

Cambridge Hornets

Allan Cup Champions 1982-83



Front left: Dave Tataryn, Coach Don Vipond, Dave Peace, Henry Wynen (vice-president and GM), Carl Reinhart, Doug Booty (president), Dan Ferguson, Bob Hogg (treasurer), Rod Sachs.

Second row, left: Brian Schnurr, John VanderGriendt, Brian Crichton, Kevin Strang, Russ Elliott, Brian Cross, Marc Thiel, Larry Wilson, Don Johnston, Don Wilson, Greg Broughton, Bob Peace, John Leclair, Jim Roberts, Dave Duff, Gary Thiel, Dave Chapman.

3rd row left: Tom Hewer (trainer), Dr. Bill Fraser, Norm Gamble, Ernie Robson, Lee Palvetzian, Nick Kordts, Les Easton, Jim MacDonald (past president), John Wydeven, Dave Peters, Dr. James G. Young, Norm Preston, Terry Dooling, Don Cooper (secretary), Don Galway, Ken Wallace (trainer). Absent: Dave Hilborn.

The Cambridge Hornets began the 1982-83 season with high hopes. It had been 10 years since the Galt Hornets became the Cambridge Hornets, following the amalgamation of Galt, Preston and Hespeler, and the team was hungry for another Allan Cup. They had won Cups in 1968-69 and again in 1970-71. And in 1961, the Cambridge Terriers, predecessors of the Hornets, won the Cup.

In the years preceding 1982, the team had been a frustrated hockey club. Although they were perennial powerhouses in the Ontario Senior A Hockey League, but in the playoffs, the team could never quite pull it off, except three years earlier when the Hornets made it to the national finals against Spokane, though they fell four straight in the championship series.

But 1982-83 changed all that. The team, led by coach Don Vipond, finished second in the regular season to arch-rival Petrolia, Cambridge provided their fans with a wealth of entertaining playoff hockey.

They beat the Chatham Maroons in six games in the league semi-finals, before downing Petrolia in a tough seven-game league championship series. Hornets won the first two games, but lost the next three, before winning the final two games and advancing. But still, the series was the toughest they would face. Game seven was only decided in overtime.

Cambridge then swept Thunder Bay in the Eastern Canada semi-finals, moving on to play in Stephenville, Newfoundland, for the Eastern Canadian title in a best-of-five series.

The Hornets took an early two games to none lead, but Stephenville came back to win the next two games and force a fifth and deciding game, which the Hornets won.

That brought them back home to face the St. Boniface, Manitoba Mohawks, which they swept in four games before a home-town crowd.

The last game, in front of a capacity crowd at Galt Arena, saw a bench-clearing brawl that resulted in 193 penalty minutes. In that game, which the Hornets won 4-1, captain Carl Reinhart scored a goal and added three assists. Bobby Hull Jr. scored the lone Manitoba goal. In earlier games the Hornets won 4-3, 7-6 and 9-2.

"This was the year," said Vipond. "If we didn't win it all this year you would have seen a mass turnover next year."

"It had to come this year," said John Leclair. "I'm getting too old for this. It's the best feeling in the world."

For Don Wilson, beating Petrolia was the key. "Once we got past Petrolia I knew we could take it all. For years we were just one or two players short, but this year...just a hell of a year."

Dave Chapman thought the key came in Newfoundland. "The fifth game in Stephenville did it for us," he said. "I knew we would win it after that. Everybody just pulled together. You'll never see another team like it."

The Hornets edged Stephenville 3-2 in the deciding game.

"Stephenville was as good or better than Petrolia," said Dave Peace. "It was a hell of a series."

"What's it been, 12 years?" asked seven-year Hornet veteran Dave Peace following the victory. "It's just fantastic to win it all, especially when you're getting older."

His longtime teammate, goaltender Dave Tataryn, said that after being bridesmaids in 1980, it was nice to finally win it all. "This time we're not the bridesmaids; we're the centre of attention." Tataryn had turned aside 41 or the 42 shots he faced in the final contest and was named player of the game.

Russ Elliott savoured the Cup even more than when he won it the first time, as a member of the 1975 Thunder Bay squad. "The first one was fantastic," he said, "but this one feels even better... I was crying on the ice. When you get older you feel the bumps and bruises a little more..."

Over the years the Cambridge Hornets represented one of the top senior hockey organizations on the continent.

The Cambridge Hornets were fatigued after a gruelling regular season and 25 more games in the playoffs, but they had won it all and, for the fourth time, had brought the Allan Cup back to Cambridge.