

Bob Hadfield

July 15, 1935 - June 24, 2001

Bob Hadfield spent most of his life in and around Dickson Park, playing or coaching baseball.

The Galt native was a talented player, in both hockey and baseball, in his youth, but it was as a coach that he earned the distinction that would one day see him named Cambridge Sports Contributor in 1998.

Hadfield won the Don and Benita Rope Award during the Tim Turow Athlete of the Year Cambridge Sports Awards that November after a lifetime of service to the city's sports youth. By then, he had been field manager of the Cambridge Bulldogs Jr. Intercounty baseball team.

He had also coached little league baseball and was a coach with the Galt Minor Hockey Association.

Among his many achievements were provincial and Intercounty championships.

Hadfield was part of the executive of the Cambridge Terriers Senior Intercounty ball club, and had coached the midget Intercounty ball, as well as the Junior Terriers, in the 1970s.

Sports had always been a part of Hadfield's life. As a youth in the 1940s he played hockey on the 1947-48 Galt school champion Manchester public School squad, and then, in the 1950s, he played Jr. B hockey for the Hespeler Hawks, an affiliate club for the Junior A Galt Black Hawks, where his teammates included Bobby Hull and Carl Hatt.

In the summers he was on the ball field, playing Junior Intercounty with the Galt Legion team in the 1950s, including the championship squad of 1952.

He was a tireless worker, said Cambridge Sports Hall of Fame inductee Ed Heather.

"Bob was a close friend," said Heather. "We travelled together often. Over the years Bob and Shirley, and me and my wife Anita, would go on trips together. He went about his business quietly, and he was always at the park. He lived right across from the park on James Street, and he'd there early putting lines down and raking the infield."

The two helped take over the club from the Senior Intercounty Terriers in 1981 and eventually turned it over to Cambridge Minor Baseball in 1986.

"He was around so many years with different teams."

Former Bulldog GM Greg Durocher said Hadfield was a real "top-shelfer," whose heart was always in the right place. "He wanted the kids to learn," said Durocher. "He wasn't hung up on winning."

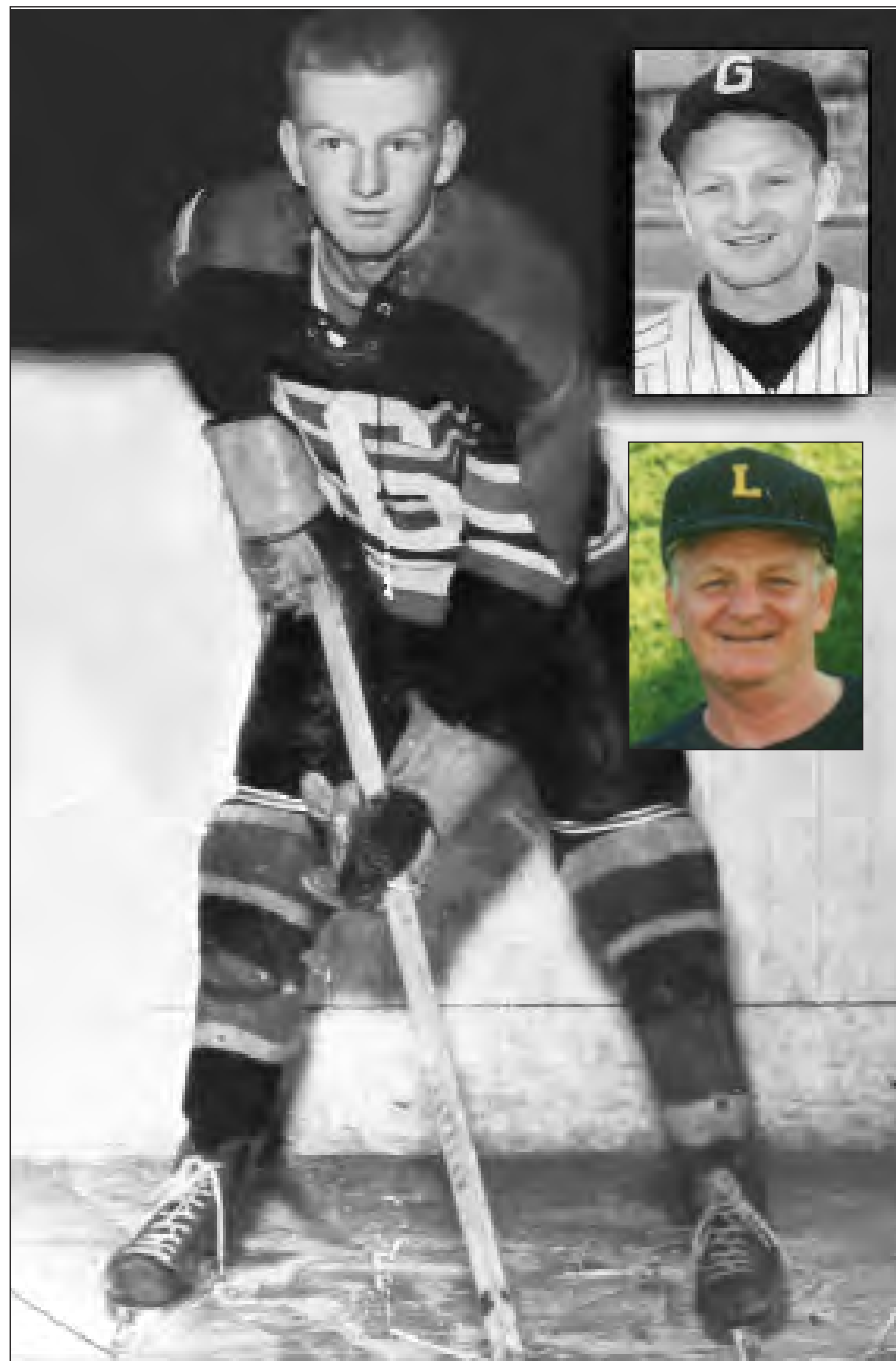
Former sportswriter Dave Menary said Hadfield epitomized what it meant to be a sports contributor. "He could always be counted on to be there," he said. "We almost took it for granted. He was never looking for praise. He was there for the love of the game and to help the kids."

Former Terrier manager Cam Allan, said Hadfield's forte was coaching teens. "I always felt that his greatest happiness came when he was working with teens. He never ran out of patience. Anybody could get frustrated when a team is losing, but Bobby never let it show. He was always positive."

And that, said Allan, was one of his greatest gifts. "He was well-liked by his players." And with good reason. He never preached, and had a willingness to put in incredible amounts of time. "His dedication never ended. Even when his kids were no longer involved, he continued to coach."

Hadfield coached the 1988 Ontario champion bantam Cambridge Cubs, as well as the 1989 Ontario champion midget Cubs, a team that was recognized as the Cambridge sports team of the year. He was also a member of the executive for the 1979 Intercounty Sr. champion Terriers, winners of the 1979 Cambridge team of the year.

When Hadfield died at the relatively young age of 65, he had spent nearly 40 years coaching youth sports in Cambridge. The City of Cambridge, and the Junior Intercounty Baseball League, had lost one of its most ardent volunteers and supporters.



Bob Hadfield, shown above with the Hespeler Black Hawks Jr. B team, and below, with the Cambridge Bulldogs during the 1990s at Dickson Park.



Inducted 2009