Dayton GEMS Records

MS - 107

Wright State University
Department of Special Collections and Archives

Processed by: Timothy J. Syzek June 11, 1981

Introduction

<u>Description of Property</u>:

The records consist of eight large black scrapbook volumes. These volumes contain newspaper clippings, programs, news photographs, etc. from 1964 to 1977. The Dayton GEMS records were accessioned into the Archives and Special Collections by a deed of gift agreement. The papers were donated to Wright State University by Mr. Edgar McFadden in January 1981.

Access:

This property shall be open to the research public without restrictions. They are located on second floor of the main library building, Room 215.

Property Rights:

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Citations:

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Linear feet of shelf space occupied: 4.5.

Scope and Content

The Dayton GEMS collection documents the colorful and exciting history of a professional sport which thrived in the Miami Valley region during the 1960's and 1970's. The earliest record of the hockey club begins May 14, 1964 and the most recent is dates March 29, 1977. The records give good coverage of hockey in hockey in Dayton, except for the years 1968-1969 and 1969-1970.

Various local and regional sportswriters contributed material on the GEMS, including Si Burick, Ritter Collett, D.L. Stewart, and John Albers. Other news correspondents from the cities if Beavercreek, Troy, Des Moines, Detroit, Cincinnati, Muskegon, Toledo, Port Huron and Buffalo, helped publicize the GEMS and other hockey teams in their league. High school papers in the local Dayton area also contributed articles for the collection.

The records provide substantial source material for sports journalists and sports buffs interested in tracing the development of hockey in the Midwest. One volume contains material on the black athletes in hockey.

History

The Dayton GEMS collection spans the years 1964 to 1977. The organization began as a new team in the already formed IHL (International Hockey League) in 1964. "Lefty" McFadden began the financial base for the team, acquiring the franchise for Dayton in 1964. With the selection of Warren Back as player-coach and the acquisition of other players, the new team was formed. "Lefty" McFadden also served as the general manager for the hockey team. He was often instrumental in getting support for his team by sponsoring special activities for games and even writing newspaper articles. Among Dayton's great individual players was a former Olympian and others who had played at various levels of professional and amateur hockey during their sports careers.

Although scheduled to play during 1964-65 at the new Wampler's Arena, the GEMS began their regular season at Hara Arena due to a gas explosion which wrecked Wampler's on October 9, 1964. IHL teams included Fort Wayne Komets, Muskegon Zephyrs, Toledo Blades, Des Moines Oakleafs, Port Huron Flags, and Dayton GEMS. Games were televised in 1965-66 and Muskegon changed their name from Zephyrs to Mohawks. The league expanded to include the Columbus Checkers for 1966-67. That year was said to be a good one for rookies on the Dayton team. Dayton played teams outside the league in 1967-68. The Port Huron Flags became the Wings and the Columbus team was called the Golden Seals in 1971-72.

Big plans were in the offering for the new ten-team WHA (World Hockey Association) for the 1972-73 season. This prompted a proposal for a new 14,000 seat arena to replace the old one. According to one study, 70 to 80% of those surveyed favored a new ice arena in Dayton. Although the plans did not materialize, there was a new team added to the league that year, the Saginaw Gears.

Toledo Blades became the Goldiggers for the 1974-75 season. By then the league had been reorganized into two divisions. Kalamazoo put a new team on ice in 1975-76 (Wings). The Dayton GEMS hockey team played their last season in 1976-77. After a slow finish, Dayton GEMS made the Turner Cup finals time and again. With personnel changes among players and coaches over the years, the Dayton Club consistently finished near the top in the IHL.

Series List

- I. Book one includes win-loss records, arena rental and player salary figures, contest for team name, articles on black hockey players Norbert Clarke, Willie Mastin, and Irving Campbell. There is also Information on Pat Rupp- 1964 United States Olympic team goaltender and Guy Trottier IHL All-Star. The date span is May 14, 1964 to March 27, 1965.
- II. Dayton GEMS place three on IHL All-Stars: Moe Benoit, Guy Trottier, and Warren Back. Information on lose of Turner Cup to Toledo. Year span of 1966 to 1967. Book two also describes television coverage of IHL games, testimonials dinners, player participation in other sports, and "Lefty" was made league Vice President. Year span of March 1965 to April 1966.
- III. Material on fans, player trades, and other league teams. League rule changes eliminating overtime play, player suspension, personality profiles on personnel. Year span of July 1967 to May 7, 1968.
- IV. Larry Wilson won second IHL championship with GEMS. Proposed move to Cincinnati was foiled. Community involvement for school board levy, Christmas seals. May 1, 1970 to April 25, 1971.
- V. Dayton team invited to join new WHA, new arena planned, and team name changes in IHL. April 29, 1971 to May 31, 1972.
- VI. Tom McVie GEMS coach, one full issue of Hockey News, Columbus plays as Owls. July 1, 1973 to April 5, 1974.
- VII. John "Bucky" Albers named general manager, heavy turnover year, Toledo club plays as Goldiggers. August 2, 1974 to april 23, 1975. Ivan Predigger new coach, new IHL team: Kalamazoo Wings. August 20, 1975 to February 15, 1976.
- VIII. League standings, final individual statistics, Ken Wilson general manager, Larry Mickey coach. June 29, 1976 to March 29, 1977.