

Sportsman of the Year

by Cpl. R. S. COOPER

During the past several years, our Force has placed emphasis on police-community relations. Programs have emerged from H.Q. Ottawa as well as Division and Sub/Division H.Q.'s. All these programs aim at better relationships and understanding of the community by policemen and of the policeman's role by the community he serves. All the programs are basically good, although some have not taken hold for various reasons.

One excellent program, in existence since 1873, has been members' participation in sports activities both within the community and within the Force. I am sure few members can honestly say that his sports participation has hindered attempts to develop a better spirit between himself and his community. Besides everyone can participate in sports, either as a spectator or by taking part in the game.

Sports participation is the most successful community project in Victoria Sub/Division. From field hockey to ice hockey, basketball to softball and baseball, soccer to football, members participate daily within and without the Force. The results have been most gratifying to all members and especially to our O.C., Supt. J. M. "Jim" Nelson. Upon his arrival to Victoria Sub/Division as O.C., Supt. Nelson, a very strong advocate of Force participation within the communities we serve, introduced many new community relations projects to be tried. Some became successful, others not. However, he became interested in the number of members within the Sub/Division who were involved in sports programs in their communities realizing these programs were a great asset to the Force.

The crowning touch came in April of 1974 when Victoria Sub/Division

represented "E" Division at the Western Canada Police Hockey tournament in Edmonton, and won the silverware.

Vancouver Island does have many hockey arenas where a team can practice and play. The first task was to form a team, which, considering the players came from all over the Sub/Division, was no mean feat. All R.C.M.P. personnel were contacted by the team officials, Insp. H. "Howie" Turner (then S/Sgt. i/c Port Alberni Detachment) and Sgt. J. I. "Jock" Colliar of Duncan Detachment. All players eventually chosen were involved in local leagues in their respective detachment areas, so conditioning didn't present much of a problem.

Next, ice surfaces for practice had to be found; anything at any time would do. Some players found themselves travelling more than 100 miles to attend a practice, whether it was midnight or midday. Since the team was not in a league, any team on Vancouver Island was fair game for a challenge, certainly a necessity if a team is to practice playing together as a unit under game conditions.

The playdowns started. The team won the B.C. Police Hockey Championship. Then, on to Edmonton and the Western Canada Police hockey tournament. The rest is history. Supt. Nelson well knew the effort put forward by the members involved in this venture, as well as in other sports activities such as softball, curling, and others. To show his and his Sub/Division's appreciation, Supt. Nelson donated a trophy to be presented annually to the member who best exemplified the Force through his involvement in sports.

On August 23, 1974, at a banquet and dance held in Duncan, B.C., the trophy was presented for the first time. Members and special guests included A/Commr.