



BREAKING THE COLOUR BARRIER:  
AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE  
CHATHAM COLOURED ALL-STARS (1932-1939)

# Breaking the Colour Barrier Curriculum Materials

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*Shantelle Browning-Morgan*  
Greater Essex County District School Board

## The Chatham Coloured All-Stars

- ❖ Grade 4 Lesson Plan
- ❖ Language Arts (with a Social Studies focus)

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SCHOLARSHIP



<b>Course/Subject:</b> Language Arts (with a Social Studies focus)
<b>Grade Level:</b> 4
<b>Topic:</b> The Many Achievements of Wilfred “Boomer” Harding
<b>Estimated Time:</b> 4-5 x 35 minute periods

<b>Curriculum Expectations</b>
<p><u>Oral Communication</u></p> <p>1.2 Students will demonstrate an understanding of appropriate listening behaviour by adapting active listening strategies to suit a variety of situations, including work in groups.</p> <p>1.3 Students will identify a variety of listening comprehension strategies and use them appropriately before, during, and after listening in order to understand and clarify the meaning of increasingly complex oral texts.</p> <p>1.4 Students will demonstrate an understanding of the information and ideas in increasingly complex oral texts in a variety of ways.</p> <p>1.6 Students will extend understanding of oral texts by connecting, comparing, and contrasting the ideas and information in them to their own knowledge, experience, and insights; to other texts, including print and visual texts; and to the world around them.</p> <p>2.2 Students will demonstrate an understanding of appropriate speaking behaviour in a variety of situations, included paired sharing and small- and large-group discussions.</p> <p>2.3 Students will communicate in a clear, coherent manner, presenting ideas, opinions, and information in a readily understandable form.</p> <p>2.4 Students will use appropriate words and phrases from the full range of their vocabulary including inclusive and non-discriminatory language, and stylistic devices appropriate to the purpose and context, to communicate their meaning accurately and engage the interest of their intended audience.</p> <p>2.5 Students will identify some vocal effects, including tone, pace, pitch, volume, and a range of sound effects, and use them appropriately and with sensitivity towards cultural differences to help communicate their meaning.</p> <p>2.7 Students will use a variety of appropriate visual aids to support or enhance oral presentations.</p> <p><u>Reading</u></p> <p>1.1 Students will read a variety of literary texts and informational texts.</p> <p>1.2 Students will identify a variety of purposes for reading and choose reading materials appropriate for those purposes.</p> <p>1.3 Students will identify a variety of reading comprehension strategies and use them appropriately before, during, and after reading to understand texts.</p> <p>1.4 Students will demonstrate understanding of a variety of texts by identifying important ideas and some supporting details.</p> <p>1.5 Students will make inferences about texts using stated and implied ideas from the texts as evidence.</p> <p>2.3 Students will identify a variety of text features and explain how they help readers understand texts.</p> <p>3.1 Students will automatically read and understand most high-frequency words, many regularly used words, and words of personal interest or significance, in a variety of reading contexts.</p> <p>3.2 Students will predict the meaning of and rapidly solve unfamiliar words using different types of cues.</p>

## Writing

- 1.1 Students will identify the topic, purpose, and audience, and form for writing.
- 1.2 Students will generate ideas about a potential topic, using a variety of strategies and resources.
- 1.4 Students will sort ideas and information for their writing in a variety of ways.
- 2.1 Students will write short texts using a variety of forms.
- 3.1 Students will spell familiar words correctly.
- 3.2 Students will spell unfamiliar words using a variety of strategies that involve understanding sound-symbol relationships, word structures, word meanings, and generalizations about spelling.
- 3.3 Students will confirm spellings and word meanings or word choice using several different types of resources.
- 3.4 Students will use punctuation to help communicate their intended meaning.
- 3.5 Students will use parts of speech appropriately to communicate their meaning clearly.
- 3.6 Students will proofread and correct their writing.

## **What will students be able to do?**

Students will:

- use a few reading comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading to understand texts
- demonstrate an understanding of the story
- analyse primary and secondary sources
- complete vocabulary enrichment activities
- use new vocabulary words in another context
- locate words in a text
- gather and organize information about Wilfred “Boomer” Harding
- write complete sentences with appropriate punctuation
- communicate their ideas and information in a clear, coherent manner

## **How will students be evaluated?**

Checklists will be used to assess students’ writing and oral communication.

## **Materials/Resources**

- primary and secondary sources (articles and photos)
- printable activities
- coloured pencils, markers, crayons
- construction paper
- glue

## Prior Knowledge/Building Background

Review:

What is a primary source? A primary source is an original, first-hand record of a specific event or period in history.

Examples:

- photographs, audio recordings, video recordings, films
- journals, letters, diaries
- speeches
- scrapbooks
- published books, newspaper and magazine articles published at the time
- oral histories
- records of organizations
- autobiographies and memoirs

What is a secondary source? A secondary source is a record about an event or period in history that was produced afterward. It was not witnessed first-hand.

It is beneficial for students to know that in the early 1800s, five Black families settled along McGregor's Creek in the tiny town of Chatham, then known as "the Forks". The village soon became a haven for runaway slaves who were escaping slavery and oppression in the United States. By 1850, a third of Chatham's population was Black.

Once here, Blacks in Chatham thrived in business, education, medicine, sport, and literary and cultural arts. News of their success attracted Blacks to the area from across North America.

The history of Blacks in early Chatham is not only of local significance; the years of Black contribution and participation in Southwestern Ontario left a fundamental impression on the national landscape.

Please visit <https://ckbhs.org/> for further information on Black history in Chatham.

## Teaching Strategies

### **GETTING STARTED**

Once students are familiar with primary sources, distribute a photo to each group. The students will examine their photo and complete the worksheet "*Analysing Photographs*." At the end, students will share their photo and their responses with the class.

### **Pre-Teaching Vocabulary**

Students will complete the vocabulary matching exercise.



Distribute the article *"Hall of Famer champion in several sports"* to students.

### Before Reading

What do you think the article will be about?

Why do you think that?

What do you know about the individual featured in the article?

Does anything on the pages remind you of anything you've done or anyone you know?

What do you know about the images on the two pages?

What do you wonder?

### During Reading

In what ways are you similar to Boomer Harding?

In what ways are you different?

Is there anything you're wondering right now?

Why do you think Blacks weren't allowed at public skating?

Have you ever witnessed racism?

Can you tell me what we've read so far?

### After Reading

What is the main message of the article?

What questions would you like to ask Mr. Harding?

Can you retell the article in your own words?

What's the most important thing to remember about Boomer Harding?

Does he remind you of anyone you know?

How should he be remembered?

What would have happened to Boomer Harding if there was no racism in sports at that time?

### **WORKING ON IT**

Students will complete the vocabulary activities and questions.

When activities are completed, students will be asked by the teacher to locate information on the page entitled *"Here are some of Boomer Harding's accomplishments."* For example, *"In what year did Harding win a championship with the Vimy Signals?"*

Additional questions:

What does this information tell us?

In which sport did he win the most championships?

In which sport did he win the least?

Which accomplishment is his greatest? Why?

What three things did you learn?

What two things did you find interesting?

What question do you still have?

### **CULMINATING ACTIVITY**

Students will create a sports card for Boomer Harding. Please review the instructions. Students will use the article, additional primary and secondary sources, and the list of his accomplishments to help them complete the task. They will complete the graphic organizer before making the card. Once the final copy is finished, students will glue the front of the card onto a piece of construction paper. On the back, they will glue the back side of the card. Students will present their cards to the class.

### **EXTENSION**

Organize and analyse more primary and secondary sources and create captions for them.

# Boomer Knew How to Win



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Match the words in the left column with the meanings in the right column by writing the correct letter in the middle column. Use different types of cues to help you predict the meaning of each word.

1. to dash		a) an ability to do something very well
2. to compete (competed)		b) to be very good at something
3. to officiate		c) to ignore
4. to excel (excelled)		d) a person who is recognized at a ceremony and becomes a member of an organization
5. several		e) to be in charge at a sporting event
6. inductee		f) to run in a great hurry
7. success		g) many
8. insults		h) an excellent outcome
9. to shrug off		i) to take part in a contest
10. a skill		j) rude words

B. Use the vocabulary words to fill in the blanks.

dash      compete      officiate      excelled      several  
inductee      success      insults      shrug off      skill



1. She loves animals. She has \_\_\_\_\_ pets.
2. He has \_\_\_\_\_ at math since he was young.
3. My neighbour was upset because someone was yelling \_\_\_\_\_ at her.
4. My uncle has a special \_\_\_\_\_: he can juggle with his eyes closed.
5. Even though we are best friends, we have to \_\_\_\_\_ against one another in the race.
6. The key to \_\_\_\_\_ is failing over and over again.
7. The squirrel would \_\_\_\_\_ across the street if a car was coming.
8. My mom has to \_\_\_\_\_ at my soccer game this weekend.
9. The baseball player was a Hall of Fame \_\_\_\_\_.
10. To remain focused, I must \_\_\_\_\_ any distractions.



## Hall of Famer champion in several sports

By Mark Malone  
The Daily News

Wilfred (Boomer) Harding could never be pinned down to one sport.

He'd dash from a soccer practice to a baseball game, then manage to fit in a softball game, too, before heading home after dark to his waiting parents.

"They didn't know where he was, but they knew he was playing something," his son Blake Harding said.

That didn't change as the years went by. The elder Harding, who died in 1992 at age 77, gained fame on baseball diamonds, soccer fields and ice rinks across the province.

Perhaps best known as a member of the 1934 Chatham Colored All-Stars — the first all-black baseball team to win an Ontario championship — Harding later starred for several other local clubs.

He competed for an Ontario baseball championship six times and won three. He also won at least two provincial titles in hockey and two more in soccer.

"Every team he played with won," Blake Harding said. "There's a common factor here that they're winners."

"He didn't go to them because they were winners. He went to them and made them winners."

When Boomer Harding grew too old to play, he umpired and refereed. And when he was too old to officiate, he took up darts, later finishing second in Canada behind only a world champion.

"If you beat him, look out," said Blake Harding, 55. "Because that was the only win you were going to get."

Boomer Harding even held the Canadian army record in the pole vault, a mark he set while wearing army boots.

"Every sport he took part in was a passion, and he did it with a passion," Blake Harding said. "And he excelled in every sport..."

"His favourite was whatever he

was playing at the time."

Hockey took him the farthest. He skated alongside NHL players, including Vezina Trophy winner Johnny Mowers, in 1945-46 on an army team touring Scotland and England.

He joined the Windsor Staffords of the International Amateur Hockey League for the 1946-47 season, picking up 10 goals and 20 points in 25 games.

The Staffords played some home games in Detroit, where Harding made history as the first black player at the Olympia.

"I don't think blacks were even allowed at public skating at the time," Blake Harding said.

His father was originally slated to play for Detroit Auto Club, a Red Wings affiliate, before joining the Staffords at a time when teams were gradually offering more opportunities to blacks.

"They were looking for the Jackie Robinson of hockey," Blake Harding said. "They wanted someone with not only the skill to play — and, truth be told, he was better



Contributed Photos

**HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE:** Wilfred (Boomer) Harding was a winner, whether it was on the baseball diamond, hockey rink or soccer pitch, in track & field or darts. He will be inducted into the Chatham Sports Hall of Fame on Thursday at the W.I.S.H. Centre.



than Willie O'Ree (who, in 1958, became the first black in the NHL) — but their attitude, how they could take the abuse of 12,000 fans at that time or 10,000 fans calling them names."

However, Boomer Harding wasn't likely to shrug off insults from anyone. Plus, he was older than 30 and had a family in Chatham, so he left the International league after one season to play in leagues around Kent County.

Sports never brought Harding much money but they paid off in other ways. The former hotel bell-

hop used the connections he made through his athletic success to become the first black postal carrier in Chatham.

"There's a lot of good athletes coming out of Chatham, and somebody had to open the doors so they could come out," Blake Harding said. "I think dad and a lot of other guys did it."

Boomer knew how to win

### Class of 2003

#### Modern Athlete

Herb Wakabayashi

#### Old-Time Athletes

Wilfred (Boomer) Harding;  
Arthur Pelkey

#### Builders

Doug Allin, John McKay

#### Team

1953 Branch 431 Legion  
Bantam Baseball Ontario cham-  
pions



#### Induction Ceremony

Thursday, 6 p.m.  
W.I.S.H. Centre

C. Answer the following questions using complete sentences.

1. What is the title of the article?

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2. What is the date of the article?

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3. In which newspaper did the article appear?

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4. In your opinion, of all the sports Boomer Harding played, which one do you think was his favourite? Why?

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D. Circle the correct response.

5. Wilfred Harding's \_\_\_\_\_ is Boomer.

- a) first name
- b) nickname
- c) last name

6. What does the sentence "If you beat him, look out, because that was the only win you were going to get" mean?

- a) Boomer would quit if he lost.
- b) If Boomer lost, he would work hard until he beat his opponent.
- c) Boomer's opponent would not want to compete against him again.



## Here are some of Boomer Harding's accomplishments:



- beginning in 1933 at age 17 and played for more than 20 years
- 1934 Chatham Coloured All-Stars (Ontario championship - first all-Black team to accomplish this)
- 1939 Chatham Coloured All-Stars - Championship finalists
- 1948 Chatham Hadley Lumber team - Champions
- 1957 Blenheim Braves - Championship finalists
- competed for a total of six Ontario baseball championships

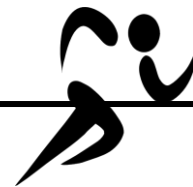


- beginning in 1931 while in high school
- 1934-1935 - Chatham Vocational School - WOSSAA champions
- 1935-1936 - Chatham Vocational School - WOSSAA champions
- 1943-1944 - London Army Team - OHA Intermediate champions
- 1945-1946 - Canadian Army Group
- 1945-1946 - Petrolia Oilers - championship finalists
- 1946-1947 - Windsor Staffords - became first Black player to play at the Detroit Olympia
- 1950s - Chatham Golds - competed for many championships at the Detroit Olympia



- 1933 - Chatham Vocational School - WOSSAA champions
- 1947 - Branch 28 Legion - Ontario champions
- 1949 - Branch 28 - Ontario finalists

- 1929 - KSSAA Junior Boys Champion
- 1934 - KSSAA Senior Boys Champion
- 1944 - Army Championship of Canada - pole vault - second place, 4x100 metre relay - first place, overall team champions
- set a pole vault record while wearing boots



## OTHERS

Softball • competed from 1930 - 1955

Basketball • 1944 - Vimy Signals - District Champions

Bowling • 3 game total of 661 including 2 singles of 231 and 277

Darts • 1962 - 1988 - consistently placing in the top three in many singles, doubles, and team • finished second in Canada in his age division

- 1988 - Calgary Olympics - Olympic Gold Achievement Medal in honour of his 55 years of athletic achievements (only 18 Canadians were so honoured)
- 2003 - Chatham Sports Hall of Fame



# Assignment

You are going to create a sports card for Boomer Harding. You will decide which sport will be represented. Your card must include the following:

On the front of the card:

- his name
- a neat picture (drawn and coloured)

Draw and colour  
a picture

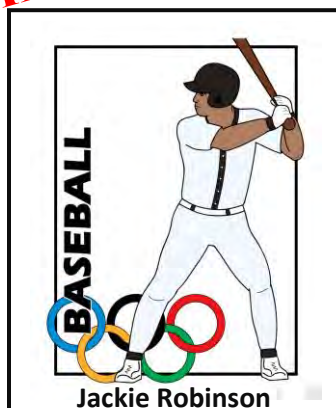
Name

On the back of the card:

- his year of his birth
- his year of his death
- his hometown
- the name of a team for which he played
- 5 interesting facts about him (in your own words)
- you will present your card to the class and you must explain why you chose those five facts

- year of birth
  - year of death
  - hometown
  - team name
  - 5 interesting facts

**EXAMPLE**





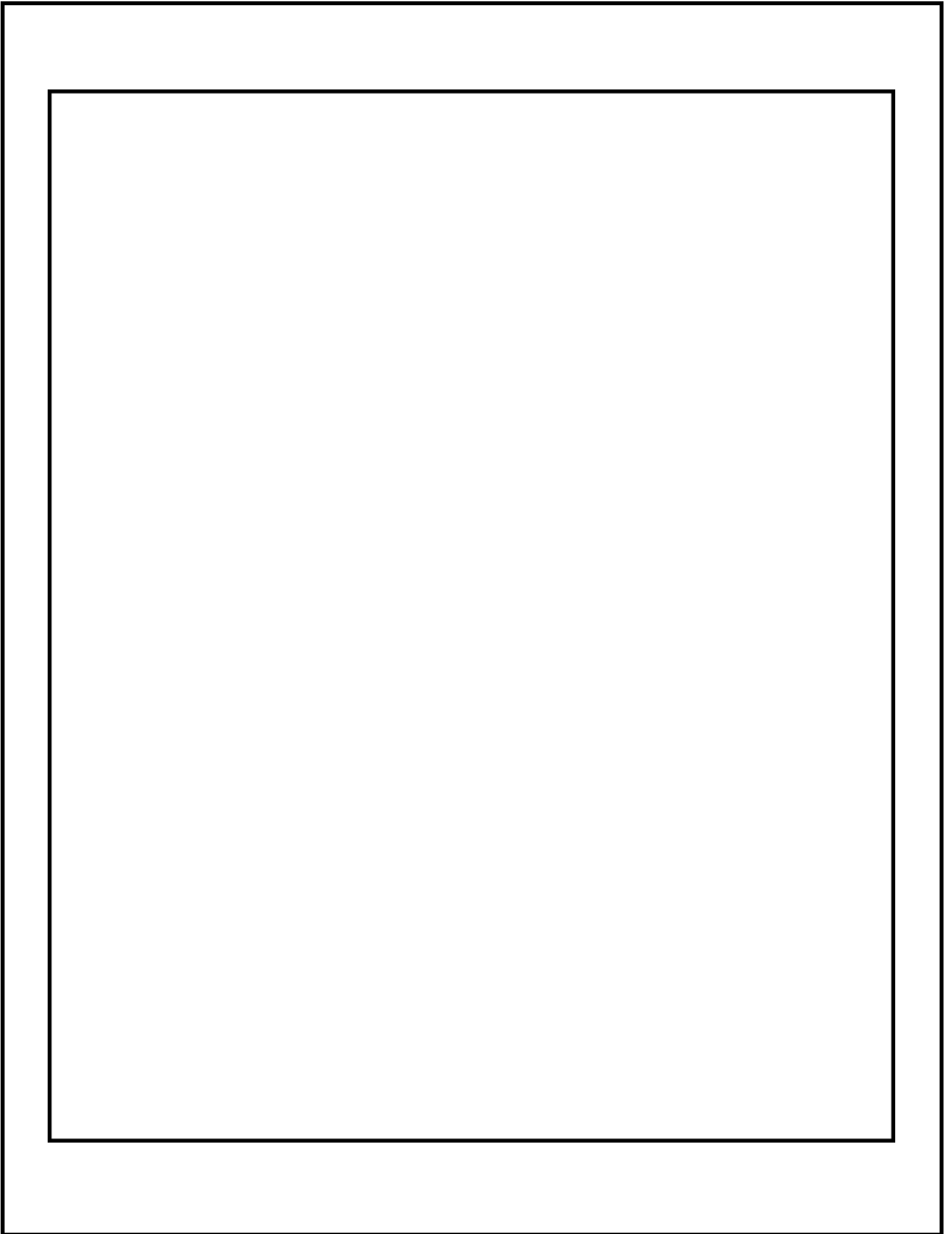
# Wilfred "Boomer" Harding (1915- 1992)

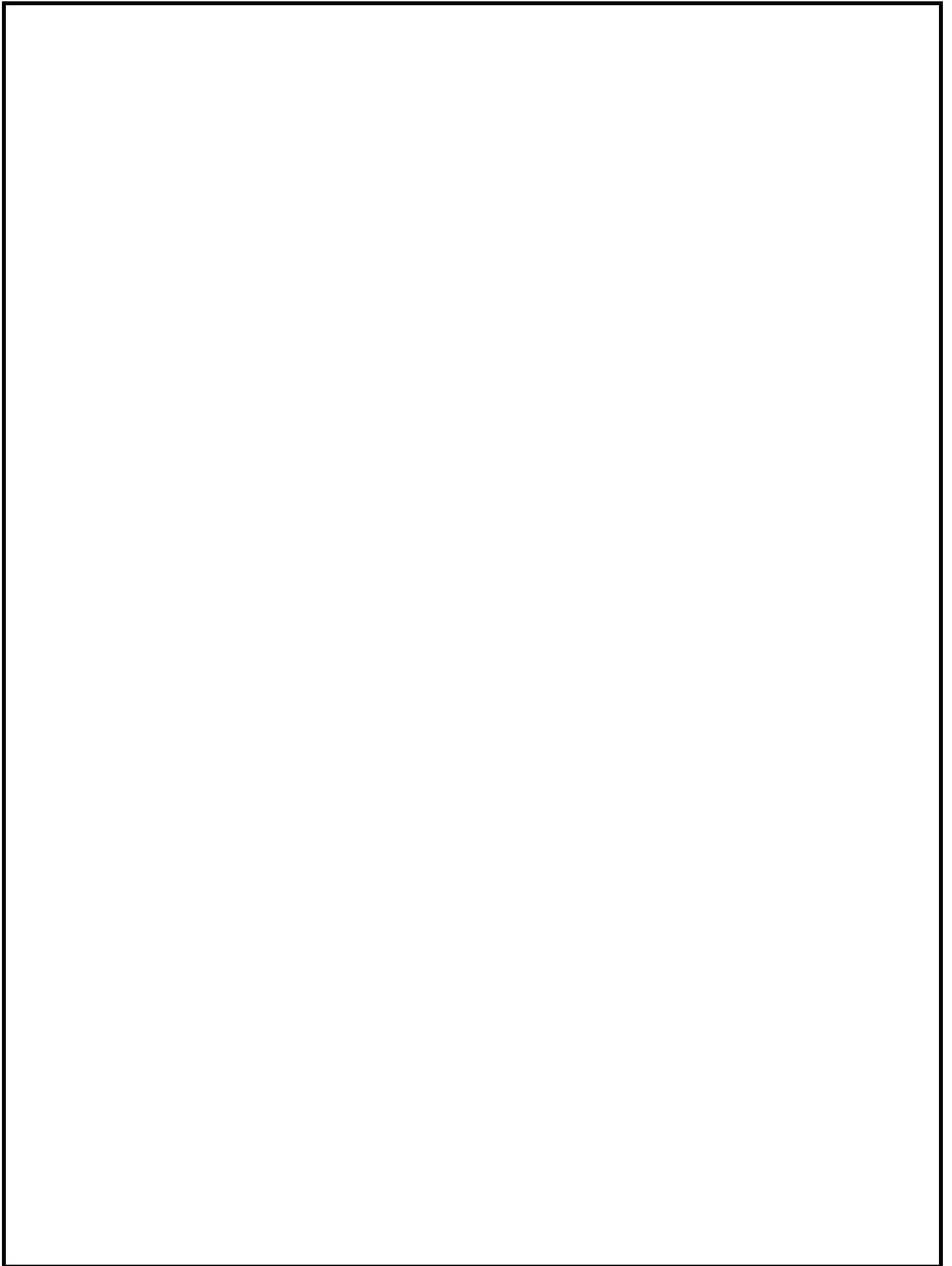
## Sports Card Graphic Organizer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name	
Year of his birth	
Year of his death	
Hometown	
Team name	
5 interesting facts	
Why did you select those five facts?	







# Boomer Harding

L W A N K L E H D W O O J D W  
N I W B B B L T P Z E S Z S S  
H D N Y O U V R E N N I W O S  
D E V L O N D A D P I L C F E  
B J N F M L T C Z H M A K T C  
B A S K E T B A L L N O Z B C  
Y Y S C R S R S R A Z N C A U  
L E X E P B G F D I E X W L S  
Q E K O B N R I C F O Z V L R  
I D R C I A A E T E L H T A E  
Q T A L O N L C H A T H A M C  
S R W R D H S L T R A C K Z C  
G O S H T O Y T C L L Y T G O  
B B E A Y S A R V Y Y D M Q S  
Y L F W H F P A E W V X A B S

ATHLETE  
BOOMER  
CHATHAM  
EXCEL  
SOCCER  
SUCCESS

BASEBALL  
BOWLING  
COMPETE  
HOCKEY  
SOFTBALL  
TRACK

BASKETBALL  
CANADIAN  
DARTS  
ONTARIO  
SPORTS  
WINNER



## Analysing Photographs

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Who do you see in the photo?	
2. What is going on in the photo?	
3. What objects do you see in the photo?	
4. Are there any captions? If so, what do they say?	
5. What time of year is it? How do you know?	

<p>6. What time of the day is it? How do you know?</p>	
<p>7. What do you think happened before the photo was taken?</p>	
<p>8. What do you think happened after the photo was taken?</p>	
<p>9. Where was the photo taken? How do you know?</p>	
<p>10. What will you remember about the photo?</p>	
<p>11. What questions do you still have about the photo?</p>	



## Grade 4 Answer Key

A.

1. f

2. i

3. e

4. b

5. g

6. d

7. h

8. j

9. c

10. a

B.

1. several

2. excelled

3. insults

4. skill

5. compete

6. success

7. dash

8. officiate

9. inductee

10. shrug off

C.

1. Boomer Knew How to Win

2. Wednesday, September 10, 2003

3. The Chatham Daily News

D.

5. a

6. b



The Chatham Daily News Tue. Sept 16, 1958 pg 10



## PANTHERS AFTER SECOND WCBA CHAMPIONSHIP

Seeking their second straight WCBA baseball crown are these Kent Panthers of Chat-

ham, Seated are B. Harding, C. Hurst, K. Calvert, B. Wright, D. Toward, L. Foster, and E.

Chase. Standing, M. Cross, R. Reaume, A. Scott, C. Cooper, B. Selby, H. Chase, D. Baldwin,

B. Gibson and A. Wright.  
(Staff)

# "Boomer" Harding Shuts Out Kent Bridge 4-0 For Panthers

"Boomer" Harding put the Chatham Panthers back on the winning path last night as he hurled the Taylor Athletic Club entry in the Kent County Baseball League to a 4-0 shutout over Kent Bridge on the latter's diamond last night.

Harding let the losers down with four hits over the nine inning route, his mates collecting a like number but utilized them to better advantage. Kent Bridge erred four times to three for Panthers.

Armstrong hurled the distance for Kent Bridge.



April 24, 1948

## NEWCOMERS OUT WITH CHATHAM INTERMEDIATE "A" O.B.A. CHAMPS



Chatham Hadley Lumber will be out again this year in an attempt to retain the crown they have won the past two seasons. Replacements are needed and the call is out for all intermediate

players to drop out to Stirling Park for the workouts. This week close to forty players were out for practice. Shown above are newcomers hoping to catch a spot with the team that promises to

carry Chatham colors into the O.B.A. ranks. Kneeling left to right are; Walt Zybura, Dick Williams, Bern Rivard, Laddie Mikulica, Jug Warren, Billy McAlorum

(By Chatham Daily News Staff Photographer) and Bill Fenton. Standing in back row are; Tony Gazarek, Don Barnwell, Merle Murray, Hank Howard, Boomer Harding, Norm Martin and Reg Swainston.



# Hall welcomes six members

## Newest inductees enjoyed success around the world

By Mark Malone  
The Daily News

They left their mark around the globe.

Now they'll be permanently honoured in their home town.

The Chatham Sports Hall of Fame announced its six newest inductees Friday, a list which includes an Olympian, a world titleist, a Canadian Hall of Famer and a handful of provincial champions.

The honourees are hockey player Herb Wakabayashi, baseball player Wilfred (Boomer) Harding, boxer Arthur Pelkey, minor baseball organizer and former mayor Doug Allin, figure skating official John McKay and the 1953 Chatham Legion Branch 431 bantam baseball team.

They'll be saluted at an induction dinner and ceremony Sept. 11 at the W.I.S.H. Centre.

Wakabayashi went from the Chatham Maroons to an award-filled career at Boston University, which later inducted him to its Athletic Hall of Fame.

He earned All-America honours in his final two seasons. He left as the second all-time leading scorer at Boston, where he also played baseball and was named the school's athlete of the year.

Wakabayashi later played and coached hockey in Japan.

He competed at the Winter Olympics in 1972, '76 and '80, when he carried the Japanese flag during the opening ceremonies at Lake Placid, N.Y.

He now lives in Richmond, B.C.

Harding, who died in 1992, is already in the Hall of Fame with the 1934 Ontario champion Chatham Colored All-Stars baseball team.

It was the first of several provincial baseball titles for Harding, who also excelled at track and field.

Less well-known is his hockey career. Harding played for more than 20 years and won an Ontario intermediate championship with the London Army team in the 1943-44 season.

He toured Scotland with the 1945-46 Canadian Army Group 'D' Red Wings and played in the International Amateur Hockey League with the Windsor Staffords in 1946-47.

Pelkey fought Luther McCarthy in Calgary for the world white heavyweight championship in 1913. McCarthy died in the ring from what were later found to be injuries he suffered two days earlier by falling off a horse.

Pelkey was never the same again. He lost his next fight — and the title — in 1914, then lost nine more in a row including a bout against Jack Dempsey.

He hung up his gloves in 1920 and died the following year.

Allin helped found the Chatham Minor Baseball Association in 1946 and worked for the next 25 years as an executive and coach.

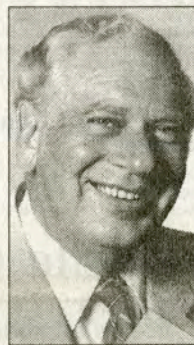
His coaching highlights include five consecutive Ontario peewee titles from 1957-61. He later won three more provincial baseball ban-



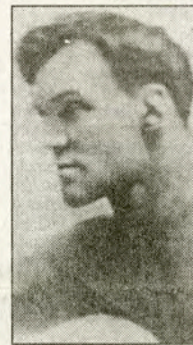
DOUG ALLIN



WILFRED HARDING



JOHN MCKAY



ARTHUR PELKEY



HERB WAKABAYASHI

ners, in addition to coaching tennis and girls' basketball.

He'll enter a Hall of Fame he helped organize in 1984. He's been on the board of directors since the project was revived in 1998.

McKay, who died in 1994, was a director of the Chatham Figure Skating Club for more than three decades.

He was also a director at the sectional and national levels, then became president of the Canadian Figure Skating Association in 1971-72. He also was the chairman of several CFSA committees.

McKay represented Canada as a judge, referee and team leader at meets around the world. He was inducted to the Canadian Figure Skating Hall of Fame in 1997.

The 1953 bantam baseball team was Chatham's first minor ball club to win an Ontario Baseball Association championship. Their feat came before the OBA made divisions based on population, so Chatham had to defeat the province's biggest and best teams to claim the title.

Chatham eliminated Sarnia, Windsor, London, Hamilton and finally Oshawa for the championship.

Jack Fairs was hired to coach the

bantams, and their success convinced the Chatham recreation department to continue hiring a full-time coach for many years to follow.

The other nominees were: Jamie Jefferson, Dennis McCord and Randy Rybansky as modern athletes; Max Lenover and Wilson (Copper) Leyte as old-time athletes; Ross Babcock and Bob Weedon as builders; and the 1937-38 Chatham Senior Maroons, the 1974-75 McGregor Panthers senior boys' basketball team and the 1982-85 Hendricks and Panic racing team in the team category.

Hall members elected one person or team per category. The board of directors then chose two more inductees — Pelkey and McKay — who may not have been known by the voters, either because they competed too long ago or participated in a lower-profile sport.

Tickets for the induction dinner cost \$30 for Hall of Fame members and \$35 for non-members. They're on sale at the W.I.S.H. Centre and Legion Branch 628.

Tickets are also being sold by Hall of Fame directors.

Call Jay Teetzel at 354-2333 or Frank Burgess at 352-0569 for details.



# Hall of Famer champion in several sports

By Mark Malone  
The Daily News

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He joined the Windsor Staffords of the International Amateur Hockey League for the 1946-47 season, picking up 10 goals and 20 points in 25 games.

The Staffords played some home games in Detroit, where Harding made history as the first black player at the Olympia.

"I don't think blacks were even allowed at public skating at the time," Blake Harding said.

His father was originally slated to play for Detroit Auto Club, a Red Wings affiliate, before joining the Staffords at a time when teams were gradually offering more opportunities to blacks.

"They were looking for the Jackie Robinson of hockey," Blake Harding said. "They wanted someone with not only the skill to play — and, truth be told, he was better



Contributed Photos

**HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE:** Wilfred (Boomer) Harding was a winner, whether it was on the baseball diamond, hockey rink or soccer pitch, in track & field or darts. He will be inducted into the Chatham Sports Hall of Fame on Thursday at the W.I.S.H. Centre.



than Willie O'Ree (who, in 1958, became the first black in the NHL) — but their attitude, how they could take the abuse of 12,000 fans at that time or 10,000 fans calling them names."

However, Boomer Harding wasn't likely to shrug off insults from anyone. Plus, he was older than 30 and had a family in Chatham, so he left the International league after one season to play in leagues around Kent County.

Sports never brought Harding much money but they paid off in other ways. The former hotel bell-

hop used the connections he made through his athletic success to become the first black postal carrier in Chatham.

"There's a lot of good athletes coming out of Chatham, and somebody had to open the doors so they could come out," Blake Harding said. "I think dad and a lot of other guys did it."

Boomer knew how to win

## Class of 2003

### Modern Athlete

Herb Wakabayashi

### Old-Time Athletes

Wilfred (Boomer) Harding;  
Arthur Pelkey

### Builders

Doug Allin, John McKay

### Team

1953 Branch 431 Legion  
Bantam Baseball Ontario cham-  
pions



### Induction Ceremony

Thursday, 6 p.m.  
W.I.S.H. Centre





PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

FORM 26

THE VITAL STATISTICS ACT, 1948

BIRTH CERTIFICATE



ONTARIO

NAME

Harding, Wilfred

DATE OF BIRTH

Aug. 6. 1915

SEX

M

PLACE OF BIRTH

Chatham, Kent Co.

REGISTRATION

Sept. 3. 1915

15-T5-13-173

(DATE)

(NUMBER)

ISSUED AT TORONTO, ONTARIO.

THE 25 DAY OF

Aug.

19

49

A handwritten signature in blue ink, likely of the Registrar General.

(REGISTRAR GENERAL)

Chatham Daily News, Wed., May 15, 1974

## Legion Player Dart Champion

GALT (Staff) — Singles champion Allan Heyninck of Branch 28 Royal Canadian Legion Chatham joined a doubles group to earn top places in two events at the all-Ontario Legion Dart Championships at Galt Saturday.

Cliff Scott and Wilfred "Boomer" Harding who copped the doubles crown combined with Heyninck and George Moore and Remi Heyninck for a fourth place finish in the five man team competition.



ONTARIO . TEAM CHAMPS

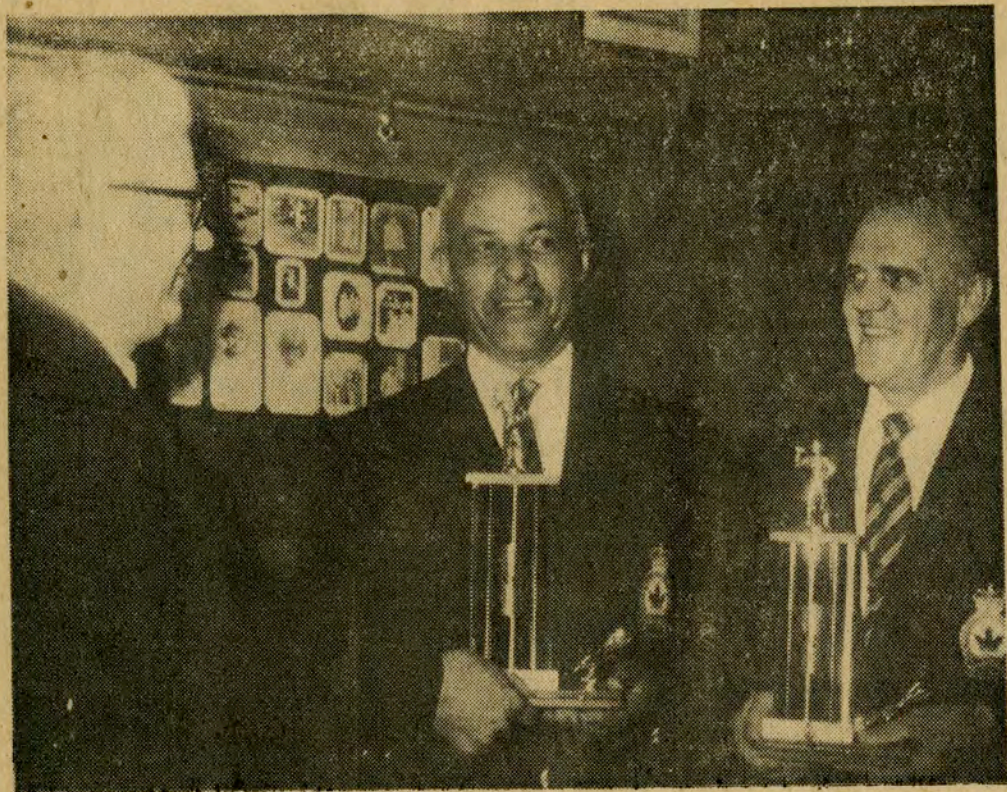


ONTARIO DOUBLES

CHAMPS







## PLACE SECOND IN CANADA

Chatham's Wilfred Harding and Cliff Scott teamed up May 24 in Lachine, Quebec to place second while representing Ontario in the annual First Annual Royal

Canadian Legion National Dart Championships. The Branch 28 duo lost out to the Alberta team. Scott had the honor of having the high score

for the day, 171. Above from left are Ontario Provincial Publicity and Public Relations chairman Charlie Moon, Harding and Scott. (Staff)



March 22, 1983



## CITY MAN DISTRICT 'A' DART CHAMPION

Chatham Branch 28 Legion hosted the District A Darts tournament recently with a Windsor squad winning the team competition, a London pair taking the doubles event a Chatham man taking the singles title. Wilfred "Boomer" Harding, front row left, of Chatham Branch 628 was the singles winner, while Dave Green and Dave Couper of Branch

2 London took the doubles crown. In back, district sports officer Sam Westbury, left, and deputy district sports officer Ken Dixon, right, congratulate the winning team from Branch 578 Windsor comprised of Skip McMahon, Bill Messenger, Greg McMahon, Pete Smallman and Bob Marshall. All the winners advance to the provincial competition in London this April. (Staff)

*Chatham Daily News Aug 16, 1958*

# Panthers Host Royals: Soccer Finals Tonight

City and County sport representatives will face the busiest and most crucial weekend of sports since the summer season opened two months ago.

Today, Chatham's three minor baseball representatives open the first round of Ontario playoffs, two of them away from home.

Moose Midgets all stars host Kitchener Midgets in the first of the best-of-three Midget quarter-finals playoff at Rotary Park. Game time is 3 p.m. Larry Myers or Dennis Roebuck are expected to handle the pitching for Chatham. Midgets eliminated Sarula recently for the Western Counties crown.

Klasmen Pee Wee all stars are in Kitchener this afternoon for the first of their best-of-three series with Kitchener Pee Wees. Second game of the series is expected to be back in Chatham Tuesday.

Branch 431 Legion Bantams journey to Brantford for their first taste of OBA playoffs today. Game time in Brantford is 5 p.m. Date of the second game to be played in Chatham has not yet been announced. The series is a best-of-three affair with the winner advancing to the semi-finals. Herb Wakabayashi or Wayne Tulloch will pitch today's opener.

Chatham's Kent Panthers tackle Strathroy Royals in the final regularly-scheduled game in the WCBA Intermediate League on Sunday at Stirling Park. Game time in 3 p.m. Panthers rest in a fourth place tie with Corunna. They face Moore Centre at Moose Centre today. Earl Chase is scheduled to pitch today's game with righthander Robert Wright going to the mound in Sunday's encounter with the Royals at Stirling Park.



**BOOMER HARDING**  
... With Panthers





BOOMER HARDING, MEL CROSS

## Panthers Host Strathroy; Minors Tackle Riverside

A tie game separates Chatham's Kent Panthers from a playoff spot in the Western Counties Intermediate League. Today, Panthers will get a chance to gain a share of the fourth position when they host Strathroy Royals at Stirling Park.

Fresh from two weekend victories over Sarnia and Corunna Panthers seek their third straight win and fifth victory in seven games when they host the league leading Royals today at Stirling Park. Game time is 5 p.m.

Moore Centre and Chatham are tied in the league basement one point back of fourth place Corunna. All teams have won six games with Corunna holding a one-point edge by virtue of a tied game. Strathroy leads with pack with a respectable 10-wins three-losses record.

Manager Allan Wright is confident his charges can come up with a win today. He will send ace righthander Bob Wright to the mound in an attempt to stop the front runners who have captured 3 of their 10 victories against Panthers.

Wright, however, has yet to be beaten in three games played to date. A member of the local detachment of the Ontario Provincial Police, he came here mid-way through the season after a brief stint with Harrow of the Essex Senior League.

Mel Cross or Boomer Harding

will handle the catching duties in today's contest. Horace Chase Abie Scott, Lorne Foster, George Montague, and Leroy Turner will make up the other infield positions.

Hard-hitting Charlie Cooper Bob Provost and Chuck Hurst will be in Panthers' starting outfield. Cooper recently hit two homeruns in Sarnia only to be called out for failing to touch base on each occasion. Cooper belted a solo homer the following day at Stirling to give the Panthers a 14-4 decision over Corunna.









# City of Chatham

OPERATING UNDER COUNCIL MANAGER GOVERNMENT  
ONTARIO CHARTER

DEPARTMENT OF

City Clerk-Treasurer.

CHATHAM, ONT., May 7th, 1929.

To be used for School purposes only.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

1915

The records in my office show that Wilfred Harding was born in the City of Chatham, Ontario, Canada, on the 6th day of August, 1915. Father's name, Andrew Harding. Mother's maiden name, Sarah Holmes. Physician's name, Dr. J. W. Rutherford, and the said birth was registered in this office on September 3rd, 1915.

*Com Foreman*

City Clerk-Treasurer.

ADDRESS ALL GENERAL COMMUNICATIONS TO CITY MANAGER





1ST CPL. HARDING



# Chatham Army Camp Track Team Ready for Meet



**M**EMBERS of the track team of Number 12 Basic Training Centre, Chatham, shown above, are confident of victory in the district track meet to be held at London July 10. Shown are, front row, left to right: Pte. H. A. Edwards of Windsor, Pte. T. Marucci of Guelph, Pte. G. Cochrane of St. Marys, Lieut. Ken Porter of Galt, who is coach as well as a member of the team, Pte. E. Hodges of Windsor, Pte. M. Robinson of Detroit, and Pte. J. Wyse of London. Back row, left to right: Pte. W. Harding of Chatham, Lance-Corporal Harry McLean of Toronto, Cpl. Harry Morgan of Windsor, Cpl. Charles Wills of Windsor, Cpl. Jack Heydon of Windsor, and Cpl. George McCurdy of Amherstburg. Absent from the picture are Sgt. Harry Brewer of Parkhill and Lance-Corporal William Pillsworth of London. (By Staff Photographer.)



# Adanacs Lead Chatham City Hockey League



THE "Adanacs," sponsored by the Canada-Dominion Sugar Company, who are now leading the Chatham City Hockey League. They have developed splendidly within the past few weeks and form a powerful unit in the league. From left to right are: J. Lacey, sub-goal; W. Walters, forward; E. Lett, defense; E. Smith, defense; W. Fleming, defense; W. Harding, forward; G. Kistler, forward; C. Dawson, forward; R. Hales, forward; E. Smith, defense; T. McKie, forward; J. Borman (captain), goal; P. R. Parliament, manager.

—Photo by Westlake especially for The Border Cities Star.







LONDON ARMY HOCKEY CHAMPS



Intermediate "A" OHA CHAMPS



DETROIT



Bromer  
Detroit

OLIMPIA /46



PAGE SIXTEEN

THE MICHIGAN CHRONICLE

# 'Boomer,' Harding Makes

\*

DETROIT



OLYMPIA

1946

*Boomer Harding*

RELIABLE INDEPENDENT WEEKLY

# Hockey

# History

# At Olympia

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1946

Windsor Staffords



# 'Boomer' Harding Makes Hockey History At Olympia

## BECOMES FIRST NEGRO TO PLAY ON LOCAL RINK

By **BILL MATNEY**  
Chronicle Sports Editor

Wilfred "Boomer" Harding, a strapping 30-year-old Chatham, Ont., youngster, made hockey history in Detroit last Monday night when he skated onto the ice at Olympia at the left wing position with the Windsor Stafford team in an International Amateur League game against the Spitfires.

Harding, who had originally been scheduled to play with Auto Club, defending champions, was switched at the last minute to the Stafford aggregation by rules of the league which state that extra players will participate with teams needing personnel.

Although "The Boomer" was not in the best condition (he had only three days to practice), he exhibited speed, power, graceful skating ability, and potential shot-making prowess. The Stafford team lost, 6-1.

### Played In Canadian Army

According to scouts who saw Harding play in the Canadian army, the young forward is a better than average player and employs hard-driving, slashing offensive tactics.

Through the years, hockey has never had a "color line," as such. In the Quebec Senior league, three of the most outstanding players in the loop are Negroes — the famous Carnegie Brothers, and McIntyre, who play on the forward line of the Shawnigan Falls outfit.

### Started In 1934

Harding is no newcomer to hockey circles. The 26-year-old star first hit the ice in 1934-35 in Chatham at Western Ontario Secondary school, where his team copped the title two years in a row.

He played in the Intermediate Ontario Hockey association from 1936 through 1943, at which time he joined the Canadian army. But "Boomer" did not let the fact that he was in service interrupt his hockey playing—for he promptly became a member of the army hockey squad playing out of London, Ont.

### Joins Kingston Team

The following year found Harding fast at keeping up his prowess at his favorite pastime, this time on the Kingston Army Hockey association team. The "Boomer" remained on the Kingston team through 1945, and then went overseas.

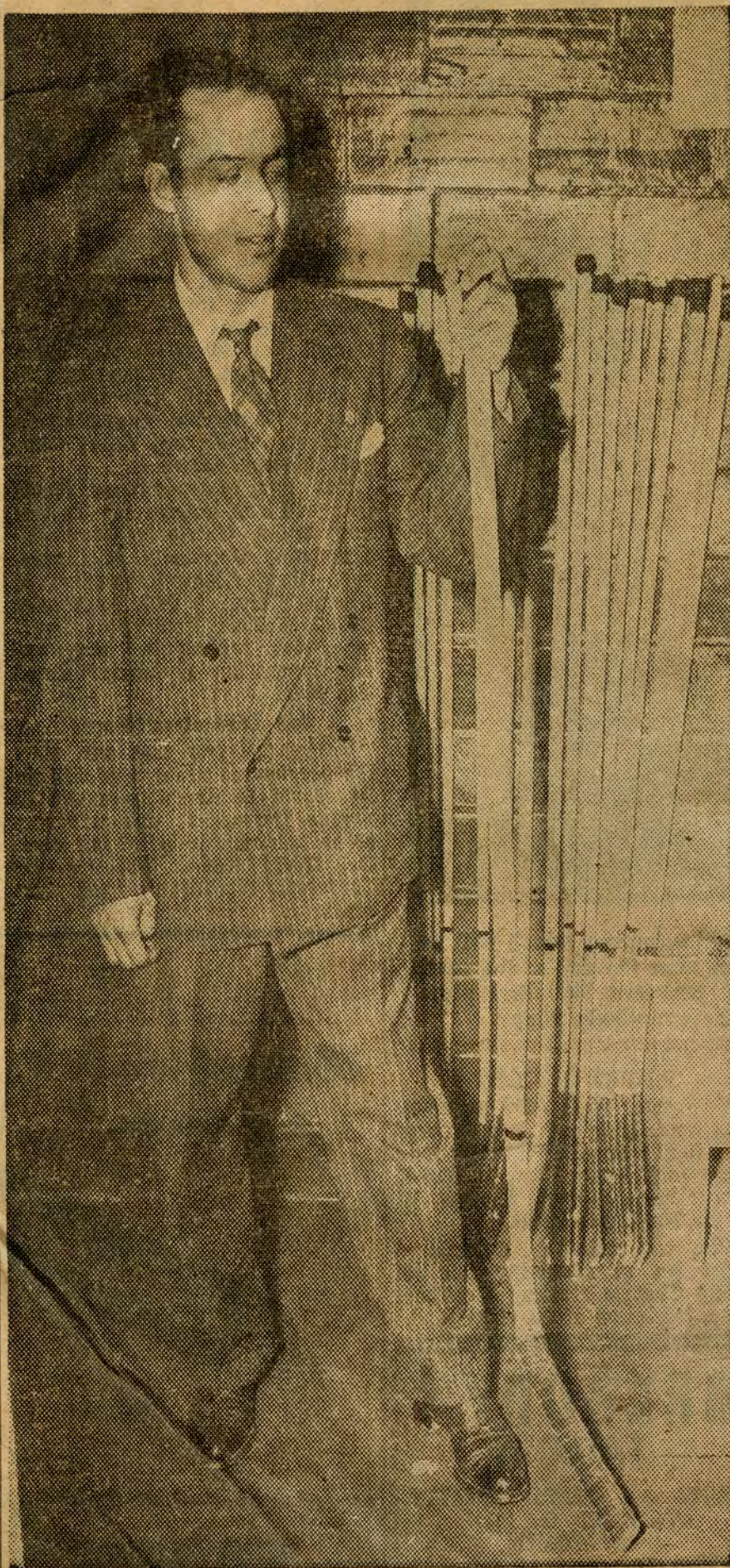
But once again the name Harding popped up again, and as usual, it was in connection with hockey. For in England, Harding found hockey quite popular, and lost no time getting back in gear.

### Red Wings Interested

Right now, the Detroit Red Wings have a protective eye cast toward Harding, who is training daily to whip himself into shape so that he may get into the thick of the fray in the International Hockey loop.

The only question remaining now is just how soon the Chatham youth can toughen up for the puck wars. Hockey history should be made within the next few weeks.

## MAY BE 'FIRST' IN PRO HOCKEY



"THE BOOMER"—That's the nickname Wilfred Harding, above, earned during his hockey playing days around Chatham, Ont., where he spent his childhood and learned the rough game of hockey. Now "Boomer" is bidding for a position on the Auto Club hockey squad, one of the Detroit Red Wings' subsidiaries. Harding is a forward, and according to those who have seen him in action, is an excellent one.





### Leafs Bright Stars in County League

Chatham Maple Leafs have been stamped as the team to beat after their convincing 11-1 win over Erieau earlier this week. Seen above the

Maple Leafs are, left to right, front row, Murray Williams, Bucky Robertson, Wilfred Harding, Al Shackleton, Bill MacAlorum, John Colby and

Mac Hall. In the rear row are left to right, Lloyd Bathurst, Lloyd Walker, Os Sutor, Laddie Mikulica, Bill Schram and Maurice Dozois. Missing when

the picture was taken were Bob Andison, Bob Males and Doug Parry. County League teams will be in action again

tonight with a double-headed night of hockey slated for 7:30 at the Memorial Arena.

(Staff Photo)



# COMMUNITY SPORTSMAN

OF THE

# WEEK



## BOOMER HARDING

A prominent figure in the sporting realm, Boomer, noted for his enthusiasm and ability, has piled up an impressive number of firsts in various fields of sport.

● **HOCKEY** — while in Vocational School Boomer was centre man on two WOSSA Championship Hockey teams. He played hockey with the Canadian Army team in Scotland and with the "Golds" in Chatham.

● **BASEBALL** — catcher on Intermediate OBA pennant winning teams; on Hadleys and the Chatham Seniors who were also OBA title holders.

● **SOCCER** — on two WOSSA Soccer teams in Vocational School, played centre on the championship soccer team of the Legion Command.

Retired from active participation Boomer now umpires softball games and successfully manages the Coloured Baseball team in the Intermediate "C".

We salute Boomer Harding as the Community Sportsman of the week.

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LEGION SOCCER







Branch 28 Legion soccer team brought new honors to Chatham Saturday afternoon when they travelled to Brantford and defeated Branch 57 Peterborough 4-1 from the Provincial Legion title. To reach the finals the Maple City Legionnaires defeated the

Guelph semi-finalists in two games for the right to advance into the final round. Shown above are the members of the team at the reception held for them at Legion headquarters last night. Front row, left to right are Johnny Burke, Bill Harper, John

Skolnik, Charles Gibson and H. T. "Red" Harwood, Branch 28 Legion sports committee chairman; Centre row left to right: A. F. Davidson, president Branch 28 Canadian Legion, Vic Jewiss, Joe Baker (captain), Roy Kilt, Wilfred Harding and George Orr,

(By Chatham Daily News Staff Photographer). (Coach). Back row, left to right; Joe Day, Legion District "A" Deputy Commander, Albert Adcock (trainer), Pete Browning, Rudy Rybansky, Jack Howard, Bill King Legion District "A" Sports Director.



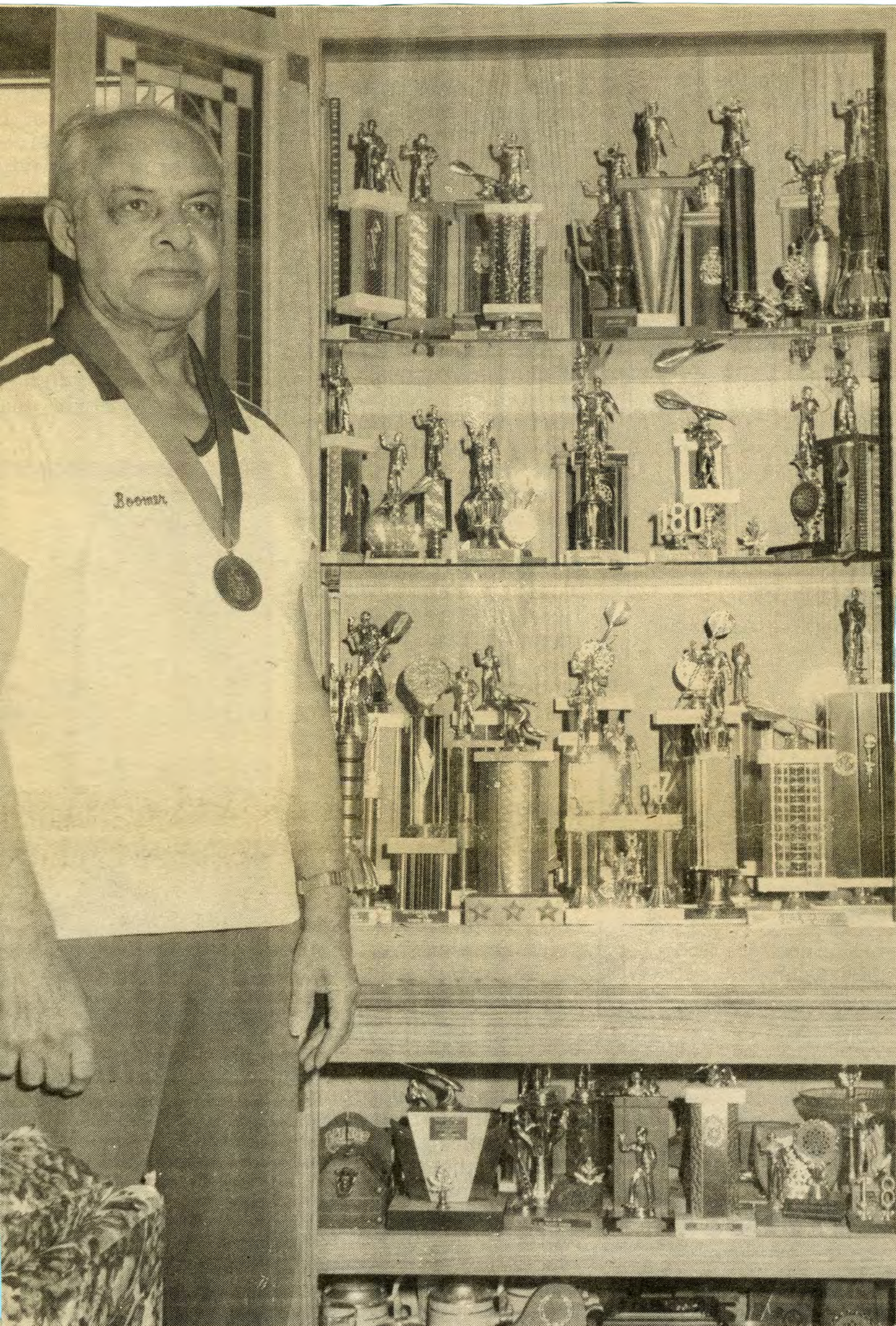
# Boomer Harding Scores Three Goals As Legion Wins, 3-2

Branch No. 28 Canadian Legion soccer levent edged Wallaceburg, 3-2 in Chatham and District Football activity at Tecumseh Park.

It was "hat trick" performance for veteran star "boomer" Harding who tallied all three Legion goals. Jim Martin notched two for the losing 'Burgmen.



# Chatham man recognized for 55 years of athletic achievement and ability



A LIFETIME OF SPORTS ACHIEVEMENT — is evident everywhere in the home of Wilfred "Boomer" Harding, 72. His recent "Olympic gold" award was just another addition to his trophy collection which points to a lifetime of

accomplishments in a variety of sports from hockey to darts. Boomer is one of the only 18 recipients of the Olympic award in Chatham Township.

## Peter Epp

For Wilfred "Boomer" Harding, it was a proud moment. He was among those individuals who received an Olympic-type award in early February, a tribute to his athletic accomplishments over the years.

The gold-coloured medallion, strung with a red ribbon, hangs proudly in the Harding household in Chatham Township, flanked by dozens and dozens of other trophies the 72-year-old has been awarded with during his lifetime. They point to his athletic prowess in baseball, soccer, hockey and darts.

Of the latter, Boomer still throws darts; and almost every gleaming trophy in the Harding showcase is a tribute to an accomplishment associated with that sport.

But Boomer is perhaps best known for baseball and hockey. He was a member of the Chatham Coloured All-Stars when they won the Ontario Baseball Association's Intermediate 'B' championship in 1934. Not only was the team the first black baseball team to win the title, but the Coloured All-Stars were also the first Chatham team to bring a provincial title back home to the Maple City.

Boomer easily recalls those days. The Coloured All-Stars were organized in 1933 at Sterling Park in the city. They played softball, but then switched to baseball. Boomer played first base, but on occasion played outfield. In later years he also played the catcher's position, and managed the team.

In the provincial championship game, the Coloured All-Stars were pitted against a baseball team from Penentang, Ont., whose pitcher, Phil Marshaldon, later threw for the Philadelphia Phillies. Penentang's pitcher, however, couldn't keep back the Chatham squad.

Boomer played with the All-Stars for about three seasons.

He was born in

Chatham, and at an early age developed a keen interest in all types of sports. His nickname came from a popular newspaper comic character at the time. Boomer says almost nobody knows him as Wilfred.

He married a Dover Township girl in 1940, Joy Handsor, but soon joined the war effort. However, Boomer's war career is unlike most

other veterans'; he played sports.

"I signed up at Chatham, but some major from a London regiment saw my name, and soon I was playing hockey in London for an army team there. Later, I was stationed at Kingston and played hockey there."

During his Kingston days, Boomer played against many of the hockey pros, including Syl Apps. Although it

has been over 45 years, Boomer easily describes a particular play during a hockey game. "You can't forget playing the professionals," he explained.

Boomer was overseas in Britain for about two years, but found that he played baseball and hockey for the Canadian Army. He was given preferential treatment by the commanders so he could play hockey,

sometimes as much as six nights a week.

"I loved it," he says today. "It was sports all the time."

However, Boomer did put down his stick long enough to be part of the occupational forces in Holland following the Allies' victory. He returned to Canada in 1946.

It wasn't too long after his return that Boomer played soccer for a team sponsored by Br. 28 of the Royal Canadian Legion. The team beat a Brantford squad one year to win the Ontario soccer title.

During those post-war years, Boomer also played hockey, and was a centre forward for the Windsor Staffords for two seasons. The Staffords played home games in both Windsor and Detroit. During one of these two seasons, Boomer's team won the season but lost the Ontario-Michigan amateur hockey title.

Over the years Boomer has also been involved with track and field, basketball, as well as coaching and umpiring.

In recent years, however, his focus of attention has been drawn to darts, an activity he's been involved with for over 40 years. As a member of the Legion-sponsored team, he's thrown darts at tournaments in Las Vegas, Chicago, Detroit, Philadelphia and Florida.

As for the Olympic award he received in early February, Boomer was one of 18 Chatham Township residents recognized by the municipality for their contribution to the community, either through athletics or through other achievements.

A retired postman these days, Boomer and Joy live in a comfortable mobile home located in Chatham Township's St. Clair Estate, immediately north of the North Maple Mall. They have one son, as well as two grandchildren. And Boomer happily acknowledges that his grandson is active in Chatham's minor hockey league.



# Chatham

Sports  
Hall of Fame

Ticket Prices  
\$30.00 ~ Members  
\$35.00 ~ Non Members

## 5th ANNUAL DINNER AND INDUCTION CEREMONY

Thursday, September 11, 2003  
6:00 p.m. Social      6:45 p.m. Dinner  
7:45 p.m. Ceremony



**Herb Wakabayashi**  
*Athlete ~ Modern*



**"Boomer" Harding**  
*Athlete ~ Old-timer*



**Arthur Pelkey**  
*Athlete ~ Old-timer*



**Doug Allin**  
*Builder*



**John McKay**  
*Builder*



**1953 Legion Br. 431 Bantam Baseball**  
*Team*

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GENERAL SECRETARY



