

▼ From B1 Coach keeps goals realistic

whether the Grays can keep on the winning path, but Kazakoff says his focus isn't on players who are gone, but on the ones still around to play and learn.

"This year I don't know if we'll be at that mark we set last year but I do expect us to be in the middle of the pack somewhere," says Kazakoff. "We're thankful we had them (Lupul, Stoner, Terry Bonnar, James Van Damme and Cav Whitley) but at the same time they are a part of our history now. You've got to look at who you have this season."

What the Grays have this season are a group of rookies like Norn, graduated from the ranks of senior Babe Ruth, including the pitching talent Kazakoff hopes will easily replace Lupul and Stoner, including Connor Whitley and Corey Bonnar, younger brothers to graduated Grays infielders Cavanaugh Whitley and Terry Bonnar.

With the bulk of the Grays veteran lineup still at college or university, the Sunday try-out saw a dozen mostly new faces at Monty Gabriel Park. Every one of them has seen the Grays play before. They know about the major league drafts, the college scholarships and the league pennant. But Kazakoff does his best to defuse that pressure by shifting its focus.

"The pressure isn't on us it's on the other guys. We've improved steadily each year to the top. They've got to beat us," he says. "Now that we've gotten here they'll expect us to play well and I expect us to play well."

Sooks compete in Coquitlam

The Northern Sooks are in Coquitlam this weekend, battling for the provincial title.

The juvenile women's club volleyball team begins competition at 9 a.m. Saturday against the Kamloops Demons Black, then progress into the round-robin competition, culminating with finals Sunday afternoon.

Oldtimers show how to win with class

It was fair play that carried the day for a Prince George team at the annual Old Timer's Easter Hockey Tournament.

The Rusty Nuts, a tournament team formed of players pulled from various leagues and teams throughout PG, tied for points with a Smithers squad in the Play-It-Again-Sports Over-50 division of the Easter tourney, but won by virtue of having the least penalty minutes, despite having lost to Smithers 4-2 in the tournament.

"We were leading 4-2 with five minutes left to go and they beat us 5-4," says Rusty Nuts winger Orv Claffey. "We stopped skating and they took it to us."

It was the first time the 35 and older Old-timer's tournament has had an Over-50 division, and the 67-year-old Claffey says the Rusty Nuts welcomed the opportunity to play against teams closer to their own age.

"The younger the age



PG's Bob Parolin of YRB falls fighting for the puck against Kitimat in the 'D' division. JOHN MCKENZIE/FREE PRESS

group the faster the game of course. You see a lot of smart plays in the older

division but not the same speed," he says. "At my age it's a lot easier to play guys

17 years younger than you than 32."

The Rusty Nuts play

year-round at tournaments throughout North America. Their next engagement in Las Vegas in July at what was formerly the Charles Schultz Old-timer's Tournament. They also use the tournaments as chances to renew old friendships. Some of the players from Quesnel and Vanderhoof, says Claffey, were the same ones he faced on the ice decades ago as a member of the Prince George Mohawks senior men's team.

"It's for the exercise and for the camaraderie with the other players," he says.

Prince George teams claimed five of the eight divisions at the second-largest old-timer's tournament in the province. Sergeant's was first in the Sergeant's division, Foresight Survey and Design topped the Esther's Inn and Gym division, the Mohawk Old-timer's took the KPMG division and the Artesians beat out the competition for the LAD Construction division.

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