

Hockey in Whitehorse : Part 2 (1956-1959)

Airforce 1956-57 ? (R.Lortie photo)



The tall man over the goalie's left shoulder was 'Dez' Decembrini. At far right of the back row is Bob Clark. The captain[C] is Gilles 'Denny' Denette. To his right (with the hat) is Lionel 'Nel' Bergeron (*Wendy Walford's father*). A '57-58 hockey program (*courtesy of the Beckers*), lists other RCAF players : Stan Sharkey, Jim Corbett, Jerry Forster, Gordon Hill, Ron Boston, Don Anderson, Jean Pierre LaMarche, Ken Morrison, John Foote, Ron Smith, "Bud" MacAskill.

Now we need to match names and faces in the photo (but the photo may be from 1956-57).

Army 1956-57 ? (R.Lortie photo)



BACK: -----, -----, Dick Walling, John Morrison, Jim Stewart, Bill Craig [*the last four all being RCMP officers*]. Man behind the goalie(not in uniform) also unnamed.

FRONT: 'Mitch' Mitchell, Norm Becker, Leo Macdonald, -----, -----, -----, Rocky Hebert, -----, -----.

Thanks to Dan Vars, Ed Ard, and Bill Craig for help on some players' names.

For larger images, click on [Airforce '57](#) and [Army '57](#)

Whitehorse Merchants 1956-57 (R.Lortie photo)



BACK: Jerry Fromme, Willie Nicholson, Al Lortie, Vin Taylor, Danny Vars, Billy Jordan, Mike Scott, Al Norrington, Eddie MacKay.
FRONT: Doug Solonick (stickboy), Scotty Munro, Len Kerr, Don Hagen, Gerry Guerin.

Whitehorse Merchants 1957-58 (R.Lortie photo)



BACK : -----, Jim King, Danny Vars, Al Lortie, Henri Chaisson, Mike Scott, -----.
MIDDLE : Willie Nicholson, Billy Jordan, Al Norrington, Keith Brammer?, Vin Taylor.
FRONT: Lorne Scott, Gerry Guerin, Len Kerr, Don Hagen, Scotty Munro, Bud MacLean, Doug Solonick (stickboy).

Whitehorse Merchants 1958-59 (R.Lortie photo)



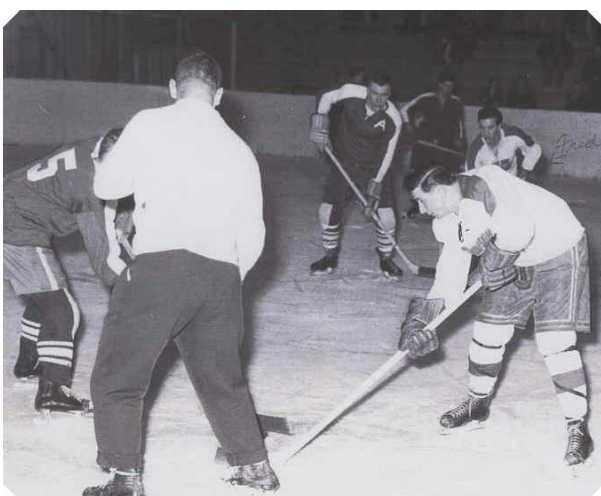
BACK : Roy Reber, George Aylwin, Lorne Vance, Boyd White, Willie Nicholson, Bud MacLean, Len Kerr, Henri Chaisson, John Carswell, Jim King, Scotty McRoberts, Scotty Munro.
FRONT : Billy Jordan, Vin Taylor, Don Hagen, Al Norrington, Les McLaughlin.
Stickboys: Ralph Lortie & Benny Sheardown.



Bud MacLean, Don Hagen & Henry Chaisson



Vin Taylor, Len Kerr & Les McLaughlin



Dawson & Hall's Norm Becker facing off against Army, John Morrison & Fred Howard on the wings. *Who is the ref ?*

For larger images, click [Bud-Don-Henri](#)
[Vin-Len-Les](#) and [Becker-Howard](#)

MINOR HOCKEY

Minor hockey consisted of two leagues, Midget (for ~ 8-12 year-olds) and Juvenile (for 13-18 yrs), both with 4 teams. The Midget teams were Kiwanis, Nelson's Pipebenders (Matt Nelson team), Capitols (Sam McClimon team), and one more which I can't recall. Juvenile teams were Whitehorse Beverages (briefly), Lions, later CYO (Catholic Youth Org.), and others I don't remember.

Trophy Winners, 1955? *(Les McLaughlin photo)*



BACK : Willie Nicholson, Al Norrington, Al Fromme, Dan Vars.
FRONT : Don Murray, Doug Wood.

Whitehorse Beverages 1956-57, Juvenile League *(R.Lortie photo)*



BACK : Lawrence Seeley (Sponsor), Mike Scott, Al Fromme, Greg Lyslo, Al Norrington, John Carswell, Stan Wilcox, Dick Carswell (Coach).
FRONT: Jay Amor, Ralph Lortie, Grant Lortie, Wayne Lee, Neil Campbell.

Crests from my old hockey uniforms or jackets: *Midget* [KIWANIS](#) '54-55, *Juvenile* [LIONS](#) '58-59.

JIM LIGHT

No account of minor hockey in Whitehorse in the '50s & '60s could be complete without paying tribute to JIM LIGHT, for his many years of work as secretary, timekeeper, statistician, etc. in the midget & juvenile leagues. For as long ago as anyone can remember minor hockey at the old Civic Centre, Jim was there for every game. Without his dedication, boys' hockey just wouldn't have been as good.



As a young man, Jim had been in the RCAF, stationed at Rockcliff, ON. He had been married and had a son. It may have been the separation from his son that led Jim to dedicate himself to boys' hockey in Whitehorse. One can never know, as Jim was a quiet man who generally kept his feelings to himself.

After Jim died in 1970, at the age of only 42, the City recognized his enormous contributions, and the Civic Centre was re-named JIM LIGHT ARENA. Then in 1991, Jim was inducted into the Yukon Sports Hall of Fame (*photo from that website*).

Some people knew Jim as Bob Light, his name being James Robert, but I think most hockey people knew him as Jim.

For many guys about my age, Jim Light will always be remembered as a close friend. For me and Jim Perry, and perhaps other boys, he will also be remembered as a fishing pal, and a driving instructor. He is fondly remembered by many, and has been greatly missed for far too long.

To see the Jim Light page in Yukon Sports Hall of Fame, click on
<http://www.sportyukon.com/hallOfFame/jlight.aspx> .

Whitehorse's Hockey & Skating Rinks

— by Les McLaughlin, with some input by RL

The first indoor rink I remember was a Quonset building on the corner of 1st Avenue and Strickland, built by either the Lions or Kiwanis in the late Forties. It was supremely cold in that unheated metal structure and I used to put my gear including skates on at home, 507 Strickland and skate on the snow-covered road down to the rink. Not good for skates, but easier for a little kid than trying to tie skates in that frozen rink.

Organized hockey (men's and boys' leagues) was played in the Airforce Hanger B, where the fans were a lot rougher than the players. I think the Civic Centre arena (later re-named Jim Light Arena) opened in 1953. Your readers may recall names like Tipton, Bodnar, Frigon, the Chaisson Brothers (Clare & Henri), Reber, Kerr, Hagen, and many other fine players who came to play hockey in 'B' Hangar and the Civic Centre.

There was an outdoor rink behind the old Mountie barracks and station, just behind where the Gold Rush Hotel is now. Over the years, outdoor rinks were also built behind the Catholic School & at the Indian Mission School (the rink having been on the corner of 5th Ave. & Lowe). Another area outdoor hockey rink was established at the Mission School at Carcross, where the ice sloped from end to end.