

Deputation to Huntsville Town Council:
Request for Diamond Naming at McCulley
Robertson Sports Complex and for
Diamonds to be Unlocked during the day

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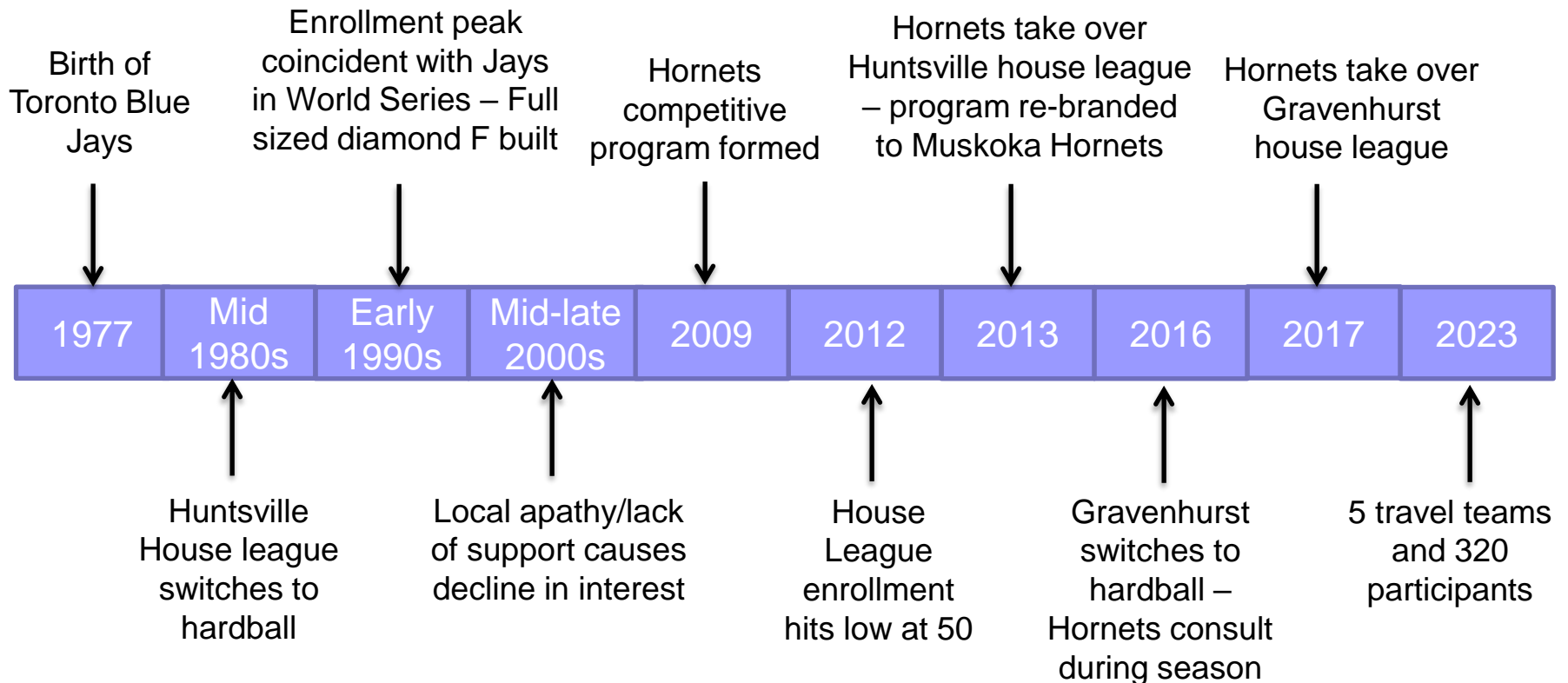
Highlights

- Review of Muskoka Hornets minor baseball program
- Diamond Naming – request to re-name Diamonds A and F
- Request to Unlock the Diamonds During the Day

History

- Small towns in Muskoka focused on softball /fastball until 1980s when the Toronto Blue Jays grew in popularity.
- Huntsville's Minor Baseball program has been hardball since mid1980s. Enrolment fluctuated over the years from as low as 50 to a peak of approximately 225-250 kids in the mid 2000s.
- In 2012, the program had 50 paid players
- Muskoka Hornets took over day to day management of Huntsville house league in 2013 and Gravenhurst in 2017 (Gravenhurst did not operate in 2021)
- 2023 paid enrolment is 320 players (ages 3-18).
- Per player enrolment fee for house league was \$200 in 2023 – players receive full uniform and play once per week from mid-May to end of August (with practices every Sunday).

Historical Timeline: Minor Baseball in Muskoka



Muskoka Hornets –Rep Program

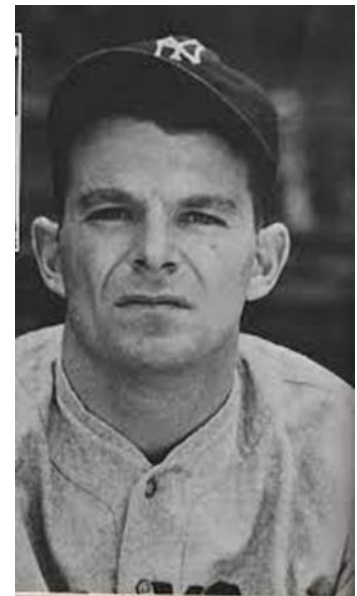
- Higher level of competition than house league
- Competitive program started in 2009 with one Mosquito team of mostly Huntsville kids playing some exhibition games and one tournament (team lost every game)
- In 2010, the Hornets joined the York Simcoe Baseball Association (YSBA) with two competitive teams.
- In 2012, the program re-branded from Huntsville to Muskoka Hornets to reflect broadening of areas represented
- In 2023 the Hornets have 5 travel teams – Players come from entire Muskoka-Parry Sound region.
- See www.hornetsbaseball.ca

Muskoka Hornets – Select/Rep Program

- Muskoka Hornets practice and play throughout Muskoka, but primarily at Wharf, Kerr Park, Peake Field and McCulley-Robertson
- Approximately 400 rental hours at McCulley in 2023
- Since 2009, Muskoka Hornets hosted as many as 50 tournaments as well as numerous league and exhibition games.
- Each home game/tournament brings out-of-towners into local shopping areas, parks, hotels, motels and campgrounds
- Muskoka Hornets also help sponsor annual baseball camp for kids that now rotates between McCulley and Peake (run by Edge Baseball Training)

Request for Diamond F Naming

- In 2018, George Selkirk was inducted into the Huntsville Sports Hall of Fame.
- Mr. Selkirk was born in Huntsville, Ontario and lived locally until he was 8 years old before his family eventually relocated to Rochester, NY.
- He went on to be a professional baseball player, winning five World Series with the New York Yankees and was an all star two times. He is also credited with inventing the warning track safety mechanism to avoid fence collisions.
- Selkirk is considered the 6th greatest baseball player in Canadian history
<https://www.liveabout.com/top-mlb-players-from-canada-320599>



Request for Diamond F Naming

- To honor Selkirk's birthplace, the Muskoka Hornets would like to ask Council to re-name Huntsville's true hard ball diamond F.
- In conjunction with this re-naming, the Hornets would purchase a plaque commemorating Selkirk's baseball accomplishments and linkage to our community. We hope the Town would help share the cost of this plaque, estimated in the \$5000 range total.
- Link to recent National Post article about Selkirk dated August 14, 2021 - <https://www.pressreader.com/canada/national-post-latest-edition/20210814/281840056735931>

Renaming Diamond A

- We believe another legend in the local baseball community – Stan Rimmington – deserves naming recognition.
- Stan is a member of the Huntsville Sports Hall of Fame as both a player and builder.
- Stan played minor baseball in Huntsville 60 plus years ago, was a key contributor to the creation of the McCulley facility (and quite frankly should have his name on the sign) and ran the local fastball league and associated annual tournament until 2023.
- We respectfully ask that Diamond A be named in Stan's honor.



Locked Diamonds

- Huntsville Parks follows a strict policy of locking its diamonds when not in use by permit holders
- Muskoka Hornets believe that the diamonds should remain open during the day, a policy that exists in most if not all other communities
- Keeping diamonds open encourages public usage and allows for flexibility on weekends when last minute schedules change and our program might need a diamond.
- Town believes permit holders should have groomed diamonds – in our opinion, public users will not disturb a groomed diamond to any material degree and risk of vandalism is remote during the day.

Locked Diamonds

- Alternatively, we requested a lock box be left on site in the event a diamond is needed on a weekend when staff are not working. In these instances, the Hornets would notify town of additional usage and would not need groomed diamonds

Summary of Muskoka Hornets Asks for Council

- The Muskoka Hornets request that Council budget and direct staff to complete the following tasks:
 - 1) Rename McCulley Diamond A (Rimington) and F (Selkirk) and to share in the cost of a plaque honoring Selkirk (approximate total cost of \$5000);
 - 2) Unlock Diamonds During the Day (or alternatively provide a lock box on site in the event of off hours needs).

Conclusion

- We have a lot to celebrate in the Muskoka Hornets program given our player development, growth and the strong base of volunteers. Part of this should include celebrating some of the important historical figures in baseball in our community.
- A successful minor baseball program is important for local kids for their health and well being and important for Town of Huntsville and region of Muskoka.
- Importantly, we must create a sustainable program with stable infrastructure able to withstand ups and downs in popularity and external events.

Contact Information for Muskoka Hornets – www.hornetsbaseball.ca

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