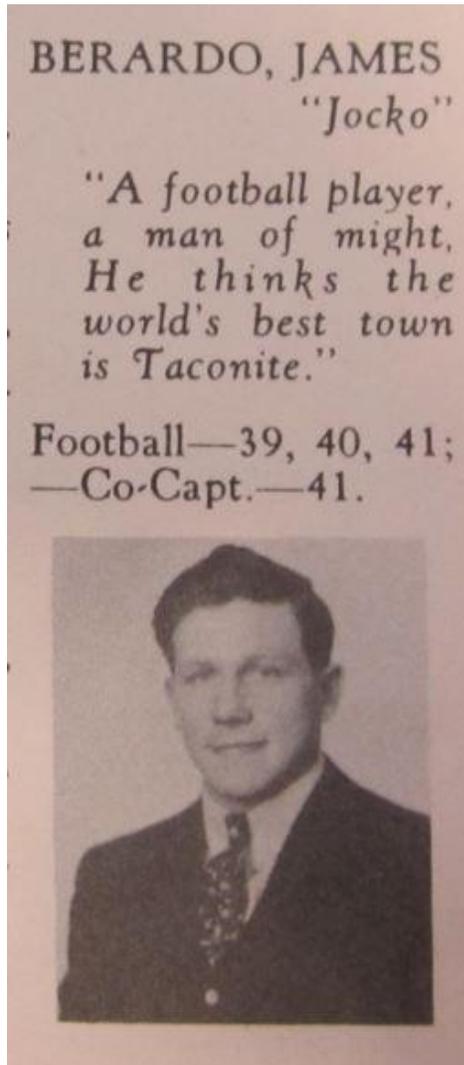


James “Chick” Berardo 1923 – 1969



JAMES BERARDO was memorialized when the West Range Arena was re-dedicated on December 30, 1977, and named Hodgins-Berardo Arena. Berardo was a hockey star from Taconite, and manager of West Range Arena from 1963 until his death.

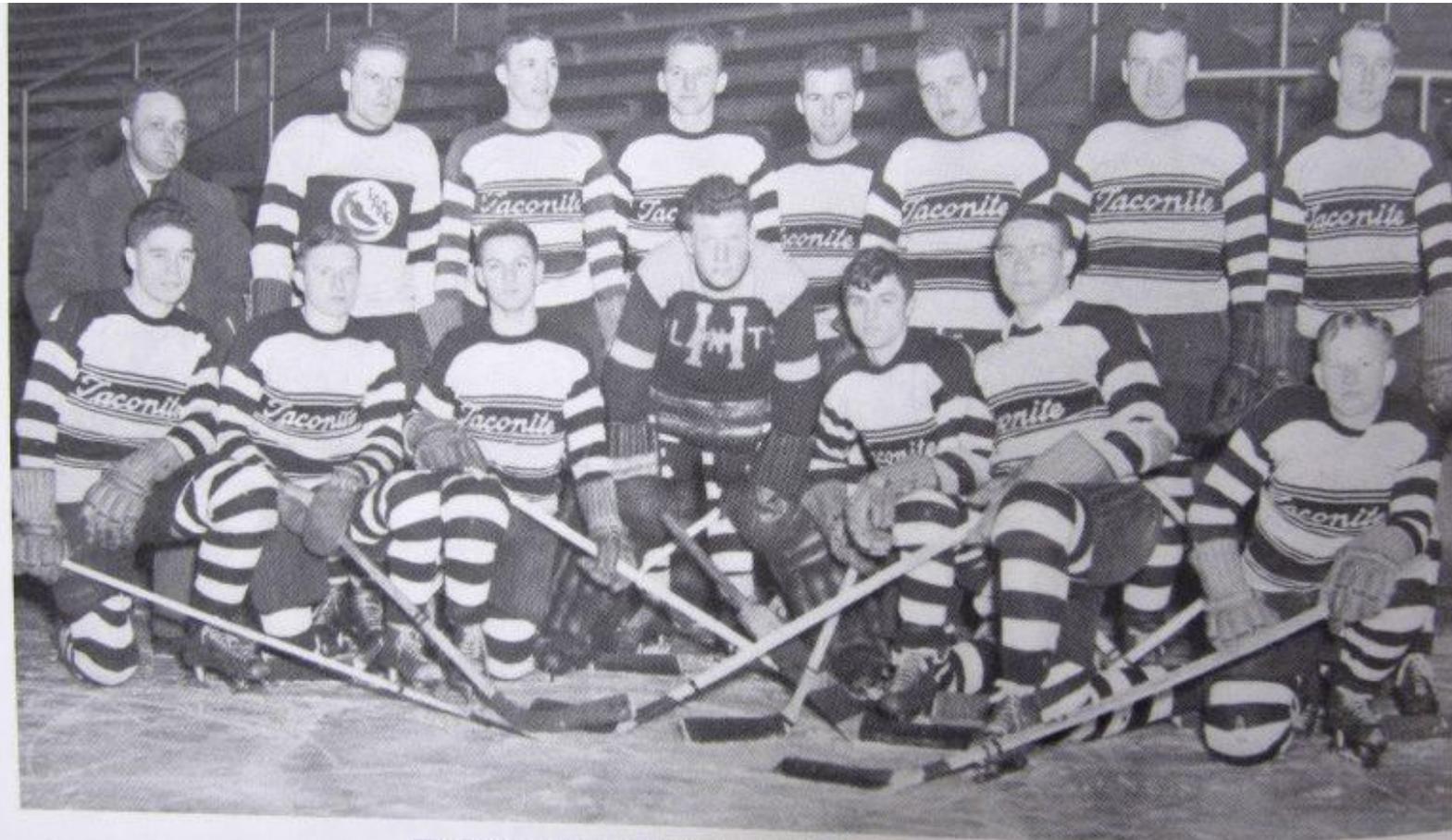
When Berardo was young, hockey teams were informal and not part of school sports programs. High school hockey did not start until the mid-fifties.

In the 1942 Greenway high school yearbook, Berardo's photo heading listed him for football. [yearbook at Coleraine Public Library]

Of course he played hockey coming from Taconite, the town that calls itself the “Home of Hockey Champions”.

Amateur adult, or senior, hockey teams organized into municipal hockey leagues, and our area into an Arrowhead Hockey Association, and then onto a Minnesota state hockey association for adult teams.

Berardo played locally with the Taconite Hornets, Hibbing Flyers and Hibbing Saints, and the Duluth Steelers. [*Taconite Diamond Jubilee, Taconite, Minnesota, 1907-1982*; available at Itasca Historical Society, Grand Rapids, MN]



The Taconite Hockey Team about 1940-41. Front row, left to right, Ken Troumbly, Ken Camilli, Bucko Troumbly, Chick Berardo, Shorty Troumbly, Bernard Kolar, Jim Dowd. Second row: Vince Saliture, [Coach] Ron Haynes, Ken Lawson, Jack Beasley, Bud Ryser, Ed Hoey, Bob Wetherell, Rinkey Gustafson.

Berardo was a goalie and is in the photo center with the large H.
Please send in a note if you know the insignia on his uniform; it looks like L, H with an N in the middle, and T.

Berardo's progression into a hockey career was interrupted by World War II, as were the national hockey associations. He enlisted in the USA Army on May 7, 1943 and was part of the **China Burma India Theater**. He was discharged on March 26, 1946.

[\[https://www-fold3-com.ezproxy.hclib.org/page/625571344_james_berardo%20%20\(1923\)/details/\]](https://www-fold3-com.ezproxy.hclib.org/page/625571344_james_berardo%20%20(1923)/details/)

After the war, Berardo was a player when the national and international hockey associations were reorganizing and trying to strengthen the sport. He played with the Eagle River Falcons in Wisconsin, a semi-pro team in a league that covered Wisconsin and Michigan. The website, **Wisconsin Hockey History**, states:

“During the thirties and up until World War II Eagle River and Wausau consistently iced the strongest amateur teams in the state. Eagle River, a small community in northern Wisconsin and possessing at that time the only enclosed rink in the state, captured six consecutive state championships. The teams under the tutelage of Connie Pleban of Eveleth, Minnesota and composed chiefly of players from the Iron Range region of Minnesota, were probably the strongest amateur sextets to represent the state with the possible exception of the 1923 Milwaukee team of the USAHA and the strong Marquette University teams of the twenties.”

What is the year of this photo? It was signed to his mother from James, and is displayed at the arena. Was it before or after the war?



1 Pleban's obituary stated he coached 1935 – 1942; did Berardo play with the team during his time ?

[\[http://www.virginiamn.com/obituaries/j-e-connie-pleban/article_ccfac088-e76c-5751-a581-69e16d6947b5.html\]](http://www.virginiamn.com/obituaries/j-e-connie-pleban/article_ccfac088-e76c-5751-a581-69e16d6947b5.html)

According to website, **Famous Why?**, Berardo is famous for his career in the National Hockey League. It states that he started his professional career in 1948 as a hockey player with the Boston Olympics team; the “Pics”. He was age 25, height 5’7”, weight 175 lbs, and his position was goalie.

He also played on teams in Sault Ste. Marie in Michigan, probably part of the International Hockey League, and another step to professional hockey.

Coleraine Will Host State Hockey Tourney

Six of the top amateur hockey teams in Minnesota will compete for state honors in the 1964 Minnesota Senior "A" hockey tournament scheduled this weekend at the West Range arena in Coleraine.

All teams have gained entry to the state tournament by final league standings or playoffs in their respective leagues.

If there is a favorite team it would have to be the Stephens Buick from St. Louis Park who are league champions in the tough North Central league. This team has such outstanding players as Ken Yackel, a member of the 1952 Olympic team — All-American while at the University of Minnesota — formerly with the Boston Bruins and player-coach of the Minneapolis Millers.

Also on the roster are such top notch players as Larry Johnson — All-State and University of Minnesota captain 1959; Dave and Roger Rovik — both All-State and University of Minnesota stars; Jim Westby — All-State, University of Minnesota, U. S. Nationals, and 1964 Olympic player; Dale and Don Rasmusson, University of Minnesota; and Tom Roe — All Eastern in 1962 with 24 "hat tricks" in college.

The Taconite Hornets will have Jim (Pecky) Guyer, 1964 Arrowhead scoring

champion; Jim Troumbly, Olympic team; John Byrmark, UMD and U. S. National team; an outstanding goalie in Joe Camilli; three more from that famous hockey family — Don, Ron and Ken Troumbly; and other favorite Taconite players who have been skating together for many years.

The tournament will also feature such outstanding players as Bill McKenzie and Pete Lintula — University of Minnesota skaters — playing for Eveleth. The Thief River Falls Thieves, Northwestern League champions, have several All-State players sparked by Jerry Westby, a University of Minnesota star from 1959-62 and a former player with the U. S. Nationals.

The Carlson-LaVine team, representing Minneapolis, has seven All-State high school players on their roster including Tom Morse from International Falls who formerly captained the University of Minnesota team and was a member of the U. S. Nationals, and, Bart Larson on the National Championship North Dakota team in 1962.

Tournament directors are Don Clark, MAHA secretary, and C. R. Lothrop, MAHA director. Tournament manager is Cotta Guyer with Jim Berardo, arena manager. The West Range Athletic Association, Inc., is the sponsoring organization.

Berardo attended Hockey Training Camp in Detroit, Michigan, and may have played with the Detroit Red Wings. Just being invited to the camp was a great opportunity as there were only six teams in the National Hockey League during his time.

Berardo, or Chick as he came to be called, married Laurie Schlader in the spring of 1963. The arena was new, built in 1961, and an asset of the Greenway School District, #316. He was hired as arena manager.

In 1964, Chick was instrumental in the success of the Minnesota Senior "A" Hockey Tournament held the last weekend in February.

Article from *Grand Rapids Herald-Review* courtesy of Itasca Historical Society.

GRHR 27 FEB 1964

Unfortunately, the community lost Chick to an early death, at age 46, on December 12, 1969. He was buried at Lakeview Cemetery, Coleraine, Minnesota.

Former Hockey Star Dies

James L. Berardo, 46, of Taconite, former professional hockey player and long associated with the Taconite Hornets, died Friday, Dec. 12, at his home.

Funeral services were conducted today (Monday) from St. Joseph's Catholic church at Taconite, with Rev. Frank Brennan officiating and interment in Lakeview cemetery. A lifelong resident of Taconite, Mr. Berardo was manager of the West Range arena and a member of the Knights of Columbus.

Grand Rapids Herald-Review Dec. 15, 1969