLACE TEAM DURING THE REGULAR SEASON. IN 1976, THE TROPHY WAS GIVEN TO THE O.L.A. PLAYOFF WINNER, AND HAS BEEN PRESENTED, TO THE PLAYOFF WINNER EVER SINCE

1964 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1965 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1966 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1967 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1968 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1969 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1971 - OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
 1979 - OSHAWA LEGION GREEN GAELS

**JIM McCONAGHY MEMORIAL CUP WINNERS JUNIOR A
 (MOST VALUABLE PLAYER IN MINTO CUP SERIES)**

1963 - MERV MARSHALL	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1964 - GAYLORD POWLESS	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1965 - JIM HIGGS	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1967 - GAYLORD POWLESS	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1968 - JIM HIGGS	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1969 - JIM HIGGS	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS

**ADVERTISER TROPHY JUNIOR A
TOP SCORERS**

1954 - DENNY McINTOSH	NEWMARKET GREEN GAELS
1955 - DAVE BAKER	NEWMARKET GREEN GAELS
1964 - JOHN DAVIS	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1966 - GAYLORD POWLESS	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1967 - GAYLORD POWLESS	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1968 - ROSS JONES	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1978 - KELLY MITCHELL	OSHAWA LEGION GREEN GAELS
1979 - JAYDE GIBBS	OSHAWA LEGION GREEN GAELS
1980 - KELLY MITCHELL	OSHAWA LEGION GREEN GAELS
1982 - JAYDE GIBBS	OSHAWA LEGION GREEN GAEL

**GREEN GAEL TROPHY JUNIOR A
IN MEMORY OF DENNIS MacINTOSH
MOST VALUABLE PLAYER**

1964 - JOHN DAVIS	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1965 - MERV MARSHALL	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1975 - STAN COCKERTON	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1976 - STAN COCKERTON	OSHAWA LEGION GREEN GAELS
1979 - DEREK KEENAN	OSHAWA LEGION GREEN GAELS

**P.C.O. TROPHY JUNIOR A
ROOKIE OF THE YEAR**

1977 - KELLY MITCHELL	OSHAWA LEGION GREEN GAELS
1982 - BARRY BREAR	OSHAWA GREEN GAELS

**KEN ROSS TROPHY JUNIOR A
ABILITY AND SPORTSMANSHIP**

1965 - GAYLORD POWLESS OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1966 - GAYLORD POWLESS OSHAWA GREEN GAELS
1967 - ROSS JONES OSHAWA GREEN GAELS

BEST DEFENSIVE PLAYER AWARD JUNIOR A

1979 - FRED UPSHAW OSHAWA GREEN GAELS (EAST)