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## ACROSS THE ISLAND

### Fabulous Hockeyists Carried Abbie Colors

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Provincial-Farm Editor

FOSTER HEWITT said recently the Toronto Granites team that won the Olympic hockey for Canada in 1924 were "one of the great teams of all time" and added "In the 1920's amateur hockey was possibly superior to the professional game."

And Vern DeGeer, veteran sports columnist of the Montreal Gazette, did some reminiscing recently and called the same Granites "the greatest collection of puck chasers outside pro ranks." It was generally agreed, DeGeer recalls, "that the Granites were formidable enough to parade in major professional company."

In case you're wondering what the Granites have to do with "Across the Island" the explanation is simple. The Charlottetown Abegweits played the Granites at Saint John in January, 1924, prior to their departure for Europe where they walloped the Czechs 30-0 and Switzerland 30-0 – I do not have all the scores – and took the Olympic title by whipping the Yanks 6-1 in the final.

The Granites were playing their 14<sup>th</sup> warmup game of their cross-Canada tour – they had won 12 – when they met the local team. The Abbies had had a couple of skates on Victoria Pond and two practices in the arena – there was no artificial ice here then – and their game against the classy Olympians was their first of the year. The score was a most respectable 4-1 for the Granites, and after the game, star defenseman Dune Munro told Sugar Gordon "you gave us one of the toughest battles we've had across the country." The Granites found it impossible to believe the Abbies were all hometown boys from a city of 10,000 to 12,000. Their team was the pick from a number of provinces.

### Saint John Games Best In 20 Years

From a scrapbook kept by Sugar over the years, I learned that Saint John newspapers called the Granites- Abegweit game the best played in that city for 20 years.

I talked this week with Fred Moore and Sugar Gordon, two of the stars of that illustrious team of other years. And right here let me thank Johnny "Snag" Squarebriggs for giving me the idea when I was eating at his restaurant a few days ago.

The colorful Abegweits of that era earned their reputation. They won 17 straight games in 1922 and were undefeated all the way through the Maritime Championship. But Sugar and Fred told me the 1923 team was the best team on which they ever played. Their record that year was 12 wins, one loss and one tie in 14 games played. For the unforgettable two-year period, Fred Moore recalled, they had a record of one loss and one tie in 31 games.

The team that played the Granites in January, 1924 was minus two of their stars of the previous season. They were without veteran left winger, Percy Rodd, who did not

make the trip and Lou Campbell who was knocked out of hockey by an injured limb. Ches Campbell was coach and Russell Chandler business manager.

The men who made the Saint John trip were Harry "Stonewall" Morgan and Spurgeon "Dutch" Diamond who played goal. Fred Moore and Fred Kelley were on defense, with Roy Prowse able to take a turn on defense or the wing. Up front they had John "Whacky" MacEachern at centre with John "Sugar" Gordon, "Chick" Williams, Earl Prowse, Frank Cronin and Earl Dalton as forwards.

### Chick Scored Abbies' Only Goal

CHICK WAS playing with a Boston club that year, made the trip to Saint John for the game and scored the only goal. He probably was in better shape than the rest of the club, as he had a number of games under his belt. It was their first of the season.

The 1922 club had Harry Morgan in goal with Fred Moore, Fred Kelly and Ches Campbell on defense. Whacky MacEachern, Sugar Gordon, Perc Rodd, Earl Prowse, Jack Callaghan, Chick Williams and George Buntain were forwards.

In 1923 the Abegweit club paid Frank Brown of Moncton \$80 per week to coach the club – that was good money in those days – and he had Harry Morgan in goal, Fred Kelly, Fred Moore and Roy Prowse on defense. Whacky MacEachern, Sugar Gordon, Percy Rodd, Lou Campbell, Earl Prowse and Frank Cronin as forwards. This was the club the Moore-Gordon pair termed the best they had ever played with. It was a better club than the one that played the Granites, they agreed.

There were no protective pads worn in those days. Fred Moore recalls he was the first man here to wear a shoulder pad. He collided with Big Bill Hay, Sussex defense star and broke his shoulder. So he got the Hardy Brothers, harness makers here, to make him a set of protective pads.

"The club gave you a hockey stick, a sweater and stockings in those days. You supplied the rest yourself," Sugar told me.

### Abegweits Were Highly Regarded

THE GREAT Abegweit clubs of those days were the toast of the town and of the province, with the exception of those who backed the Summerside Crystals who also were great. Some of the Abbies most bitter battles were against the Crystals, through those earlier Twenties.

Sugar recalls, for example, that the Abbies had been in the semi-finals or finals of the Maritime champion competition through 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, and 1926. The Crystals beat them in 1925. There was little in the way of organized Maritime hockey competition prior to 1921, he recalled, though there was great competition among several top Charlottetown clubs. But that's another story. I am not going to go into it now.

Abegweit team members each received \$20 gold pieces at the end of the 1922 season. Awards at the end of the 1923 season were gold watches.

\$4,000 Annually For Star

DUNC MUNRO, Sugar recalled, was guaranteed \$22,500 for turning professional with the Montreal Maroons in 1924 after he had completed the Olympic chore. But that was over a three-year period. The Maroons paid him \$4,000 each season in cash, and they guaranteed him \$3,500 in his business during the year. If his business did not net him that amount, the club would make it up. Professional Hockey was not the big money game then that it is now.

Mr. Gordon picked four Islanders that he knew whom he “would put up against anyone in Canada as all-around athletes. “He was talking of men who were stars in football, hockey, baseball and basketball. They were Lou Campbell, Whacky MacEachern, Carl Milford and Frank MacCarey. Milford died some years ago. MacCarey was killed in the First Great War, MacEachern died last year. These men were tremendous in all four sports.” Of Lou Campbell, the only one now living, Sugar recalled “he was one of the greatest baseball pitchers of his time. He played all games well. He used his head,” Sugar told me.

He didn't say so but I recall Sugar was an all-rounder too. He played hockey, basketball and football and he also rode a bicycle in competition, I recall.

#### Beef Fieldman Is Popular

GLEN COTTON, provincial beef fieldman, I find, negotiated the sale of the fine Hereford herd of Gordon Matheson of Hunter River to the Island Development Company's Shed Acre farm at Brackley Point or Covehead – part of the farm is in both districts, I am told.

Incidentally I have heard many warm compliments for Mr. Cotton from beef cattle breeders. And there is good reason. This man's appointment came as a result of repeated requests for a beef fieldman, and the department was fortunate indeed to come up with a man of his qualifications.

Glen Cotton has had the benefit of 18 year's experience as a cattle buyer for one of the large packing firms that buy cattle and other livestock here, and he's ready to pass on the benefits of his knowledge and experience to any cattleman who may desire advice.

This man can advise a farmer whether his steers are ready for market or whether they would benefit from a few weeks' additional feeding.

He can help in other ways. Anyone who wishes advice can have it by writing, telephoning or otherwise getting in touch with Mr. Cotton at the provincial department of agriculture office in Charlottetown.