

TRY TO BEAT THAT!: THE 1978-79 BRANDON WHEAT KINGS

Chartier overcame injuries to help team

BY PERRY BERGSON

Dave Chartier was one of Brandon's two ultra-talented 17-year-old forwards in the 1978-79 season, a year he simply had a lot of bad luck.

The St. Lazare product broke his wrist and tore a tendon in his knee, playing in 48 games, usually in the team's bottom six. Still, Chartier was able to contribute 14 goals in 48 games while finding a way to annoy opponents.

He blossomed into a WHL superstar in the next two seasons, scoring 39 and then 64 goals in the following pair of seasons with Brandon.

The Winnipeg Jets drafted him in the 10th round, 191st overall in 1980, and he played one game with the NHL club during the 1980-81 season, but a knee injury ultimately derailed his pro career after four seasons.

He worked in a potash mine in Saskatchewan for decades and lives in Binscarth.

STEPHEN PATRICK: "Dave had a ton of talent, which I don't think he knew when he was there for the first year, but his stats will show you otherwise."



Dave Chartier, who was one of two 17-year-old rookies the Wheat Kings had up front, struggled with injuries but still managed to score 14 goals in 48 games. (Brandon Sun file photo)

He was a s— disturber on the ice but wouldn't really fight until a little bit later. When he did, he learned how to fight really good and really quick. He had the best toe drag. He had a real wide-legged skating style but was real talented and a tough kid."

LAURIE BOSCHMAN: "Dave was very animated and could skate like the wind and had a pretty good shot."

BRIAN PROPP: "(Dave Chartier) worked out hard and had a

couple of injuries here and there but he was fast and he knew his role. I loved him for that. He gave an effort every game."

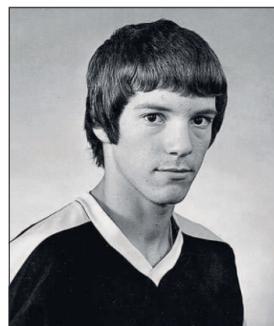
GREGG DRINNAN (Brandon Sun): "Dave had a funny skating style. Lots of times it was like he was running on his blades. If there was a pest on that team, it was him. He was the guy who was whacking the other guy on the back of the legs, not on the front of the legs, and giving him a little dig. He had injuries a lot,

and I think it was because of his helter-skelter way of play. He wasn't going to hold up for anybody's money. Sometimes he ran around likely a little bit out of control and likely delivered some hits where he got the worst of it because he was running at somebody and wasn't in proper position but he was the energizer bunny that every team needs. Quick to smile, quick to laugh, he could score."

TIM LOCKRIDGE: "Charts was a great hockey player ... He was the nicest guy in the world, and a guy I played against a couple of years after that, and we would go out and talk. He was just happy to be there and along for the ride."

RICK KNICKLE: "You always have an agitator but Charts was more than that. He was another good teammate, a French guy from St. Lazare who fit right in because he backed up a lot of stuff. You earn your respect. I played with Charts too with the Travellers when he was a 16-year-old ... He was a hard-nosed guy, a good guy, another guy who wanted to be a good teammate and fit in."

MIKE PEROVICH: "Dave got



Dave Chartier

called up the year before and (in the dressing room) he was banging and saying 'Come on, let's go!' and I remember Billy (Derlago) looked at him, 'Hey, cut that s— off.' We all started laughing ... He was a good kid. He was a good skater and a good player."

DAVE STEWART: "Charts kind of kept to himself. He liked to chirp. He wasn't a drinker, which was very unusual back then for junior hockey players. He never did much partying with us. He had a lot of talent. He was a good skater."

DON GILLEN: "(Dave) was a

gritty gamer. When he was at his best, he was irritating the other team. He was talented, a great skater, scored big goals, worked hard, was a team player."

KELLY MCCRIMMON: "Dave turned into a great player. He was 17 on that team and we didn't have many 17-year-olds. He could play anyway you wanted. He was really talented and a great skater. Once he got to junior hockey, he became a physical, hard-to-play-against player who could fight. He wore his heart on his sleeve every night and was a fan favourite. He was a passionate, talented player."

WES COULSON: "Dave was good, he was quick. I didn't hang around with him too much because I think he was going to school at that time, so the only time you would see him was at the rink ... He was feisty. I can remember in Montreal we went out for dinner and we took him because he could speak French so we knew we would get the right food ... He got banged up a few times because there was nothing he wouldn't try to run over or go through."

» pbergson@brandonsun.com
» Twitter: @PerryBergson

Kempthorne joined Brandon's 20-goal club

BY PERRY BERGSON

Brad Kempthorne split the 1977-78 season between the Brandon Wheat Kings and their farm club, the Manitoba Junior Hockey League's Brandon Travellers.

He was called up for the 1978 WHL playoffs, contributing six points in eight games, and graduated to the big club in time for the 1978-79 season.

The lanky 18-year-old from Boissevain provided an injection of skill and scoring ability in the bottom six, contributing 22 goals and 31 assists in 56 games. He was selected by the Atlanta Flames in the fifth round, 96th overall, in the 1979 draft.

Kempthorne, who didn't respond to repeated requests to be part of this series, returned for the 1979-80 season, and was traded with Brant Kiessig to the Medicine Hat Tigers. After graduating from the WHL, he embarked on a six-year professional career.

He now owns and operates Hammer's Bar & Restaurant in Bartonville, Ill.

LAURIE BOSCHMAN: "Brad was a right-handed shot, tall, lanky, good sense of humour."

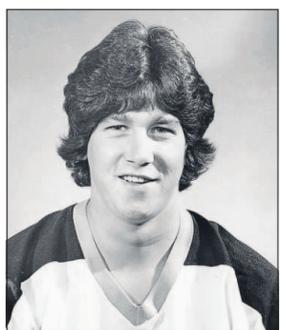
RICK KNICKLE: "He was a talented player. Me and Kemper got along really well. He's just a really good guy, fun-loving and free spirited."

STEPHEN PATRICK: "Kemper had the mitts too. He was built differently than Donny (Gillen), a tall guy but not as thick, but he had really good hands ... Kemper was a good hockey player. He had a lot of talent."

GREGG DRINNAN (Brandon Sun): "Brad might have been the biggest guy on the team. He wasn't that thin, he had some meat on his bones. He was third-line centre and could play up and down the roster, kill penalties, get you 20 goals. I remember how heartbroken he was when he got traded (during the 1979-80 season) ... He really came on in '78-79. He started out



Talented Boissevain product Brad Kempthorne was one of nine 20-goal scorers for the Wheat Kings, notching 22 goals and 31 assists in 56 games. (Brandon Sun file photo)



Brad Kempthorne

like he was feeling his way but after the Christmas break, a lot of the guys, especially the younger guys, realized that the first part of the season wasn't a mirage and they weren't going anywhere. They were going to be there until the end and got comfortable and played like it, and he was one of them."

TIM LOCKRIDGE: "Kemper was a guy with a ton of talent and he didn't overexert himself unless he absolutely had to. He was a nice, easy-going guy."

DAVE CHARTIER: "Kemper was lanky, a big kid too. He was older than me. There was sort of a divide between us country

guys and the city guys ... He was a good player."

MIKE PEROVICH: "I played with Kemper in pro. He was a good guy. He was drafted by Atlanta so I played with him in my last year in Denver. He was a funny guy. He was quiet and worked hard."

WES COULSON: "(Brad) was a big kid and good skater. I'm not sure who he played with but there were a lot of guys on other Western Hockey League teams who didn't score that many goals. He had good talent and could skate well. He was a good teammate."

DAVE STEWART: "Kemper kind of kept to himself. I think a lot of guys who didn't play on the '77-78 team, when they came in, everybody seemed to have their own place. This is your place and this is what your job is. Kemper was a little younger than us too."

DON GILLEN: "(Brad) was very talented. The guy probably could have been on the PGA or a Major League ball player. Wherever he grew up, he would have thrived in the sport of the community."

» pbergson@brandonsun.com
» Twitter: @PerryBergson

Roberts was Brandon's forgotten man

BY PERRY BERGSON

If there's a mystery man on the 1978-79 Brandon Wheat Kings, it's Larry Roberts.

The Winnipegger came into the Western Hockey League as a top prospect after scoring more than 70 goals in his final season at the under-18 level, and contributed 20 goals and 33 assists in 70 games with the Calgary Wranglers during the 1977-78 season.

In an obscure bit of Wheat Kings trivia, he was the only player acquired by the team that season who joined them full time.

Brandon picked Roberts up on Oct. 18, 1978 from the Billings Bighorns, who had acquired him in the summer as part of a three-team deal with the Calgary Wranglers. Brandon traded the rights to 17-year-old Regina product Darren Babyck to the Pats, with Regina shipping 18-year-old John Eger to Billings.

Roberts became a depth player on Brandon's championship team with 18 points in 55 games, and was traded to the Seattle Breakers the next season for 17-year-old winger John Strait, on Nov. 19, 1979.

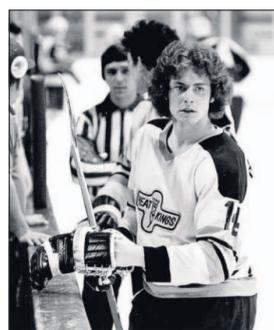
After playing 26 games with the Breakers, he disappears off online hockey databases for good.

Roberts didn't stay in touch with anyone from the championship team, and four decades later, some of his former Brandon teammates don't remember him well.

RICK KNICKLE: "He looked like a beer-league guy but he had hands. He could do things and play. He played 55 games. He was one of those utility guys that you have to have in junior. John McPhee played 25 games and we called some guys up from the Travellers ... Larry was your typical fourth-liner except he didn't fight. He had 26 penalty minutes, which is a surprise, because everyone else had a lot ... He could shoot a pretty good puck. I'm surprised he didn't score more but he didn't play enough."



Larry Roberts was the only player the Brandon Wheat Kings traded for who stuck with the club in the 1978-79 season. (Brandon Sun file photo)



Larry Roberts was a highly touted player as he came up through minor hockey in Winnipeg, and he scored 20 goals as a Western Hockey League rookie with the Calgary Wranglers. (Brandon Sun file photo)

DON GILLEN: "Larry Roberts was a good guy. He was quite a talent before he came to Brandon and he wasn't in very good shape. He was one of those guys who was always rounding into shape. He was a smart hockey player, but just because of the type of team we had, he didn't end up getting a lot of opportunities."

GREGG DRINNAN (Brandon Sun): "Larry Roberts sometimes got grief for not playing hard, but it wasn't that he was not playing hard, it was just the way he looked. I remember people talking when I was a kid about Gordie Howe — not to compare Larry Roberts to Gordie Howe —

but Gordie Howe didn't always look like he was going 100 per cent but he was certainly working hard."

STEPHEN PATRICK: "(Larry) had a lot of talent in minor hockey. The two best kids at that age group in Winnipeg at 15 were Dave McDonald and Larry Roberts. Larry could score and he had great hands but I don't think his skating improved from 15 to 18."

TIM LOCKRIDGE: "Larry was a pudgy little guy. He came from Winnipeg and he didn't play in the third period a lot. He was a nice, easy-going guy."

WES COULSON: "(Larry) was kind of a role player."

KELLY MCCRIMMON: "I don't know where Larry was from and I don't know where he went after. He was on the team all year and didn't play very much."

DAVE STEWART: "I think (Larry) was another guy who kept to himself."

DAVE CHARTIER: "Larry was another good guy. He had raw talent. I got along with him fairly well."

GREGG DRINNAN: "Because of his style, (Larry) was one of those players that afterwards, you were always asking yourself 'Boy, there's got to be more there to give.' I don't think he was as driven as some of them, and he just was who he was. What you saw was what you got."

» pbergson@brandonsun.com
» Twitter: @PerryBergson

ON THE ICE

BRANDON 6, EDMONTON 4

Game 69, March 18, 1979

Recap: Ray Allison scored his 59th and 60th goals of the season as the Wheat Kings passed the 120-point mark, and Brian Propp's goal and three assists pushed him to 502 in his three-year WHL career. Allison is close behind with 469 career points, trailing only Propp and Ron Chipperfield on the all-time list. Brandon played without the McCrimmon brothers, with Brad nursing a bruised shoulder and Kelly rehabbing an ankle injury.

BWK goals: Allison (2), Patrick, Propp, Chartier, Stewart.

BWK goalie: Olson.

Shots on net: 31-29 BWK.

Attendance: 964, in Edmonton.

Record: 56-4-9.

Dunc McCallum: "We did a lot of hitting in the second and third periods. And that is really encouraging. Propp did a whole lot of hitting, and so did Laurie Boschman and Ray Allison. Brant Kiessig, Dave Chartier and

Don Gillen did a good job for us, too."

BRANDON 6, EDMONTON 5

Game 70, March 19, 1979

Recap: Laurie Boschman's hat trick allowed him to hit the 60-goal plateau and Don Gillen added his 20th and 21st goals of the season. Brandon tied another record with three 60-goal scorers — the others are Brian Propp and Ray Allison — equalling the 1975-76 Medicine Hat Tigers and 1977-78 Wheat Kings. Brandon had to score twice in the third period for the victory, with the winner coming off the stick of Don Dietrich with 94 seconds remaining. Brandon goalie Scott Olson went after an Edmonton skater after the final buzzer, launching a bench-clearing brawl and earning a one-game suspension.

BWK goals: Boschman (3), Gillen (2) Dietrich.

BWK goalie: Olson.

Shots on net: 35-34 BWK.

Attendance: 884, in Edmonton.

Record: 57-4-9.

Dunc McCallum: "(Scott) Olson made some big stops and he didn't get a whole lot of help in the first half of the game. The defence was really shaky at the start. (Don) Dietrich appeared nervous at the start, maybe because of the extra pressure due to more ice time, but he really played well in the second half. And Wes Coulson is playing the left side and finds it a bit strange at times. But, he, too, came on and played well."

SASKATOON 6 BRANDON 4

Game 71, March 21, 1979

Recap: Brandon led 4-3 after 40 minutes but Saskatoon scored three times in the third period to hand the Wheat Kings their second loss of the season on home ice. The Blades are now 2-1-0 in the last three meetings between the clubs, who will both be part of the Eastern Division round-robin. A wild bench-clearing brawl in the third period after Brian Propp was high stucked in the face proved costly when Brad Kempthorne later

was given a five-game suspension for being the first player off the bench, and Don Gillen also drew a two-game sentence. Brandon police officers intervened and sent the teams to their dressing rooms with two minutes 38 seconds remaining or it could have been worse.

BWK goals: Boschman (2), Patrick, Chartier.

BWK goalie: Knickle.

Shots on net: 49-41 Sas.

Attendance: 2,692, in Brandon.

Record: 57-5-9.

Dunc McCallum: "We can't take bad penalties against them. We had them 4-2 and two bad penalties let them right back in."

BRANDON 9, REGINA 3

Game 72, March 23, 1979

Recap: Brandon's big guns certainly put on a show in the season finale, combining for 16 points in the blow-out. Laurie Boschman scored four goals and added two assists, Brian Propp had three goals and three as-

ists, and Ray Allison contributed four helpers. Propp's 13th hat trick of the season tied the record set by former teammate Bill Derlago. Tim Lockridge's goal was his career-high 10th. Overall, the Wheat Kings broke nine team records and tied another, and Propp became the career leader in assists and points. Six other individual records were broken and one tied. Between periods, Scott Olson was named the team's rookie of the year, Dave Stewart was the top Manitoba-born player and Brant Kiessig was named top graduate from the Brandon Travellers.

BWK goals: Boschman (4), Propp (3), Kiessig, Lockridge.

BWK goalie: Olson.

Shots on net: 62-49 BWK.

Attendance: 3,119, in Brandon.

Record: 58-5-9 (125 points).

Brian Propp: (on a near miss) "I thought the second one was in. I even had my arms halfway up in the air. I was sure it was in. I was glad I got the third one because that tied the record."