

# 1968-69 Galt Hornets



**Back row, left: Pete Panagabko, Corby Adams, Ron Smith, Doug Kelcher, Don Snider, John Beechey, Ron Boomer, Larry Ziliotto. Middle left: Toots 'Doc' Last, Boat Hurley, John Nickerson, Fern Belanger, Billy Hway, Bob Maxwell, Howie Dietrich, Pete Brennan, Erroll McGibbon, Ed Heather, Dr. Gary Ramsay. Front left: Wes Lillie (manager), Vance Millar, Joe Hogan, Gord Renwick (president), Ron Hergott, Rio Caron, Bob Ertel, Bill Wylie (coach).**

On Saturday night, May 3, 1969, as the Galt Hornets completed their pre-game warmup, four men dreamed that they again could be part of an Allan Cup championship team.

Joe Hogan and Boat Hurley were players on the 1961 winners; Doc 'Toots' Last was the trainer and Bill 'Wiggie' Wylie, now the coach, was a centre for the 1961 Galt Terriers Allan Cup winners.

A 7-2 win over the Calgary Stampeders that evening made their dreams a reality.

A blend of veterans and youth, size and speed, the 1968-69 Hornets won 52 of 67 games that season.

They gave the city its third OHA title when they swept a talented Barrie Flyer squad.

The Hornets qualified for the Eastern Canada Allan Cup finals by beating the Gander Flyers 4-1 in games, with the deciding game played in Newfoundland.

Then came what players called "the real Allan Cup final."

Their opponents were the Victoriaville Tigers, representing the Quebec league which had defeated the Ontario champions the previous four years.

Six tough games were required before the Hornets moved on.

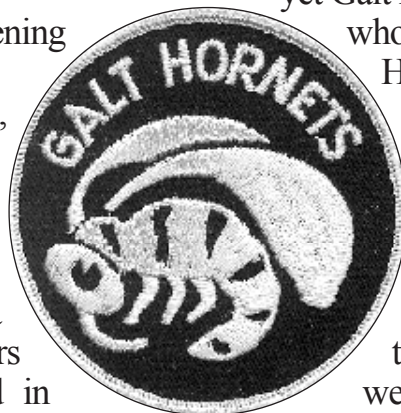
Galt city council had to pass a special by-law before Game 2 to permit the playing of a sports event in the city after 1:30 p.m. on a Sunday.

In the final game, Victoriaville had a decided edge in shots on goal. But Boat Hurley, considered perhaps the finest senior goalie in Canada, was in goal. Victoriaville badly outshot the Hornets yet Galt held a 1-0 lead after the first period. John Nickerson, who played defense beside high-scoring partner Ron Hergott, said to Hurley: "There Boat We've got you the lead. Now hold it!"

Hurley did, winning the game, despite facing a barrage of shots.

The final against Calgary was anti-climactic, going only four games. Befitting a national championship, the city arranged for a civic reception, featuring a parade, chuckwagons and square dancers, to welcome the Calgary team. Not surprisingly, the leading playoff scorer was Hergott, who'd won scoring titles in the OHA and the East Coast League for New Haven. He scored 19 goals in 27 games.

As nearly 3,000 fans celebrated the national championship, none realized that another was not far away.



**Inducted 1998**