West Nipissing Sports Hall Of Fame

Next INDUCTION DINNER SCHEDULED FOR May 11, 2013
DEADLINE FOR THE NOMINATION IS DECEMBER 31st, 2012

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Induction Dinners –
October 20th, 2001
May 31st, 2003
November 6th, 2004
May 6th, 2006
September 29th, 2007

Preamble
This constitution is modeled on the North Bay Sports Hall of Fame constitution and with special recognition to Mr. Peter Handley for his support and interest in the West Nipissing Sports Hall of Fame. We also wish to recognize the efforts of the Sturgeon Falls Special Events Committee as the founding organization of the West Nipissing Sports Hall of Fame.

Purpose
To honor and perpetuate the name and deeds of those whose athletics prowess brought fame to their community and to themselves; of those whose interest in and for work for sport resulted in a climate which benefited athletes and athletics. The West Nipissing Sports Hall of Fame (herein after referred to as the WNSHF) is a nonprofit organization with the above purpose. Work towards that aim shall be carried
on without purpose of gain for the Executive Committee members and any profit or other accretions to the organization shall be used in promoting its objects.

Committee Members

Sports Hall of Fame Executive 2012–2013
Dan Richard – Chair
705–753–4982

Ron Bégin
Cal Callaghan
Marc Cuillerier
Mike Decaen
Lynn Duhaime
Don Fortin
Marc Gagnon
John Horner
Jennifer Jedynack
Julie Labrosse Landry
Lucien Lachance
Rock Lachance
Roger Lachance
Richard Lachance
Janice Renaud
Rhéal Rivet
Martial Rivet

Criteria

1. Restricted to Town of West Nipissing athletes and builders of sport. (See definition of West Nipissing athlete and builder).

2. See automatic nomination.

3. Athletes to be considered for admission to the WNSHF must have been (or be) outstanding in their athletic field of endeavour or to have achieved better than average proficiency in a number of sports even if not reaching the absolute top level in any one. The label “outstanding” must be applicable over an extended period of time in competition against peer athletes. This involves those competing on a strictly local level and those going on to district, provincial, national and international events as well as those who enter professional sports.
However, distinction should be made in the nomination paper as to the reason for the nomination. An athlete who is prominent locally over a period of time should not necessarily be downgraded if she/he has limited success on a higher level or in professional ranks. Conversely, an athlete who had limited success locally etc. should not be downgraded for this if she/he achieves top proficiency in a wider arena, whether this be amateur or professional.

4. The criteria must necessarily be broad, however, documentary evidence should be available, plus views of her/his contemporaries. If possible, age class contemporaries should be included on the selection Committees.

5. Builders– including officials (referees, umpires, etc.), sponsors, executives, trainers, coaches etc. – whose work for sport over an extended period of time has been outstanding, whether it be in organization of leagues and facilities, achieving a high degree of success in coaching teams and / or individuals, keeping a league or team active, providing services of consistently high level over an extended period of time etc. However, just because someone has worked many years for a sport as a builder, does not necessarily mean inclusion in the WNSHF. His/her work over that period of time, or over most of it, must have been of a consistently high level with regard to services provided or results achieved.

6. a. All athletes qualified for inclusion in the WNSHF shall be eligible on having retired from active participation in the sport or sports involved for a period of five years; or in having reached thirty-five years of age regardless of whether she/he is still active in the sport or sports involved. Note– clarification – athlete shall be eligible for inclusion in the WNSHF after five years retirement from sport or sports involved even if said person is under thirty-five years of age.

b. Age/retirement regulations (35/5) apply only when the athlete in question is and remains a resident of West Nipissing.

c. Death also voids the age/retirement rules.

d. A qualified athlete who moves away from West Nipissing for whatever reason is eligible for membership consideration after two years away from the city.

e. A qualified athlete who is classed as being from West Nipissing though living elsewhere – and who wins a Canadian championship (as per regulations), or who would otherwise qualify as an Automatic member of the WNSHF – may be considered by the Executive Committee and voted on in the usual way immediately after her/his feat.

7. Any person nominated in the Builder Category (executive, coach, official, etc.) shall be eligible at any time. There shall be no waiting period in this category.
and indeed, the person may still be active in the role(s) for which he/she is nominated.

8. Automatic Selection
   i. One
      a. Any West Nipissing athlete who competes in the Olympic Games in any capacity

      b. Any West Nipissing athlete who places in the top ten in any recognized Senior (IAAU sanctioned), World Open championship, i.e. individual event (not including University, Masters, Special Olympics, etc.) and (not including team sports such as hockey, soccer, etc.) NOTE – curling rink to place in top three, top five relay, pairs and fours.

      c. Any West Nipissing athlete who places in the top three in any recognized open senior multi-county games event (e.g.. Pan American, Commonwealth). (Not including team sports as in (b) and University, Masters, Special Olympics, etc.)

      d. Any West Nipissing athlete who wins a Canadian championship in any Senior (“A”) non team discipline sanctioned by a governing body affiliated with Sport Canada and/or is considered authentic “adult” age category as determined by the particular sport regulations. (Not including exclusion in (b) and (c) and teams such as defined in section 10 – doubles, relays, fours, rinks, etc.)

      e. NOTE – for purposes of a, b, c – pairs, double, fours members of curling rink, a West Nipissing member is eligible Automatic induction as outlined in regulations for a, b and c.

      f. Other cases may be reviewed on merit. Automatic induction is intended to honour outstanding feats.

      g. Not withstanding the Automatic regulations as set out in (a), (b), (c), the Executive Committee may accept nominations of athletes with outstanding credentials who do not make the listed “Automatic” criteria. To invoke the “not withstanding” clause 85% of votes cast must be in the favour. The vote to accept the particular athlete in question must be 75% of votes cast.

   ii. Clarification
      a. The West Nipissing athlete involved in (i) must have been a resident of this town at the time of his/her feat to be qualified as “Automatic”. An athlete who performs her/his feat while temporarily outside of West Nipissing is considered to still be a resident of West Nipissing providing his/her “Home” residence is still in this town.

      b. Providing the above and other restrictions are met, the Executive Committee shall vote as to whether the credentials and research presented is factually
proof of feat. Only one vote is necessary, but approval must be by 75%. If research is disputed and a 75% vote is not received, the same athlete/feat may be presented at a later meeting with more definitive information to back the nomination.

9. Deceased Nominations
Each case to be decided on the merits of the person involved by the Executive Committee as to whether the five year delay regulation shall be invoked.

10. Team Nominations
The WNSHF shall recognize qualified “teams as follows: “Teams” shall be eligible for “Special Recognition” by the WNSHF. Each team nominated for special recognition shall be judged on merit by the Executive Committee. Nominations shall be made by the nominating committees as per individual nominations. Teams so honoured shall be listed on an Honour Roll to be mounted at WNSHF in the WNSHF exhibit. Team name and sport only, shall be listed, except in the case of teams of four or fewer, when members may also be listed. A “team” for WNSHF purposes is defined as “any group” of two or more athletes engaged in the same sport who work together as a unit in that sport. The team may be made up of members of the same sex or the sexes may be intermixed. Classification – a boxer and his manager do not constitute a team. A figure skating pair, tennis doubles, curling rink, cross country running team etc. are defined as teams for our purposes.

Definition
The current boundaries of the Town of West Nipissing will be used as the official area of recognition for any nominations to the West Nipissing Sports Hall of Fame.

Note: any reference to the Town of West Nipissing deems inclusion of Garden Village First Nations Reserve.

West Nipissing Athlete – for purposes of the WNSHF a West Nipissing Athlete shall be:
  a. Anyone born in West Nipissing who spends her/his formative years here and continues to reside in the town.

  b. Anyone who is not born here, but who comes to the town and over and extensive period of time, proves his/her worth in an athletic sense in the town. Said athlete may be considered even if she/he eventually moves away from the town.

  c. Anyone in (a) or (b) who, after a local amateur career, moves into professional sports elsewhere and who is deemed worthy of inclusion.

  d. Anyone in (a) or (b) who, after a local amateur career, moves into university sports elsewhere and who is deemed worthy of inclusion.
e. Anyone in (a) or (b) who, after a local amateur career, moves into amateur sports elsewhere and who is deemed worthy of inclusion.

For eligibility as a “Builder” – For the purpose of WNSHF, a builder shall be:
- As defined above in sections (a), (b), (c), (d), (e).
- A builder can be involved in coaching, officiating, sponsoring, training etc. – even if not involved in an active, on the field role.

Categories – As related to above definitions.
Automatic – section 8
Amateur – Sections (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) in definition.
Professional – sections (a), (b), (c), (d), (e) in definition.

Official crest
The WNSHF official crest shall be used on letterhead, scrolls and any memento presented to the nominees to the WNSHF.

Awards
Each living nominee to the WNSHF shall receive a scroll suitable for framing.
Commemoration in the WNSHF shall be in the form of a plaque or plate, with picture and listing on the honor roll.
The name of each team accorded “Special Recognition” shall be inscribed on a plaque. Team members and accomplishments may be listed at the discretion of the Executive Committee.
Pictures and press clippings of individuals and teams awarded Special Recognition may be placed in showcase for suitable length of time, to be determined by the Executive Committee. These clippings and photos would be copies so originals would not be lost or damaged.

Inductions

First Induction Dinner
October 20, 2001

Teams
Field Eagles 1948–49 North Bay Mercantile League Champions & NOHA Finalists

Hockey
The fighting Field Eagles, from a small Northern Ontario town of 800 people, amazed hundreds of hockey fans in North Bay and district with their outstanding performance during the 1948–49 seasons. They played Intermediate “A” Hockey in an NOHA sanctioned league called the North Bay Mercantile League. The Eagles emerged as Champions of this league and eliminated their next opponent, the Sault Pim Hill Bullies. In ousting the Sault, they triumphed over a city that North Bay had been trying to subdue in sports for many seasons. Their season ended when they were knocked out of NOHA playoffs by the powerful Rouyn Flashes.
Players
André Fortier – Captain
Rosario Paquette – Manager
Louis Brun – Executive
Laurent Fortier – Executive
Pat Marchant – Playing Coach (League MVP & Most Sportsmanlike)

Lionel Beaudin
Garney Bush
Del Chenier
Ray Cuillerier
Jack Dillon
Rolly “Cuggie” Gauthier
Jules Guenette
Joe Hargraves
Boots Martha
Dick Mayer
Garfield Morrison
Dr. Nicol Patenaude
Marcel Rivet
Gerry Séguin
Hubert Séguin
Bon Studholme – Goalie
Sturgeon Falls Bombers 1962 NORFU Champions & Provincials Runners Up

Football

The Sturgeon Falls Bombers Football Team was often termed the “Cinderella Team” of the Northern Ontario Rugby Football Union because they came from a community of 6000 people. In 1962 they re-wrote records in Canadian football by defeating one of their opponents 100–0. After winning semi-final, the Sturgeon Falls Bombers won the NORFU Championship over the North Bay Tiger Cats. Continuing their rise to power, the Bombers did battle with the Sarnia Imperials for the All Ontario Championship.

Players

Yvan Robineau – President
Cal Callaghan – Captain
Ted Doucet – Manager
Gaetan Ferlatte – Coach
Phil Aubin – Trainer
Mac Cameron – Trainer
Joe Marleau – Executive
Raymond St-Louis – Executive

Curly Blimkie
BooBoo Brisbois
Fred Burrows
Bill Carpenter
Jacques Gagnon – Sponsor
Gagnon made major contributions for the development of sports in West Nipissing. He sponsored an Intermediate Hockey Club, and established a Juvenile Team called “Little Butcher” which won the NOHA title in 1979–1980, and competed locally with a team from Sweden. In 1985, he helped from a progressive Committee in “AA” Minor Hockey. A longtime sponsor of NSA and OASA fastball teams, he helped form Minor Fastball in the area, and brought the 1984 OASA Midget Fastball Championships to Sturgeon Falls.

Charles Goudreault – Coach
Goudreault spent 33 years of his 40 year teaching career at Sturgeon Falls High School. It was the teaching of physical education and coaching that he found his true calling. His Sturgeon Falls’ team won the Ontario Football and Hockey Crowns numerous times. He was instrumental in forming the Sturgeon Falls Bombers Team in the 1950’s, a team which became a power house in the 1960’s in the Northern Ontario Rugby Football Union (NORFU).
Léo Bourgeault – Defenseman, Hockey
Bourgeault played for the Saskatoon Crescents of the WCHL and moved up to the WHL the following year, where he split his season between the Toronto Maple Leafs and the New York Rangers. Over the next nine seasons, he played for the New York Rangers (winning the Stanley Cup in 1928), the Ottawa Senators, the Montreal Canadians and three CAHL teams (namely the Bronx Tigers, Québec Beavers and Springfield Indians).

Carmen “Sammy” Cole – Pitcher, Fastball
Cole was an extraordinary pitcher who played fastball for Sturgeon Falls through the 1940’s to the early 1960’s. Renowned for his high caliber of pitching, fans would follow him to North Bay to see their local hero pitch. He was a very humble, loveable person who never bragged about his accomplishments.

Richard Deschatelets – Wrestler, Wrestling

Deschatelets came from a wrestling family. He has won medals at OFSAA; Québec and Canadian Championships; Junior & Senior World Championships; Common Wealth Games. He participated in the 1976 & 1984 Olympic Games. Elected OUA & CIAU Coach of the Year, he was Olympic Head Coach for the Canadian Wrestling Team at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia.

France Gareau – Sprinter, Track
Gareau broke high school NDA, NOSSA and OFSAA records, and was a CIAU All Star in track at York University, Toronto. She has won: GOLD, 100 meters, 1989 Canadian Track & Field Championships; BRONZE, Canadian Women’s 4x400 meters, 1990 Common Wealth Games; SILVER, Canadian Women’s 4x100 relay, 1989 & 1994 at the world’s “Les jeux de la francophonie”; SILVER, Canadian woman’s 4x100 relay, 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

Marcel “Lolo” Levis – Running back, Football
During his youth, Levis excelled in hockey and high school football, where he dominated as a back fielder, punter and place kicker. He is best remembered for his outstanding performance as a running back for the Sturgeon Falls Bombers Football Team, during the 1950’s and 1960’s. In 1959, when the Bombers narrowly missed winning the league championship, Marcel won the M.V.P title.

Johnny Vannier – Left wing, Hockey
Nicknamed one of the ‘Flying Frenchmen’ while with the Paisley Pirates of Scotland, Vannier was chosen from 350 players from all over the Dominion. His skills allowed him to excel in baseball, badminton, skiing and swimming, as well as hockey. He played for the Sudbury Juveniles, Wolves Juniors, Legionnaires, and the Copper Cliff Junior “A” Redmen; the Ottawa Army team; the Canadian Legion Intermediates; the Paisley Pirates, the Fife Flyers and the All Stars of Scotland.

Second Induction Dinner
May 31, 2003

Teams
Nipissing Warriors (1972) Hockey

1972 was the year of the Nipissing Warriors Hockey Team. It was a team made up of natives from #10 reserve, mostly from Garden Village. The Nipissing Warriors played in the Industrial League and were the top team after regular league play. They swept through their semi–final, 4 out of 7 and their final series, 4 out of 7, by winning eight games straight, thus capturing the Industrial League Championship.

The Nipissing Warriors hosted the North Shore Manitoulin Recreation Association Men’s Hockey Tournament February 26–27, 1972 in Sturgeon Falls. Ten native teams competed and the Nipissing Warriors swept the “A” pool championship. This win took the Warriors to London in late March for the Native All–Ontario Championship. Six Nations – Moose Factory, Kenora, Kettle Point, Nipissing, Thunder Bay and Rice Lake – were the districts sending a winning team from their area to the Native All–Ontario Championships. The Nipissing Warriors won all their games and were declared Ontario Champions. They defeated Thunder Bay, 6–1; Kenora, 6–3 and won 7–5 over Brantford Six Nations. Also winning All–Ontario, individual awards went to Mike Penasse: best left–winger and top scorer; Ralph Beaucage: best defense; Stan Couchie: best goal tender.

Builders

H. Allaire & Sons – Sponsor
In 1931, Hermenegilde Allaire started his plumbing business by making house calls with his bicycle. In 1953, the H. Allaire & Sons plumbing shop opened on Nipissing Street and has remained at that location since. From 1955 and on, H. Allaire & Sons became known as sports builders and team supporters. They sponsored teams in hockey, bowling, curling, figure skating, soccer, fastball, baseball and cross–country skiing. The support in hockey and fastball has been continuous over the last fifty years.

The Allaire sons responsible for these contributions were the four brothers: Léo, Lucien, Aurel and Jacques. They also provided financial help for the arena complex, Goulard Park and the swimming pool. A lesser known fact, the Allaire brothers helped numerous sports athletes financially, enabling them to play sports, even to the extent of providing jobs for some.

Athletes

Yvan Gingras – Dog Sled Racer
Yvan Gingras was one of the originators to introduce dog sled racing to the West Nipissing area. In 1959, he purchased and trained his first dog team. He helped organize the first dog sled races in Verner in the winter of 1962. Yvan sought help and support from various local organizations.

Though Yvan raced his dog teams in other provincial competitions, he is especially remembered for taking on the responsibility of organizing and maintaining dog sled racing in West Nipissing from the 1960’s to the 1990’s, up until he took his retirement from the sport in 1998. Largely because of his volunteer work, dog sled racing grew into the main attraction at the annual Verner Winter Carnival.
Though his winning accomplishments are too numerous to be catalogued here, there is one story that should be told. In the winter of 1990, a group of American mushers came to the North Bay dog sled races to beat a local musher, Lou Serré, who had beaten many of these Americans at their dog sled races in the U.S. When they were told that the one to beat was Yvan Gingras, their response was: “We’ve never heard of him.” Well, after the races the next day, they knew who he was. They were all beaten by him and by more than 2 minutes.

Guy Valade – Stand Out Athlete
Guy was a stand out athlete. At Sturgeon Falls High School, he finished 1st in nine different events at a track and field meet. In a four-game football schedule, he scored 12 touchdowns in 1953 and led the team to a NOSSA “B” Championship, defeating a school from Haileybury. Guy “Crazy Legs” Valade toiled as a running back for the Sturgeon Falls Bombers in the NORFU from 1955–1961. He won outstanding player and top scorer in 1958.

Of the many curling exploits for which he was known, the following were highlights of his sports career. For the first time in the history of Sturgeon Falls curling, Guy skipped a rink to the NOCA finals in 1963. The Valade rink ended the North Bay mastery in the British Consol district playoffs. In 1965, a Valade rink from the North Bay Elk’s Club were the Ontario winners of the Dominion Elk’s Corby Cup and went on to compete in the National finals in Winnipeg. Saskatchewan was the winner of this event; however, they were beaten by the Valade rink 6–4 in the round robin play.

Guy became involved in the organization of curling events. He was draw master for the NOCA Bonspiel in 1969 in Coppercliff comprising of 128 rinks, and he was runner up for this event. Guy continued to show the same excellence in other sports to which he was dedicated during the rest of his life.

Sam Jackson – Left-winger, Hockey
Sam Jackson was an all-around athlete. However, it is in the sport of hockey that he achieved his greatest prominence. As a fourteen-year old he made his mark with the North Bay Junior Rangers in 1958–59 where he scored four goals in a game against Espanola. From 1958 1964, he played Junior “A” hockey for the North Bay Trappers where he racked up 88 goals and 120 assists, was M.V.P. in the 1962–63 season and played the Toronto Marlies for the Memorial Cup in 1964. Following his junior, he played pro hockey for three different teams: 1964–65, the Nashville Dixie Flyers of the American–Eastern League; 1965–66, the Jacksonville Suns of the American –South League; 167–68, the Moncton Hawks of the Senior Eastern League.

Sam played high school football under the late Charlie Goudreault, toiled for the Sturgeon Falls Bombers during the early sixties and was on the 1962 and 1963 teams that won the NORFU Championship.
He made his mark in the Nipissing Fast Ball League by being one of the best catchers, a home run hitter and a speedy runner around the bases. From 1984–1987, he played in the Gateway Major Fast Ball League and in 1986 won an Ontario Championship.

Moe Mantha Jr. – Defense, Hockey
He was one of the greatest athletes to come out of the Sturgeon Falls area. Moe Mantha was born in the United States where his father, Moe Sr., played professional hockey. Moe Jr. was nine when his father retired from hockey and moved his family to Sturgeon Falls in 1970. Moe Jr. played minor hockey in Sturgeon Falls from 1970–76. In the winter of 1976–77, as a fifteen year old, he played high school hockey for Northern Secondary School in the N.D.A. where his skills overshadowed players three and four years his senior. In 1977–78, he played for the Streetsville Derbys and won the Jr. “B” championship that year. In 1978, the Toronto Marlies of the O.H.L. drafted him 3rd overall. In his second year with this team he was named an all-star and was awarded best defenseman for the Marlies.

At age 19, he was drafted by the Winnipeg Jets and went on to have an illustrious 12 year career in the N.H.L. during which time he also played for the Pittsburg Penguins, the Edmonton Oilers, and the Philadelphia Flyers. He had his best year with Pittsburg in 1985–86 where he posted a 67 point season: 15 goals and 52 assists. Moe Jr. retired from professional hockey following the 1991–92 season having totaled 370 points: 81 goals and 289 assists. Moe Jr. played on U.S. teams that competed in the I.I.H.F. World Championships in 1982, 1985 (Captain), and in 1991. As assistant captain, he played for the U.S. Olympic hockey team.

He was subsequently enticed into coaching hockey, which has now become his second career. He spent several years coaching affiliate teams to the N.H.L., but he gave his coaching career a different direction when he took on the challenge of coaching the U.S. under 17 world tournament in 2001 in Halifax and in 2002 in Winnipeg. He has since taken on coaching the under 18 U.S. team and won a world championship in Slovakia in 2002.

We must never forget the Moe Mantha Jr. annual golf tournament held every July at the Laurentide Golf Course and sponsored by him and his family, who have for years donated the proceeds to the Sturgeon Falls Minor Hockey. His coaching success will continue to rise and don’t be surprised if you find Moe Mantha Jr. coaching an N.H.L. team someday.

Third Induction Dinner
November 6, 2004

Builders

Romeo Goulard – Builder of Sports

Romeo Goulard, head of Goulard Lumber in Sturgeon Falls, is known a recognized for his contributions in the West Nipissing area as a builder of sports. Over the last forty
years, the Goulard Family has supported sports teams at different levels such as minor hockey, old timers’ hockey, baseball, soccer and swimming. Romeo was responsible for financing the development of ‘Goulard Park’, a first class facility with lights for baseball and fastball. He is also responsible for having financed the improvements made to the municipal football and soccer field near the Sturgeon Falls Sports Complex. Last but not least, his generous contributions were instrumental for the development of the indoor swimming pool and sports complex.

Dr. P.M. Young – Builder of Sports
Dr. P.M. Young was born in Belfast, Ireland in 1911 and immigrated to Canada with his parents in 1928. In 1935 he obtained a medical degree from the University of Western Ontario. He came to Sturgeon Falls in 1939, married in 1940, and raised a family of two sons and a daughter.
Though his contributions as a Medical Doctor are too numerous to be mentioned here, it should be pointed out that he delivered over 5000 babies during his 38 years as a medical practitioner in West Nipissing. He delivered Richard Deschatelets who became a world class and Olympic wrestler, and he also delivered many of the Sturgeon Falls Bombers football players.

He was instrumental in having the first swimming pool built in Sturgeon Falls after a teenager drowned in the Sturgeon River. He loved tennis and organized a tennis club in Sturgeon Falls. His greatest love of sports was for the Bombers football team. He was a dedicated fan and the team doctor throughout the years Sturgeon Falls had a team in the NORFU. He was always there to look after the special needs of injured players. The team wouldn’t have been a team without him. He was a member of the team. In remembrance of Dr. Young’s dedication and contribution to area athletics, the Dr. P.M. Young Track Centre in Sturgeon Falls was dedicated in 1991.

Athlete & Builder
Gordon Gow – Athlete, Coach and Builder of Sports
Gordon Gow was an athlete, a builder of sports a coach, an inventor of body building machines, and a participator in World Sports Symposiums.

Gow was born in Sturgeon Falls in 1932 and resided in the community until 1952. He attended Sturgeon Falls High School where he participated in football, track and field, baseball and excelled in hockey. In 1951–52, Gow played right wing for the Junior “A” Sudbury Cub Wolves. The following year, 1952–53, he played NOHA Intermediate hockey for the Espanola Kayveys. Later, from 1955 to 1957, he played two years of Intermediate “B” hockey for the Temiskaming Royals, helping them win a championship the last year.

Gow attended the University of Toronto in 1958 and played 3 years for the U. of T. Blues where he was a standout. He moved to Barrie where he again played Intermediate “A” hockey for the Barrie Seven Ups. While in Barrie, Gow played softball in the Barrie and District Senior Softball League.
West Nipissing residents remember Gow for his endurance and grit while participating in two memorable 26 mile walkathon. On July 1st, 1956, at Sturgeon Falls, Gow was the first of 59 walkers to cross the finish line in a time of 5 hours, 23 minutes. Four years later, in 1960, Gow again competed in the Sturgeon Falls annual July 1st
walkathon finishing first in a sensational fashion, edging out the legendary John Argo by 4 seconds. This time he finished in a time of 4 hours, 45 minutes and 23 seconds.

As a builder of sport, Gow was a high school football coach at Barrie North Collegiate where he guided the Vikings to a Georgian Bay Secondary School Championship. While there, he developed a machine that trained players to block and tackle better. He has since been involved in developing a series of machines. Gow and partner Ed Martin designed and developed the GOW TRAINER in association with American exercise specialist and former Mr. Universe Bob Gadja. This piece of equipment – which is comprised of the Strider, the Floor Slider, G2 Max Knee Machine and the Shoulder-ciser – is being used by universities, athletes and professional sports teams.

Over the years, Gow has helped everyone from high school students to professional athletes, including Maple Leaf winger Wendel Clark, San Francisco Giant pitcher Atlee Hammaker, Chicago Black Hawks Al Secord and Chicago Bears QB Jim McMahon. Internationally, Gow was a speaker at the 1988 Seoul Olympic Scientific Symposium where he was chairperson in the sports medicine session and in 1997 he presented at the Fourth IOC Congress on Sports Sciences in Monaco. In 1995, the Minister of Fitness and Sport–Ontario acknowledged Gow’s contribution to amateur sport by awarding him a 1994 Special Achievement Award.

Athletes
Raymond Arcand – Bowler
Ray has been an avid five pin bowler since the age of 17. He has won bowling competitions and tournaments at the local, regional and provincial levels, and has competed at the national level. He qualified sixteen times to advance to the provincial level and won this event, the Labatt’s Blue Light in 1992, in Dryden, Ontario, as a member of a men’s team from Sturgeon Falls. In the same year he qualified to compete in the Nationals which were held in Sudbury. In November of 1984, he won the Sturgeon Falls Men’s Open. Bowling against the best bowlers from Northern Ontario, he won the Labatt’s Tournament in 1986 at the Plaza Bowl in Sudbury. In 1982–83 he bowled 25 games of 300 points or more. His highest score for a bowling game was 440, achieved in 1984 at Sturgeon Falls Rendez-Vous Lanes. No one else in West Nipissing has reached his level of success in five-pin bowling.

Sheppard Edwin Mayer – Defence, Hockey
Shep Mayer grew up playing hockey on the outdoor rinks of Northern Ontario. He received his schooling at Sturgeon Falls High and North Bay Collegiate and by the time he graduated, he was well established as a hockey player. At the age of 18 he suited up for the Sturgeon Falls Indians in 1940–41. The following year he played Major Junior “A” for the Guelph Biltmores where he scored 9 goals and 17 points in 23 games. At the start of the 1942–43 NHL season, he played 12 games with the Toronto Maple Leafs scoring once and finishing with three points. Nevertheless, it was a thrill for him to have played hockey with the likes of Lorne Carr, Syl Apps and Turk Broda. World War II interrupted his promising career when he joined the Canadian Air Forces in 1942. In spite of his military duties, Shep continued to play hockey until 1951 for many of the teams formed by the RCAF detachments where he was stationed. The
teams he played for while in the Air Force were Saskatoon RCAF, Camp Utopia Flyers, North Bay RCAF, North Bay Rangers, Sault-Ste. Marie Indians, Saskatoon Quakers, Valley Field Braves, and Ottawa RCAF Flyers.

Don Michaud – Athlete, Coach and Builder of Sports
Don Michaud played hockey, fastball, volleyball and football. He became a hockey coach and refereed hockey and football. Though his athletic endeavors were reflected in many sports, it is hockey that he left his mark.

At 15, he played intermediate hockey for College Rigaud. From 1958 to 1961, he played junior for the North Bay Trappers and the North Bay Black Hawks. During this time, he won an NOHA Championship by defeating the South Porcupine ‘Porkies’. His speedy antic up and down the ice earned him the name ‘The Rocket’. After junior hockey, he played Intermediate, Senior, Industrial and Old Timers. At whatever level Don played, he was always a standout. Don coached hockey at the Minor, Intermediate and Industrial levels. He was instrumental in organizing the West Nipissing “AA” system. He traveled throughout Ontario and USA with a Batam team and won many tournaments and championships such as the ‘International Silver Stick Tournament’ held in Port Huron, Michigan in 1988.

From 1953 to 2002, Don had a long and distinguished career as a hockey referee. He is a level four referee, who taught on-ice clinics and night school for referees. He was referee in chief for the NOHA. Three notable awards he won were ‘the Rick Albert Trophy’ for referee development, the ‘CHA/NOHA’ for Most Deserving Official as Supervisor, Instructor and Administrator, and ‘CAHA Award’ for service to minor hockey.

Teams
The Cache Bay Merchants (1975– ) Northern Ontario Intermediate C Fastball Champions, Fastball
Fastball was a thriving and competitive sport in West Nipissing during the 1970’s. The Cache Bay Merchants had several outstanding fastball teams during this decade; however, it is the 1975 team that achieved and attained the highest record. The team played 47 games, winning 72 and losing 5. These impressive statistics comprised of regular league play, tournaments and playoffs. In 1975, the Cache Bay Merchants won tournaments in Cache Bay, St-Charles, Mattawa and Temagami.

In the West Nipissing Fastball League that year, the team finished in first place with a record of 21 wins and 3 losses. In the semi–finals, the team beat Ferlatte Sports in three straight games and in the finals; it eliminated Truchon Fuels by winning four games straight. This qualified the team to enter the 1975 Northern Ontario playdowns. This team went on to win five playoff series, each series a two out of three affair. The Cache Bay Merchants met Chapleau in the finals where they lost the first game, but won the next two games to capture the Northern Ontario Intermediate C Fastball title.
Fourth Induction Dinner
May 6th, 2006

Team

Sturgeon Falls Allaire Electric

1970 Northland Fastball Association Intermediate AA Champions
Sturgeon Falls Allaire Electric played in the Nipissing Mercantile Fastball League in North Bay. Over a complete decade throughout the sixties, the Allaire Electric fastball team rose from the bottom of the league to capture the Ed Rice Trophy in the 1970 Northland Fastball Association Intermediate AA Championship.

Players

Paul Ducharme : Coach
Don Michaud
Bob Piquette
Jean Marc Raymond
Peter Reynolds
Rhéal Rivet
Dave Saad
Billy Sunstrum
Rhéal Violette

Athletes

Grégoire Bourassa – All Around Athlete & Coach
Grégoire was one of the most talented athletes to come out of Sturgeon Falls. His athletic prowess became evident during his school days at “Collège Sacré Cœur” in Sudbury. He was captain of the track and field team that won the Sudbury and District Secondary School Championship five years in a row. At a NOSSA track and field meet in 1947, Grégoire won the 100 yard dash, the 200 yard and the 440 yard and set a record that still stands to this day. Grégoire was a superb hockey player, largely responsible for winning five consecutive district championships for “Collège Sacré Cœur”. Grégoire attended the University of Montreal where he was an all-star on the University hockey team; he earned a Bachelor Degree from the College of Education in Toronto, and graduated from the University of Toronto as a Doctor of Dental Surgery in 1959, while maintaining his status as an outstanding varsity hockey player. The faculty of dentistry at U. of T. honors Grégoire annually by awarding the G.C. Bourassa Cup to the most outstanding graduate student, for excellence in academics and athletics.

Guy Malette – Boxer
Guy Malette was born in Sturgeon Falls on April 22nd, 1942. He started boxing at age 15, moving to Ottawa and joining the YMCA to further his training. He participated in several Golden Gloves competitions, winning the 156 pound class in 1968. In 1974, he left active boxing to become a trainer.
Guy trained Gaetan Hart, a Canadian Champion rated 10th in the world Contender Lightweight category, and Jean-Yves Theriault, Champion of the World in Kick Boxing.

Gaston Edgar Rifou – Trap Shooter
Gaston was born and raised in Sturgeon Falls. During his teens and early twenties, Gaston was known for his weight lifting, boxing and wrestling. He helped form the Sturgeon Falls Boxing Club which was an affiliate member of the Northern Ontario Boxing Association. He was a role model for youth, promoting the spirit of sportsmanship and healthy competition. Gaston excelled in trap and skeet shooting. He was a consistent, high profile competitor at many events across Ontario, racking up numerous perfect and near-perfect scores, and was recognized by his peers as a true champion.

Builder
Gaetan Ferlatte – Athlete, Builder of Sports and Coach
Gaetan (Pie) Ferlatte was born, raised and spent much of his life in Sturgeon Falls. He devoted his time and energy to creating a better sports environment in West Nipissing. He helped form the Sturgeon Falls Bombers who became members of NORFU (Northern Ontario Rugby Football Union). He acquired coaching strategies while playing for the Bombers, and became a player/coach for the team, and eventually devoted his time to coaching only, kick-starting the Sturgeon Falls Bombers’ greatest years.

Fifth Induction Dinner
September 29th, 2007

Team
1963 Sturgeon Falls Bombers Football Team

In 1963, the Sturgeon Falls Bombers Football Team won the Northern Ontario Rugby football union (NORFU) championship and went on to play the Toronto East York Argos (ORFU) for the provincial championship. Sturgeon Falls Bombers finished the regular season with a 5–1 record. They then faced the Sudbury Hardrocks in a semi final two game total point series which the Bombers won 58–21. In a best of three series, the Bombers won two straight games against the North Bay Tiger Cats by scores of 14–0 and 27–0 respectively.

East York was a “farm club” to the CFL Toronto Argonauts. Many players from this team went on to play CFL football. Sturgeon Falls Bombers led the game in the third quarter by a score of 20–0 and 23–20 in the forth quarter before losing in the final minutes by a score of 27–23. This was the last year that a small community in Ontario was able to field a team that was skilled, talented and good enough to compete for a provincial championship.

The Bombers, which had the support of the whole community, were an exciting team that fielded a strong offence and a hard hitting defense. Approx. 1000 fans would
attend home games and approx. 1500 fans attended the provincial title game which was played at exhibition park in Sturgeon Falls.

With disappointment and sadness, the Sturgeon Falls Bombers dropped out of the NORFU in 1969 leaving this community with fond memories of an exciting football past which featured 3 NORFU championships and 3 provincial title games. The 1963 Bombers were a highlite among these memories leaving the community with vivid lingering thoughts of ‘what was’ and ‘what could have been’.

This team performed 44 years ago. It would be a fitting tribute to have the remaining executive, staff and players of this 1963 championship team see the 1963 Bombers Football team recognized by the West Nipissing Sports Hall of Fame.

Players

René Brisbois
Yves Bourassa
MJ ‘curly’ Blimkie
Don Cull
Joe Clifford
John Clifford
Cal Callaghan
Bill Carpenter
Zee Chartrand
Peter Devine
Joe Drago
Butch Dupuis
Hermidas Desgroseilliers
Alex Fex
Armand Ferlatte
Gaetan Ferlatte
Robert Lafleche
Norm Lekun
Ernie Lekun
Alban Labelle
Joe Moylan
Yvan Robineau
Bob Romberg
Gerry St-Jacques
Russel Wilson
Carl Leblanc
Dave Morris
Jack Bergeron
Ron Hewitt
Gus Mackinnon
Marcel Robineau
Sam Jackson
Athletes

John Clifford – Football, Running Back

As a youth, Clifford played junior football for Sturgeon Falls High school Rams football team under the guidance of renowned head coach Charles Goudreault (WNSHF inductee) and senior football for Scollard Hall Bears. His power running and tenacious tackling immediately put him in the elite category among high school football players.

While still in High school, Clifford’s football ability and sense was good enough to earn him a position with the Sturgeon Falls Bombers of the NORFU where he toiled from 1958 to 1963 and again from 1965 to 1968. While with the Bombers, Clifford played fullback offensively and linebacker defensively, often playing both way during a game. Include specialty teams into this mix and you had one of the most complete football players a coach could wish for.

Clifford played for the Sturgeon Falls Bombers during their dynasty years –1961 to 1963– when they won three consecutive NORFU championships and narrowly missed three provincial championships by close scores to Oakville Black Knights, Sarnia Imperials and Toronto East York Argos.

Clifford had a banner year in 1962 when he won the NORFU scoring title and was a co-winner of the league MVP award. That year, he scored 84 points on 14 touch downs, a league record at the time.

Clifford’s astounding inside power running, his adept outside speed and his aggressive instinctive defensive play earned him a tryout with the Toronto Argonauts in 1963. He remained with the Argos throughout training and played in their inter squad game playing with cookie Gilchrist (running back) and the legendary Jackie Parker (quarterback).

Clifford was released by the Argos only to be called up by the Hamilton Tiger Cats where he attended training camp and decided to leave for personal reasons. Ralph Sazio, Head Coach of the Tiger Cats acknowledged Clifford’s worth by stating in a letter “I was very disappointed that John Clifford decided to leave our camp before he gave himself a chance to make our football team”.

In 1964 Clifford played for the Port Arthur Mustangs and returned to play for the Sturgeon Falls Bombers from 1965 to 1968.

After his playing days, Clifford shared his experience by taking on an assistant coach position with Laurentian University from 1968 to 1970. He later coached the North Bay Ticats in 1979 as an assistant coach.

In 1985, Clifford’s spectacular football past was recognized when he was inducted into the Northern Football Conference Hall of Fame. The legendary Charles Goudreault, who was involved in high school sports from the 1930’s to the 1950’s paid Clifford one of the highest tributes by stating that he was the best athlete he ever coached.
Clifford was a credit to West Nipissing and a great ambassador for Northern Ontario football.

Gina Fay – Figure Skater
In 1968, at the age of 4, Gina Fay Vaillancourt started off her illustrious skating career as a member of the Sturgeon Falls figure skating club under the tutoring and guidance of coach Joan Wilkes.
Over the next 14 years, Fay Vaillancourt involved herself in private lessons, competed in club and interclub competitions, performed at skating carnivals and completed rigorous testing. She quickly became recognized as an elite figure skater.
Her excellence in skating and her dedication to practice helped her win many competitions and awards including a free skate/junior ladies gold medal in 1975, a dance/junior ladies gold medal in 1975, a free skate/senior ladies gold medal in 1977 and a free skate/senior ladies gold medal in 1980.
Recognizing her maturity and excellence as a figure skater, Coach Wilkes arranged for Fay Vaillancourt to audition in 1982 for Walt Disney’s World on Ice at the tender age of 18 years. Her hard work and perseverance as a young skater earned her a position with the world renowned show.

Over the next 6 years, her love for skating saw her on tour through North America, South America, Europe and Asia performing for Disney’s World on Ice, Disney’s Magic Kingdom on Ice, Theater on Ice (Germany), Fantasy on Ice (Greece) and Holiday on Ice–Gold Division.
Every young skater dreams of performing before large audiences around the world. Gina Fay Vaillancourt fulfilled this dream with hard work, dedication and commitment.

John Horner – Hockey, Fastball, Coach, Referre, Sports Administrator

The West Nipissing Sports Hall of Fame has recognized John Horner’s contribution to the community as a builder of sport and will honor him with induction because of his relentless dedication and devotion to baseball, hockey and curling over the past four decades.
Horner was an accomplished hockey and baseball player but his service to sport as a coach, as an official/referee and as an executive board member helped enhance the sporting endeavors of youth, adults and seniors in many categories of recreational sport.
For 30 years (1974–2004) Horner, who was president of the Sturgeon Falls referee’s Association, was responsible for officiating minor hockey, NOHA, men’s league and old timer’s hockey.
As if this wasn’t enough, Horner’s genuine love of hockey involved him in coaching minor hockey at different levels from 1986 to 2004, (West Nip. AA, 1986–1988; Sturgeon Falls Minor Hockey, 1992–1994 and West Nip AA, 1994–2 000). Where there was ice, there was John Horner. Even through his busy schedule of officiating and coaching hockey, Horner found himself in the elite position as president of the Sturgeon Falls Curling Club (1997–1999) where he spent many years throwing stones and sliding out of hacks.
No sooner was the ice off of the rinks, Horner was on the baseball fields or in the board rooms where his leadership qualities and his ability to communicate assured that softball, fastball and baseball were being played at all levels. Horner’s dynamic enthusiasm for ball saw him split his time between being a coach and an executive member. His devotion covered men’s, women’s and youth baseball.


Over the last few years, Horner has involved himself in officiating the mixed slow pitch games. Women and men of all ages have gained from Horner’s unselfish approach to community sport and his willingness to impart his time and knowledge to all people, especially the youth of West Nipissing.

Bernard Plouffe – Boxer

Bernard Plouffe’s prowess as a boxer has earned him the prestigious honor of being inducted into the WNSHF.

As a youth growing up in Sturgeon Falls, Plouffe participated in many sports including hockey, high school football, softball, gym team activities boxing and track and field. Later, he played hockey in the merchant league and coached women’s baseball.

As a 14 year old youth, Plouffe was introduced to boxing at cadet camp in Ipperwash where he learned the basics of the sport and participated in a number of amateur fights. Boxing caught his passion and he immediately acquired the zeal and determination to become a top notch fighter. Shortly afterwards, the Sturgeon Falls Boxing Club was formed where he trained under the highly regarded former boxer John Lecaille.

Plouffe devoted himself to a tough rigorous training schedule and under the guidance of Lecaille, he participated in a number of boxing matches, winning most of them. During one fight in Sturgeon Falls, the North Bay Nugget reported that, approximately 400 people witnessed Plouffe knock out a Mattawa boxer after knocking him down twice in a rematch .In a previous bout, Robert Dunlop had decisioned Plouffe and was favored to win again.

In June, 1961, Plouffe fought one of his most memorable fights in North Bay where he was declared the Northern Ontario middle weight champion beating Pat McRea of the Gamebridge club. Plouffe’s finesse and skill showed in a major match with Sudbury’s Omer Gagnon, the reigning gold gloves champion at the time. The match ended in a draw with Gagnon
retiring after the match. In a rematch, Plouffe beat Gagnon’s replacement, a fighter who had previously beaten Gagnon.

After hanging up his gloves, Plouffe became a corner man for 15 years for the legendary Jean Yves Theriault who eventually became the world middleweight and light heavyweight champion. He also trained amateur kick boxers in the art of boxing as well as working the corners for the Quebec Provincial teams. Plouffe was a namesake in the North when boxing was popular and attracted a large following of sports fans.

He was truly a keen boxer who developed the skills and toughness to make him an achiever

Builder

Suzanne Lavoie–Guénette – Special Olympics, Volunteer, Fundraiser, Organizer

Suzanne Lavoie Guenette, a very special lady to Special Olympics and to the community of West Nipissing, will be inducted into the WNSHF as a ‘builder of sport’. Lavoie Guenette who was an athlete in her younger years, went on to be a swimming instructor and later gained her notoriety by serving the special needs of mentally challenged athletes.

During her high school years, Lavoie Guenette excelled in basketball and volleyball. In 1975, her athletic ability opened the door to a new challenge as a basketball and volleyball instructor through the Ministry of Education for adults and children. She served the community in this capacity until 1977 during which she also volunteered as a Secondary School basketball referee.

From 1977 through 1978, Lavoie Guenette expanded her sporting endeavors by participating as a member of the Ontario Handball Team. In her capacity as Activity Supervisor and Pool Director with the Sturgeon Falls Parks and Recreation Department from 1978 through to 1979, Lavoie Guenette became a swimming instructor for developmentally disabled persons. Her genuine interest in assisting mentally challenged adults led to her employment with West Nipissing Community Living in 1984 and the rest was history for this dynamic community minded woman.

Over the next 20 years, Lavoie Guenette was instrumental in seeing that Ontario Special Olympics was a part of the community where athletes and their needs were recognized equally. Ontario Special Olympics West Nipissing Chapter exists today because of the vision, enthusiasm, and determination of this remarkable woman who played the role of coach, convenor, coordinator, chair and fundraiser for a cause which she truly believed in.

Special Olympics are very visible in West Nipissing where under her devotion and guidance, athletes have competed at the local, regional, provincial, national and international level. Anytime there was an athlete involved in a special Olympic endeavor or a sporting activity for a group of special Olympic participants was taking place, her presence was there ensuring their well being and enhancing their
participation in all sports including bowling, softball, swimming, track & field, skiing, floor hockey & snowshoeing.

Lavoie Guenette spearheaded the effort needed to bring the 1990 and 1992 Special Olympics Provincial Softball Championships to West Nipissing, a remarkable accomplishment for a small community. She stated in a press release “These events give mentally challenged athletes a chance to compete and participate in various activities in a way to include them in community oriented functions.”

In 1986, Lavoie Guenette was named to the 80 member coaching staff for the Canadian Special Olympics held in Calgary where over 800 athletes competed. Lavoie Guenette was also a hockey mom who involved herself with the Sturgeon Falls Minor Hockey Association where she chaired meetings, organized banquets, convened tournaments and resolved issues with parents, coaches and referees.

Lavoie Guenette’s untimely passing in 2004 was heart felt across West Nipissing. The overwhelming response and accolades which outpoured from the community attested to her accomplishments with Ontario Special Olympics and gave tribute to a person who truly deserves to be inducted into the WNSHF.

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