



Halton Hills Sports Hall of Fame welcomes five new members

Class of 2025

Neil Cotton, Bob Donker, Jan Popiel, Trevor Ritchie, Daryl Veltman

APRIL 29, 2025 – The Halton Hills Sports Museum and Resource Centre is pleased to announce the Halton Hills Sports Hall of Fame class of 2025.

Joining the Hall of Fame this year are Neil Cotton (hockey), Bob Donker (cross-country/track), Jan Popiel (hockey), Trevor Ritchie (harness racing) and Daryl Veltman (lacrosse).

They will be honoured at the induction ceremony Wednesday, June 4 at the John Elliott Theatre in Georgetown. Q107 morning show host Ryan Parker will be the emcee, Woodbine Entertainment CEO Michael Copeland will be the guest speaker and the event will be catered by Brady Davies. Tickets are available for purchase at the [John Elliott Theatre box office](#).

NEIL COTTON

A rugged defenceman, Neil Cotton was the captain of three straight Ontario Intermediate A championship teams with the Georgetown Raiders (1972-74). When the players were told the team was folding after the 1976 season, Cotton stepped up to become team president— while still playing—ensuring the team would continue. The Raiders won their fourth Ontario title in six years and advanced to the Eastern Canadian championship, where they lost to the eventual national champions.

After his playing days, Cotton led the local power skating program, coached minor hockey and led Georgetown District High School, where he was a teacher, to its first-ever Halton boys' hockey championship.

Cotton was the 2012 recipient of the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Award for significant contributions to hockey in Georgetown.

BOB DONKER

Bob Donker showed his potential at Georgetown District High School where he won the 1987 OFSAA junior boys' cross-country title.

Donker earned a scholarship to West Virginia University (WVU), where he became the only runner to win three straight Atlantic 10 Conference cross-country championships. He turned in three top-eight finishes in the 5,000m at the NCAA track and field championships.

He was also the first WVU athlete to earn all-American honours three times in one year and became the school's first winner at the Penn Relays in 100 years.

Donker was the Canadian 3,000m champion in 1995 and represented Canada at the Pan Am Games in Argentina, finishing 13th in the 5,000m.

In 2024, Donker was inducted into the West Virginia University Mountaineers Hall of Fame.

JAN POPIEL

A key player on Georgetown's back-to-back Ontario Minor Hockey Association midget championship teams, Jan Popiel was selected 10th overall in the 1964 NHL Draft by the Chicago Blackhawks.

Despite winning the Eastern Hockey League rookie of the year, Popiel never got his shot with the Blackhawks. But when the World Hockey Association began play in 1972, Popiel was signed by the rival league's Chicago Cougars. He debuted with a 31-goal season and played in the league's first all-star game.

Popiel played 296 games over five WHA seasons, tallying 78 goals and 160 points. He played in two WHA finals, one with the Houston Aeros alongside his brother Poul.

Popiel joins his brother Poul (2013) in the Halton Hills Sports Hall of Fame, the first siblings to be inducted.

TREVOR RITCHIE

A Canadian Horse Racing Hall of Famer, Ritchie established himself as a clutch performer when he drove 30-to-1 shot Quite a Sensation to victory in the North America Cup in 1986.

A Canadian-sired horse had never won the Hambletonian until Ritchie drove Yankee Paco to victory in the first leg of the Trotting Triple Crown in 2000. That same year, he tied a record with three Breeders Crown wins in one night. Not surprisingly, Ritchie was named the Canadian Harness Racing Driver of the Year.

An Acton resident throughout much of his career, Ritchie's 3,710 career victories included many of North America's biggest races. He won the Meadowlands Pace, the Canadian Pacing Derby, had seven career Breeders Crown wins and three Maple Leaf Trot victories.

DARYL VELTMAN

From an Ontario Jr. B MVP award with his hometown Halton Hills Bulldogs, to a Mann Cup (Canadian Sr. A) championship with the Victoria Shamrocks, Daryl Veltman found success at every level.

He won a silver medal with Canada at the 2003 World Under-19 Field Lacrosse Championships. The No. 1 pick in the 2003 Ontario Jr. A draft, Veltman led the league in scoring with 102 points in 2005.

At Hobart College, he was the ECAC rookie of the year and a three-time conference all-star, graduating as the school's all-time leading scorer at the Division I level.

Selected first overall by Boston in the 2008 National Lacrosse League draft, Veltman led the Blaze with 34 goals and was named to the NLL all-rookie team. He had 165 goals and 461 points in 136 games over a nine-year career, playing in two NLL finals.

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The Halton Hills Sports Museum and Resource Centre is a non-profit organization established in 2007. The Halton Hills Sports Museum is committed to preserving the history of sports in our community, honoring excellence, and fostering connections between the generations of individuals who participate in, develop, and contribute to athletics in Halton Hills. Our goal is to uphold the legacy of local athletes and contributors, inspire future generations, and celebrate the distinct sports heritage of Halton Hills.