

Female Puckster Reflects on Decade of Playing Anna Sadler encourages other girls to try game

By Trudy Kelly Forsythe

SUSSEX – When Anna Sadler was four years old, she looked at her father and said, “I want to play hockey.” The pair was sitting in the Sussex arena where Sadler’s two brothers played.

“He took me and signed me up,” said the now 14-year-old Sadler, who became the first girl to join the Sussex Minor Hockey League a decade ago. Sadler’s father, Jack, said there was one other girl who signed up the same year, but she didn’t complete the season nor play hockey afterwards.

Exposure to the sport at an early age certainly attributed to Sadler’s interest in the game.

“I had been going to the rink as long as I could remember,” she said. “I grew up around it and I had a knack for it.”

There was naturally an adjustment period for the boys when Sadler took to the ice with them.

“It took some getting used to,” she said. “A lot of them were not used to playing with girls. At first

they wouldn’t pass much or include me sometimes, but once they got used to me being there, it was fine.”

Sadler said it was the parents who really had the hardest time with it, however.

“As soon as I was on the ice I didn’t care what anyone else thought.”

Anna Sadler

“A lot of parents didn’t think I should be playing on the same team as the boys,” said Sadler. She didn’t let that bother her though. “As soon as I was on the ice I didn’t care what anyone else thought.”

These days Sadler plays left wing for the Sussex Regional High School team (Sonics) and she skates on the midget girls regional team which consists of players from various high schools around southern N.B.

Her ultimate aspiration for the game is to one day play on Canada’s female hockey team in the Olympics.

“That’s kind of my dream,” she said.

Sadler encourages other girls to get out and try the game. That’s certainly easier to do these days since girls can join Sussex Minor Hockey along with the boys as early as five years old. For those who just want to play with girls there’s the Sussex Female Hockey Club for girls between seven and 17. High School girls can try out for the Sussex Sonics as well as for the midget regional team.

“It’s a lot of fun and a great way to meet people,” said Sadler, who offers the following advice for girls who want to play hockey, “Don’t let anything stop you from doing what you want to do; I certainly didn’t.”

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