South Peace News, Wednesday, April 8, 2020 South Peace News, Wednesday, April 8, 2020

# The debate begins: the best team in NPHL history is . . .

**Peace River Stampeders** 

1962-63 to 1968-69

It is a debate that has no answer.

Which team can lay claim to being the best in North Peace Hockey League history? It is near impossible to compare teams from different eras so the best we can do is rely on statistics and - of course – good old-fashioned opinion.

Based on a single season, there is no debate who was the best team: the 2004-05 Horse Lake Thunder. It was a team comand Gino Odjick and a load of other ex-junior stars bound and determined to win the Allan Cup. which they lost in the final game.

The Thunder was 25-0-1 in the regular made. season and outscored the opposition 240-85. In the playoffs, the Thunder was 11-0 and outscored their opponents 96-40. They swept Fort St. John in three, Spirit River in four and High Prairie in four. Overall, their record was 36-0-1-0 and they outscored their opponents by a sizzling 336-125.

For the record, the Thunder's only blemish on their near-perfect season was a 5-5 at Grande Prairie on Jan. 6, 2005.

The true mark of great teams is susexcellence. tained three Therefore, teams qualified for our debate, having won at least four straight ti-

You may argue the league was better in the so-called "Olden Days" but the fact is other season so they coach of many Major each of these teams beat the other teams placed in front of them. era. Whether it was in the 1960s, 1980s or 2010s it apologies needed.

The Peace River Stampeders seven straight titles from 1962-63 to 1968-69. They lost the next season in the semi-finals to Fairview in a series the Stamps' record. he suggested it didn't that marked arguably Not that they found matter. the NPHL's most fa- themselves needing to "The best team," he Schneider scored in overtime to oust the ice mighty Stamps, who however. rebounded to win the title in 1970-71, so they times the Stamps lost where the playoffs demight well have won a playoff game during cide a champion.

an incredible nine straight.

Our second team is the High Prairie Regals, who won four straight titles from to 1985-86. Their run was ended in when Falher Pirates dispatched the Regals in five games in the semi-final. The Pirates lost the first game 11-5, swept four

The Regals also enlence from 1971-72 to lost only six for a .700 win 1978-79 when they won six titles in eight years. They won two, lost, won two more, lost,

who won five straight titles from 2012-13 to 2016-17. They have not played a game since winning their last title.

Once all the stats are in the playoffs, which digested, it is clear each team can make an argument they were the best.

And, believe it or not, when compared to the team fails miserably in the argument for Peace at least one important River being the best, but statistical category.

#### Peace River Stampeders

Stampeders have the solid argument that their seven straight titles is a league record.

they placed first six the best team? times in seven years

dominance. son."



Editor, South Peace News joyed another run of their run. They won the unprecedented excel- next game 14 times and

percentage but it was

less than High Prairie's

By Chris Clegg

or Spirit River's. Another blemish on and won two more but the Stamps record is never won three they never swept an straight so they are no NPHL final in their included in the debate. seven-year run despite But a case might be their dominance. They also had the worst win The third team is the percentage in the final Spirit River Rangers, among the three teams: .651 to High Prairie's .696 and Spirit River's in-

> The Stamps also never went undefeated was something High Prairie did once and Spirit River did four times in their five-year

Yes, it is odd that so other two teams, each many stats go against they did win seven erything, there is no ar- River did not. gument.

## **High Prairie** Regals

So, what is the argument High Prairie can They can also brag make regarding being

[second place the Zigi Schmid? He was the The Stamps were a won the Supporter's leading .793. sizzling 35-4 in 39 home Shield, which is pretrue champion is its season]. He was emroad in the playoffs, after Seattle lost the there is a blemish on conference final when

mous goal when Ken win on the road very of-said, "is the one that ten due to their home wins the regular sea-

That is not how we played. One argues a 10-2 [.833] and Peace In fact, however, 20 think in North America



bolic of European club football where there is no playoff. The team with the best record is the champion.

Well, the High Prairie Regals had the best win percentage of any of the teams in the regular season from available stats. High Prairie was .793 to Peace River's .756 and Spirit River's .690. Like Peace River, the Regals placed first each year of their four-year run and second the other year, albeit during a four-year run to Peace River's record setting

The Regals also had a higher win percentage in the NPHL finals playoffs than Peace River [.696 to .651], a better record after a loss than Peace River [win percentage of .833 to .737], and went undefeated in straight. If winning is ev- one playoff while Peace

## **Spirit River** Rangers

River's five-year run proved that a team can be built for the playoffs. Not that the Rangers were bad in Ever hear of the late the regular season as they had a 71-30-2-5 record for a win percentwere clearly the domi- League Soccer clubs. In age of .690. But it was nant team during their 2014, he was coach when less than Peace River's Peace River was "only" the Seattle Sounders .756 and High Prairie's 54-20 for a .730 win per-

centage and High Prai-The Rangers also rie "only" 727 playoff games in their sented to the team with placed first only once in \* Spirit River swept seven-year run but a the best regular season their five-year title run. four of five finals during mediocre 19-16 on the record [20 wins, 10 They also placed section their run [Falher twice, road. If the mark of a losses and four ties that ond, fourth place twice Lakeland and fifth place once. Not Grimshawl, High Praiability to win on the broiled in controversy the greatest regular rie swept one and Peace season team. The big-River none. Only gest blemish on their ar-Grande Prairie defeated gument is in 2016-17 dur-Spirit River in the final, twice in 2014-15. ing the last year of their run they had a record of \* Spirit River was 8-1 10-11-01-1 and were out- after a loss [.889 win perscored by 14 goals centage in the playoffs

[113-99] in 22 games while High Prairie was

.500 hockey shouldn't \* Spirit River trailed

even be in the playoffs in a series only once in

team playing less than River was 14-6 [.700].

but that is not how the five years. High Prairie NPHL works and no trailed in five and Peace apology is needed. "Just

straight title. Were they the best team in NPHL history?

win, baby" as Oakland

were dominant like no

other team. Consider

win percentage.

these numbers:

The High Prairie Regals hoist the Campbell Cup in 1986 after winning their fourth

\* Spirit River was an Raiders' coach and astounding 20-2 in the owner Al Davis used to NPHL finals [win percentage of .909] while But, when the lights High Prairie was 16-7 shone brightest in the [.696] and Peace River playoffs the Rangers 28-15 [.651].

## The verdict

\* Spirit River was 52-9 It's Peace River's in 61 games played and seven straight titles vs outscored the opposi-Spirit River's unprecetion 313-164. That is a dented dominance in the playoffs. Each team has blemishes on their record when compared to the other. Forced to make a choice, it is Spirit River. When the lights were brightest, the Rangers dominant.

**High Prairie Regals** 

1982-83 to 1985-86

Editor's note: Team logos not the same when Peace River and High Prairie won their titles.

And, Spirit River never lost after their fifth title. Had they played next season and lost, the argument shifts to Peace River.

Finally, Peace River never went undefeated in the playoffs or swept a final series. It is what dominant teams do.

So there you have it, NPHL fans! Let the debate begin!

## The Best of the Rest

McLennan Red Wings 1955-56 to 1957-58

The first team to win three straight titles. First team to go undefeated in playoffs [7-0 in 1955-56]. \*21-7 in three-year run, outscored opposition 152-103. [Missing one score in 1957 finals win.] 12-3 at home during three-run run.

## **Grimshaw Huskies** 1994-95 to 1996-97

Only Huskies team to win three straight titles. Were 12-3 in finals for .750 win percentage. Were 33-13 in playoffs, .717 win percentage. Were 11-2 in last 13 road playoff games, .846 win percentage. Won last three road games vs Lakeland in 1995-96.



## **Overtime Games**

**Spirit River Rangers** 

2012-13 to 2016-17

Which teams is best in the clutch? When the next goal decides the outcomes? Advantage: Spirit River never lost an overtime game in their five-run run to

Team	GP	W	L	Perc.
Spirit River	4	4	0	100%
Peace River	5	3	2	.600
High Prairie	4	2	2	.500
TOTAL	13	9	4	.769

## **Shutout Games**

Is the true mark of a team its ability to shutout the opposition? It is one of the benchmarks to keep the puck out of your own net. Below is the number of shutouts for each team: a rarity indeed. Advantage: Spirit River due to less games played.

Team	GP	ROAD	HOME	TOTAL
Spirit River	61	2	1	3
Peace River	74	0	3	3
High Prairie	44	0	0	0

## **Record After a Loss**

It is said that one of the true marks of a champion is how they respond after a loss. The chart below shows all three teams have outstanding records after a playoff loss. Advantage: Spirit River.

Team	GP	W	L	Perc.
Spirit River High Prairie Peace River TOTAL	9 12 20 41	8 10 14 32	1 2 6 9	.889 .833 .700 .780

## **Team Record** in NPHL Finals

Tealli	GF	VV	_	reic.
Spirit River	22	20	2	.909
High Prairie	23	16	7	.696
Peace River	43	28	15	.651
TOTAL	88	64	24	.727

## **Regular Season Records**

The European football leagues declare the regular season champion the best team. Not so in North America, where we have playoffs. It can be argued that the standard for excellence is a team's play during the entire regular season. Who was best during their run?

#### **Peace River Stampeders** [not all stats available]

Season	GP	W	L	Т	GF	GA	Pts	POS	
1962-63	_	_	_	-	—-	—-	36	1st	
1963-64	20	17	1	2		—-	36	1st	
1964-65	28	20	3	5	229	112	45	1st	
1965-66	30	_	_	-	_	_	48	1st	
1966-67	20	18	2	0	152	68	36	1st	
1967-68	32	19	11	2	232	161	40	2nd	
1968-69	32	19	11	2	204	130	40	1st	
TOTALS	162	117	34	11	817	471	245		
*1062-63 64	nacon i	not includ	dod: in	1065-66	24 win	e cradit	ad to co	mnrica	tha

1962-63 season not included; in 1965-66, 24 wins credited to comprise the 48 points earned.

## **High Prairie Regals**

1982-83	34	28	6	0	232	135	56	1st			
*1983-84	34	28	5	1	—-		57	1st			
1984-85	36	26	10	0	240	142	52	1st			
1985-86	34	27	7	0	196	121	54	2nd			
TOTALS	138	109	28	1	668	398	219				
*1983-84 season goals for and against not included.											

#### Spirit River Rangers

Season	GP	VV	L	OL	SL	GF	GA	PtS	PU3
2012-13	22	16	5	0	1	150	84	33	4th
2013-14	24	15	8	1	0	156	71	31	5th
2014-15	20	15	3	0	2	132	59	32	2nd
2015-16	20	15	3	1	1	106	74	32	1st
2016-17	22	10	11	0	1	99	113	21	5th
TOTALS	108	71	30	2	5	643	401	149	<del></del>

## **Category Leaders**

Category	PR	HP	SR	Winner
Overall Win Percentage	.756	.793	.690	High Prairie
GF/GA Percentage	.634	.627	.616	Peace River

## **Playoff History**

## **Peace River Stampeders**

Year	SP	GP	W	L	GF	GA	Home	e Away	SERIES TRAILED
*1962-63	2	11	8	3	48	27	4-1	4-2	1
1963-64	2	10	7	3	61	29	5-0	2-3	0
*1964-65	2	9	7	2	54	30	5-0	2-2	0
1965-66	2	12	8	4	67	58	5-2	3-2	1
1966-67	2	9	8	1	55	26	5-0	3-1	0
1967-68	2	11	8	3	66	43	6-0	2-3	2
1968-69	2	12	8	4	70	43	5-1	3-3	2
TOTALS	14	74	54	20	421	256	35-4	19-16	6
Editor's not	e. One	score i	s miss	ina from	n each n	lavoff s	eason		

## **High Prairie Regals**

									TRAILE	D
1982-83	2	12	8	4	62	42	3-3	5-1	2	
1983-84	2	8	8	0	71	34	4-0	4-0	0	
1984-85	2	12	8	4	67	36	5-2	3-2	2	
1985-86	2	12	8	4	72	47	5-1	3-3	1	
TOTALS	8	44	32	12	272	159	17-6	15-6	5	

#### Spirit River Rangers

								_	TRAILED	
2012-13	3	14	12	2	78	33	6-1	6-1	0	
2013-14	3	12	12	0	59	32	6-0	6-0	0	
2014-15	2	12	8	4	55	33	5-1	3-3	1	
2015-16	2	8	8	0	49	16	4-0	4-0	0	
2016-17	3	15	12	3	72	50	6-1	6-2	0	
TOTALS	13	61	52	9	313	164	27-3	25-6	1	

GA Home Away SERIES

## **Category Leaders**

ategory	PR	HP	SR	Winner	
oad Win Percentage	.543	.714	.806	Spirit River	
ome Win Percentage	.897	.739	.900	Spirit River	
verall Win Percentage	.730	.727	.852	Spirit River	
F/GA Percentage	.622	.631	.656	Spirit River	