

Ex-NHLer Greg Hotham lands in the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame



By Jake Courtepatte

Greg Hotham enters the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame as one of two residents inducted into the Athlete category in 2014.

Although Hotham was born in London, Ontario, his family moved to Aurora in 1960 when he was four years old.

"I think the population around that time was maybe 5,000 people," said Hotham. "As a matter of fact, my parents are still living in the same house."

It was with the Aurora Minor Hockey Association that he first laced up his skates, playing house league until the age of eight when he would move up to the Aurora Legion PeeWee All-Star team.

After being cut by the OHL's Toronto Marlboros two years in a row, Hotham kept busy on his skates playing for both St. Andrew's College and the Aurora Tigers in his teens. He would make his NHL debut in 1979, after being picked in the fifth round of the 1976 NHL Draft by his hometown Toronto Maple Leafs.

Although the Hothams cheered for the Maple Leafs on television every Saturday, Hotham admitted that growing up he had a soft spot for the Detroit Red Wings because of his favourite player, Gordie Howe.

Hotham then spent part of three seasons with the Maple Leafs, acquiring fifteen points over sixty games before moving to the Pittsburgh Penguins.

Coming full circle, Hotham ended his professional career where it all began in Newmarket, with the Newmarket Saints of the AHL.

"There were some other opportunities, but at the time I had a young family. My wife was a school teacher, and she was trying to get back into teaching full-time. There didn't seem to be any reason to go anywhere else really, to have to restart a lot of new things and with the boys just going into school. So it was nice to stay at home and still play at a pretty high level."

With his playing days behind him, Hotham coached the Newmarket Saints from 1986 to 1990, and founded the Hotham Sports Centre.

Hotham is part of a 2014 ASHoF class that includes the likes of international soccer player Ed McNally and Aurora Storm founder Bruce Stafford.

?It's exciting, obviously there are some pretty good athletes in the area. Having grown up here, I know a few of the Hall-of-Famers personally. There are a lot of good memories in Aurora. If you're going to get into any Hall of Fame for a sport, it doesn't matter whether it's the local Hall of Fame or the Hockey Hall of Fame, anytime you get the opportunity it's pretty cool.

?I've been out of it for a little over twenty years now, and sometimes you think that things have probably been forgotten, but it's kind of nice to get recognized for your hard work and the things that you've done.?

As an ex-Leaf, The Auroran also had to get Hotham's ?two-cents? on the upcoming 2014-2015 season.

?There are a lot of good teams, and unfortunately I just don't see them making the playoffs again. But it will come eventually. Toronto's just dying for a playoff run.?