

THE TRI-CITY NEWS

Wil Bill's legend lives on

By Bruce Walkinshaw – Tri-City News - June 27, 2008

Have you ever been struck in the side of the head with a small, round object so hard that your eardrum burst?

If so, what did you do after it happened?

When it happened to Canadian Lacrosse hall of famer Bill Bradley, after being nailed in the head by a wild shot from Kenny Winzoski during an Coquitlam Adanacs game back in 1968, Bradley simply took a couple of shifts off before returning to the floor to finish the game.

For many in the Western Lacrosse Association world who watched, play with or had to play against Adanacs defensive great Bill Bradley the story is good representation of the manner in which Bradley played the game.

Tomorrow night the Coquitlam Adanacs will honour Bradley when they retire his #7 jersey at the Coquitlam Sports Centre during the first intermission of their game against the New Westminster Salmonbellies starting at 7:45 p.m.

"It's a great honour and I pretty proud that i will be up there with some of my good friends and former teammates," said Bradley.

"I had a good career and really enjoyed all the players I played with and all the highs and lows of playing the game so this is a really exciting thing for me. I am looking forward to it."

Bradley began his time with the Adanacs in their inaugural year in 1965 after breaking into senior Lacrosse with Norburn and playing two season with the Victoria Shamrocks.

Known as one of the great leaders in Adanacs history, Bradley served as the team's captain before going to Windsor to play under and from lacrosse mentor Jim Bishop. Bradley returned to Coquitlam in 1973 as a player-coach.

Regarded primarily for his defensive play, which often saw him put up against the oppositions best players, Bradley had some success offensively as well. Bradley scored 376 goals with 561 assists in his lacrosse career for a total of 937 points in 498 games and is the Adanacs' 7th all time leading scorer with 641 points.



Former Coquitlam Adanacs tough guy Bill Bradley will be retiring his lacrosse jersey over the weekend at the Coquitlam Sports Centre.
Colleen Flanagan/The Tri-City News

"Bill was defiantly know as an all round player because he could shut you down and score on you," said current New Minister Salmonbellies coach and former Bradley competitor Bob Salt.

"And Bill wasn't the type of guy who was a naturally gifted scorer.... but what you love about him was that because he worked so hard and gave every ounce of energy, every single game, he made himself a great scorer. He just wouldn't let up."

One of Salt's favourite memories came when the two participated in an old-timers tournament in Prince George.

"Our team had older guys on it and we were up against a lot of younger guys so most of us took it easy, not Bill," recalled Salt who was inducted into the Canadian Lacrosse Hall of Fame the same night as Bradley.

"He was so sore after those games he couldn't move. He just sat there in the lounge in total pain. But that's Bill Bradley, even in the old-timers game, he couldn't cut it back."

Bradley's all out dedication to Lacrosse is a common theme when people talk about him.

Adanacs general manager Les Wingrove used to watch Bradley play as an Adanac.

"He was such a hard-nosed player," said Wingrove. "Guys really respected him. He was a leader on and off the floor."

According to Wingrove, Bradley's leadership and all encompassing dedication to the game continued on as a coach as well.

"I remember when he was spending a lot of time on his coaching but also working as a plumber and I said, 'Bill, I guess you're a really busy guy, how are you going to keep up with so many things?'" said Wingrove chuckling.

"He said, 'Oh don't worry, if it gets to busy I'll just quit my job.' He's just that dedicated to the game."

Bradley said that sometimes when he sleeps he dreams that he is still playing Lacrosse.

"I love it," he said. "Lacrosse is a game where you got to give it and take it. It's a hard game. But it's a lot like life that way."

"No doubt about it, I am proud to have played it."