

History of Hockey in St. Augustine

As anybody from the coast would know, hockey is played by a large number of men from the towns and taken very seriously. Some children are put on skates as soon as they are able to walk. This love for hockey had to begin somewhere and where was that you ask? Well it began in 1967 with the first two hockey teams ever in St. Augustine, the Braves and the Rockets. Some of the men on the Braves team were Abraham Lessard, Amos Lavallee, Donald Driscoll, Leonard Driscoll, Garry Lessard, Reuban Shattler, Michel Driscoll, Reginald Shattler, Tony Organ, and Roger Driscoll. The coach of the Braves team was Ralph Maurice and the coach of the Rockets team was Fred Maurice.



The Braves and the Rockets played as separate teams for a few years and in 1974, they merged and became the well-known Raiders. There was some resistance at first, however the men came around and presented a united front as the Raiders. The first team members of the Raiders were Jimmy Driscoll, Marcel Driscoll, Clyde Lavallee, Zoel Lavallee, Bernie Belvin, Lionel McKinnon, Douglas Fequet, Camil Fequet, Melvin Lavallee, Gordie McKinnon, Herman Bateman, Kevin Bateman, Donald Roberts and Howard Pryor. The first coach of the Raiders was Fred Maurice, following him was Harrison Lavallee and after him came Chesley Lavallee who is the present day coach. However, for one

hockey season Ernie Belvin took Chesley's place as coach. The places in which these men played hockey in St. Augustine over the years. The first hockey rink was situated on the river in front of the village and it was then relocated to the marsh clearing across from St. Augustine Retail. Finally the hockey rink found a new home for many years beside the community hall.

The hockey tournaments on the coast are like none seen anywhere else. It is a 3-day event that usually takes place anytime from end of January to the middle of March. Hockey would be played all weekend until you would end up with a champion team. Over the years, the Raiders came out the champions of hockey tournaments in St. Augustine and in other villages hosting hockey tournaments. The first hockey tournament held in St. Augustine was during the winter of '67. Hockey teams from all over the coast came to participate in this hockey tournament. However, the Raiders didn't just use their talent on the coast. They gathered up their equipment and in 1987 they traveled to Sept-Iles and along with them went four fans; Lucille Bateman, Lillian Lavallee, Bobby Driscoll, and Paul Maurice. They were the first team to go to Sept-Iles and they decided they would play in the lowest division. To everyone's surprise, this young team from a small town won all the games they played and took home the trophy. Being confident in their talent they decided to return again the following winter and the team from La Tabatiere also entered the tournament. However the Raiders decided to play in the highest division and once again proved themselves, they won all their games and once again walked away with the trophy.

Hockey has always been in the hearts of everyone in St. Augustine so when they received a visit from a hockey legend in 1982, the love for the game grew. Bobby Orr flew in on Reverend Brian's plane and stayed in St. Augustine long enough to show him how much this town loves hockey. Upon arrival he was greeted with the warmth of St. Augustine and he proceeded to the Big R Bar where a supper was prepared and he signed autographs and met many hockey lovers. He also had a scrimmage with the Raiders and commented how pleased he was with their talent. It was a visit that will forever be remembered by all of St. Augustine, even those who weren't born at the time, they were told about this great event. It is very clear how important hockey is in St. Augustine and all along the coast.

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