

Happiness is a hockey stick

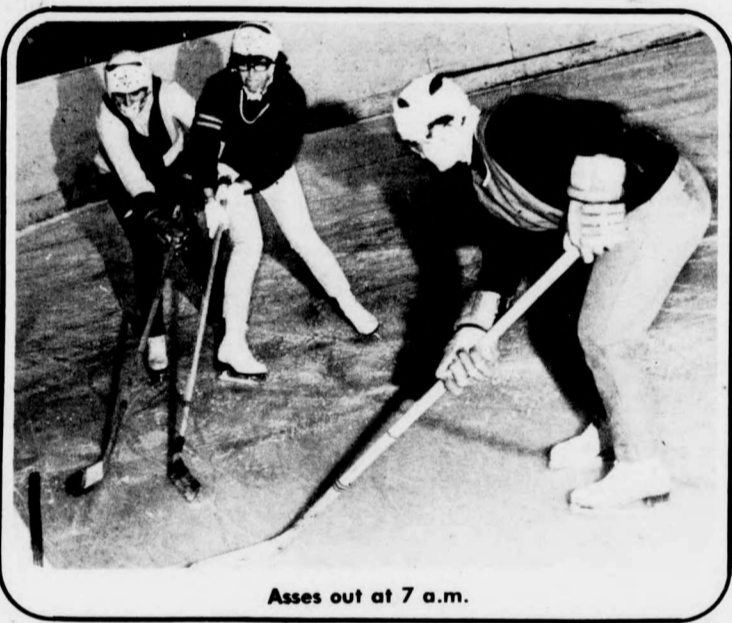


"If only my curlers would fit under my helmet!"



Cheer up — it's only 7:30 a.m.

photo essay
by Scott McMaster
(so! that was the guy ogling us at 6:30 in the morning)



Asses out at 7 a.m.

'We start at 6:30 a.m. . . .'

by Ruth Ann Whipp and Anne Wright

It's 6:30 a.m. and just getting light. Twenty-three girls in all parts of Toronto are turning off their alarm clocks. They dress quickly in warm sweaters and ski pants, knowing they have to be at the York arena within an hour.

By 7:30 a.m., armed with skates, helmets and hockey sticks, the women's ice hockey team (give or take a few late-comers) are straggling into the ice rink.

Crazy, huh? Crazy to want to play hockey at this ungodly hour, knowing that if you miss one practice, you'll be cut.

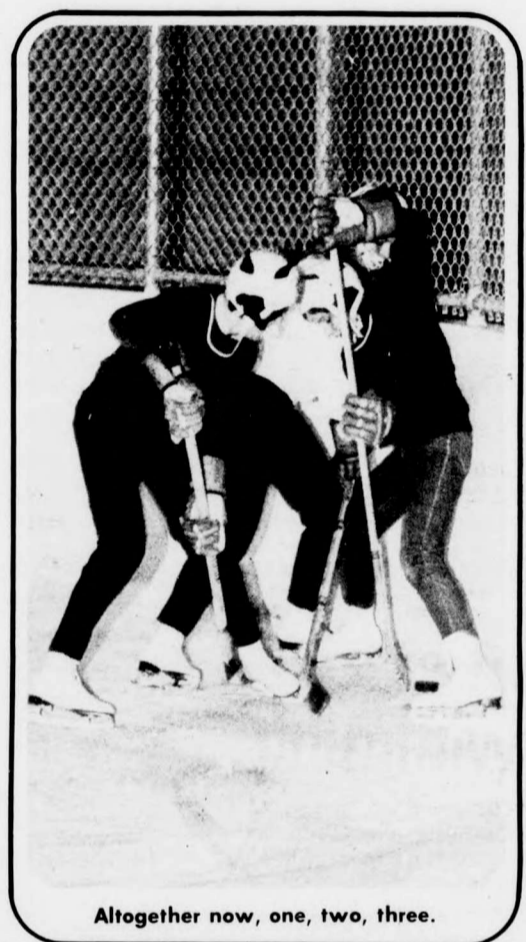
But the enthusiasm's always high as they enter the arena — their footsteps echoing on the cold cement floor break the crisp morning air.

The dressing room door opens and the sound of laughter escapes into the arena.

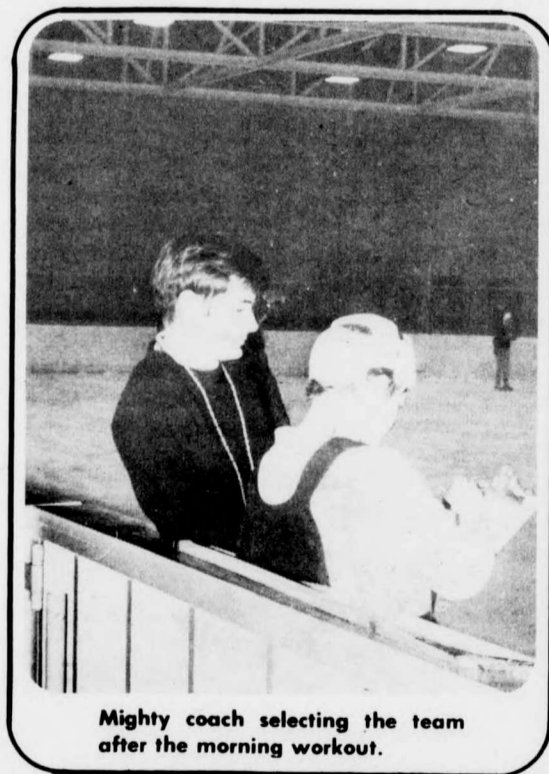
It's only 30 degrees. By 8 o'clock, the dressing room's empty and the whole team is on the ice ready for a two-hour practice.

Coach Fenton cracks the whip and the workout begins. Sprints between the blue lines, stops and starts, backhand shots, forehand shots have the girls begging for mercy after the first hour. But it's not enough and the practice goes on. Line drills take place and then it's on to practice games with the girls determined to score.

At 10 o'clock the "tyrant" says practice is over. The 17 girls to play in the next inter-university game have just been selected on the basis of their morning workout. Dragging themselves off the ice, they stumble into the dressing room, all laughter gone. Wearily they take off their equipment and one by one slowly leave the arena.



Altogether now, one, two, three.



Mighty coach selecting the team after the morning workout.



"Thank God it's over".