

Fri. Nov 4/83

PEPP-TALK

with
Harry
Pepper

I guess everyone has their favorite, but when it comes to ice arenas I'll take Rossland's.

I suppose it's because it's the first indoor facility I have had a chance to enjoy. They say your first love it always the best, so let's say that's my excuse.

I remember back in Strathmore, Alberta, where I saw my first ice-hockey game, the rink there was an outdoor one. That first winter back in the late '30's I was working on a farm situated about 3½ miles by road from town.

That winter I attended every game the Redwings played and I beat my own path across a couple of miles of open country through snow sometimes three feet deep. The amenities of that rink consisted of a hot stove room where one could warm up between periods and buy a hot dog. Out in the stands during a good game there was enough excitement to keep one warm.

The Redwings had a good team, four or five Giroux boys were the backbone of the club and the opposition consisted of teams from Banff, Canmore, Gleichen and a couple from Calgary in a league known as the Bow Valley league.

When I arrived in Rossland in 1951, it was late in the summer and I could hardly wait to see what kind of hockey we would see here. I had gotten a taste of the senior game in Trail the previous year and I really looked forward to seeing

what Rossland had to offer.

During that first winter someone introduced me to the sport of curling and I took part in my first 'spiel in the old facility just off the main drag on Spokane Street. The new rink for curling was added to the hockey rink shortly after and I took to curling every chance I got. I tried the men's club but shift work interfered. Then a shift club was started and it kept going until I was ready to retire at which time we formed what is now the largest club in town.

Actually, for a town of Rossland's size we have a lot of activity in the winter months. Two ladies' clubs, a large mixed club and the men's club plus our retirees on the curling side.

On the other side there is our number one attraction, the Warriors, plus fun hockey and a fairly good minor hockey program, both boys and girls. The lounge facilities are as good as any in the Kootenays, in fact there aren't many rinks in the area where one can sit in comfort and watch a hockey game with a glass of beer or a short drink to add to your enjoyment.

The rink used to be run by a group of Rossland citizens known as the Rossland Civic Activities Association (RCAA). These people did a hell of a job, combining many long hours of work at the arena with a regular job at Cominco. When they finally threw in the towel, I think they had just found it

was getting too big to handle.

They handed it over to the city who formed a recreation commission. Today this committee carries on most of the business from an office located in the arena.

This year, with 14 rinks in our retirees' club we have to curl three days a week. We play four games on Tuesday, six games on Wednesday and another four on Thursday. We have arranged for every member of the club to have a copy of the rink

personnel and the draws as they come up, so it looks as though we may be embarking on a banner season.

On Thursday we buried a popular member of our club over the past few years, Bruce Ackerman. I hadn't know Bruce for long but our association was always an enjoyable one. We were fellow members of Branch No. 14 of the Legion and spent a number of happy times together in the club.

Till next week then!