

BOYD, Mabel

Builder / Women's Hockey / Girls' Baseball



Born: In 1921
Etobicoke, Ontario

Mabel Flora Elizabeth Boyd is viewed as the "Grand Mother" of organized women's hockey in Mississauga and one of the true pioneers of the women's game in Canada. If that's not enough, she is also credited with planting the early seeds of organized girls' baseball in the days when Mississauga was known as Toronto Township.

In recognition of her visionary roles, leadership and remarkable contribution, Mabel was inducted into the Mississauga Sports Hall of Fame on June 1, 2006.

Born in Etobicoke in 1921, Mabel participated in various sports programs in both elementary and secondary school. She was particularly interested in baseball, hockey, field hockey and track and field and not only played on boys' teams but often beat the boys at "their own" game. Even in her teenage years, Mabel and her older brother organized mini track meets and invited the neighbourhood children to participate.

In 1956, with her husband and family, Mabel moved to a house at the corner of Burnhamthorpe and Tomken Road in what was then called Toronto Township. It was there that she continued her love affair with sports and began playing at the baseball diamond behind the old St. Patrick's Church at the south west corner of Dixie Road and Dundas Street.

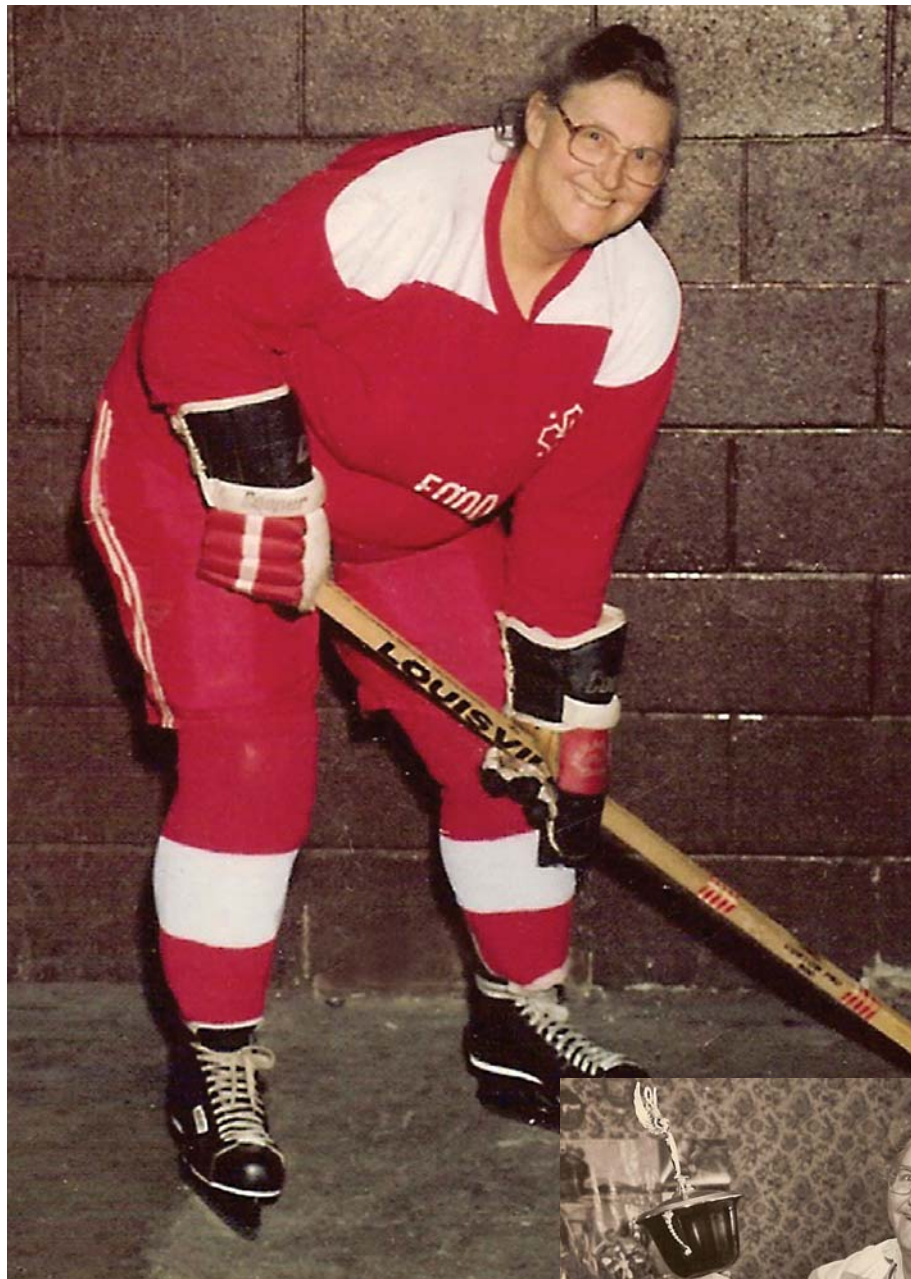
Soon after in 1958, she organized her first girls' baseball team consisting of 11- and 12-year-old players. Because funds were not available, Mabel and some of the mothers from the neighbourhood made the team uniforms. It didn't take long for their efforts to blossom into an organized league. Both as a player and administrator (organizer, equipment manager, coach and whatever was required) Boyd was responsible for the development and growth of women's baseball.

Following the formation of girls' baseball, her love for hockey got the better of her and soon under Mabel's keen nurturing, young girls were not only learning the rules of the game but also sportsmanship and team cooperation.

In 1967 she and her hockey mates formed a league of their own. It wasn't much of a "league" at first, consisting of 15 players, in age ranging from 14 to 20 - and "Granny" Boyd twice as old. Registration fees ran \$15 for the season and it cost about \$30 to equip a player, without a girl having to borrow her brother's shin pads. Soon the word spread and the loop started getting bigger and better. In the early 1970s, equipment regulations were tightened and protective headgear became mandatory and eventually face visors also became standard protective gear.

By 1976, the league expanded to include separate atom, peewee, bantam and juvenile age divisions with Mississauga teams playing against opponents from Orangeville, Beaton, Fergus and other southern Ontario communities in addition to their own league fixtures.

By the time the 1980s rolled around, the league's membership sped past the 200 player mark with 15 house league and five rep teams in the fold. The "Mighty Missy Machine" became a feared force as many of the league's teams were carting home the silverware from various tournaments, including Mississauga's own Christmas Classic which got off the ice for the first time in



1981 and annually still attracts teams from various parts of Ontario and beyond, including the U.S.

While coaching her own teams, Mabel herself continued to play both women's baseball and hockey. She was instrumental in taking her women's hockey team (the team she played on) to play in tournaments in Finland, Holland, Germany, Sweden and England and in Hawaii.

She was a familiar face at the annual women's tournaments played in Mississauga and also in tournaments in other parts of Ontario.

In 1991, she organized the Women's Masters Hockey League and while still going strong, Mabel was chosen recipient of Mississauga's Outstanding Contribution to Community Sports award for 1992. She was also named one of the 25 Most Influential People in Mississauga Sport, a 1999 award that recognized her leadership in promoting women's hockey.

Over the years, she has rubbed shoulders with not only sports writers and talk show hosts but also NHL greats such as Darryl Sittler, Ken Dryden and Dennis Hull.

At age 73, Mabel was on record as the oldest living registered women hockey player in Canada. How's that for a mother, grandmother and a hockey playing great-grandmother - all at the same time!