

York Oldtimers Hockey Association marks its 50th Anniversary

Stephen Forsey has been a York Oldtimers Hockey Association administrator for twenty years and it's under his watch that the venerable hockey league will mark its fiftieth anniversary during the upcoming season.

Forsey acknowledged that the York Oldtimers Hockey Association (YOHA) did not create the first team of oldtimer hockey players in Town.

Tom McPherson, an Aurora lawyer, has the distinction of starting the first Old Timers team in Ontario in 1967. He called his group the Aurora Church Dodgers because their ice time was at 10 a.m. on Sunday mornings. However, by 1975, Aurora needed more than one team as the population of veteran hockey players in the region grew.

The long-time Emcee of Sport Aurora's annual Volunteer Recognition Breakfast reflected on his connection to the volunteer founder of the YOHA: "I took over for Alex Ansell. He started the league in 1975 for players over the age of 35. As Alex reached 45, a 45+ division was added. As the guys got older, we kept adding divisions. The best part of being an administrator for the Oldtimers is giving back. There have been a lot of positive comments about continuity of leadership in that Alex and I have administered the league for a combined 50 years. It's been fun to be part of. I started playing in the 35+ division and I've loved playing hockey with the guys and having two skates a week with them."

Forsey, who is entering his second season in the 60+ division, has witnessed the remarkable growth of the YOHA.

"We have over 350 players in the association and we're spread out over four municipalities. As an adult recreational league, it's one of the larger ones in Ontario. We'd like to attract more guys to our 35+ league and build on our current four teams which play on Friday nights at the Leisure Complex. There's no playoff structure. We don't want that level of competition to be an impediment to guys coming out to play and having a good time."

"Our 70+ league is unique in that it still has four teams in it and they've had the distinction of competing very well in the Ontario and Canadian Senior Games over the years. Our association was also recognized during the Hockey Day in Canada celebrations when Aurora was recognized as a Hockeytown. I was proud to help preside over the Opening Ceremonies."

The personable spokesman for the YOHA offered a sneak preview of some of the 50th Anniversary ceremonies that will be forthcoming.

"Some of our upcoming events will include a Celebratory Tournament, there's a big push to organize an annual golf tournament, and there will be celebratory swag available soon to mark the anniversary."

As we exited our booth at Wicked Eats, Forsey segued from the upcoming 50th Anniversary festivities to disclosing his goal-scoring prowess as an OldTimer: "I'm a 50-goal scorer. Over seven seasons."

By Jim Stewart