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# The awards just keep coming for sports equipment pioneer

By MARK HOLMES  
Staff Reporter

There are a lot of youngsters out there who have plenty to smile about, thanks to Mississauga's Arthur Wood.

Wood is has been called a "pioneer" and the "father" of protective equipment. He is the man without whom the mouth guards, helmets and face shields may never have existed in their present form.

Honors have been heaped upon the man, including induction to the Mississauga Sports Hall of Fame, Mississauga Hockey Hall of Fame, being nominated for Mississauga's Citizen of the Year and he's a recipient of Canadian Dental Association's Distinguished Service Award.

Added to the list this month is Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Award of Merit for 1990. Recognizing two decades of work that has led to the development of injury-reducing and even life-saving athletic safety equipment, earned him the award.

Wood's interest in his community (and saving faces) began almost 40 years ago when in 1951 he coached and helped found the Cooksville Hockey Association.

At the same time, Wood was also establishing a thriving dental practice specializing in treatment of children. His career put him in a position to see a lot of sports-related mouth injuries.

It bothered Wood to see young-

sters losing their teeth, but what really started him off on his injury prevention campaign was the day a neighbor's son came into his office with a mouthful of broken teeth.

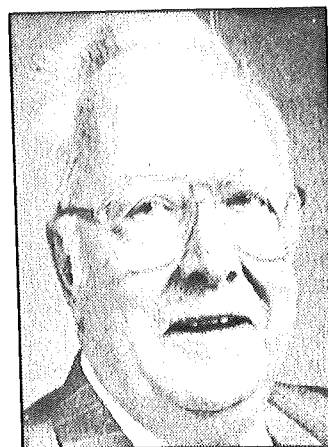
So Wood and a friend he describes as "sort of an inventor" came up with the idea of mouthguards for hockey players. Wood admits there was a lot of trial and error involved. One of the first prototypes lined with a type of foam rubber proved to cause allergic reactions in some players.

But they kept tabs on the Mississauga hockey players wearing their inventions and they paid close attention to the complaints and comments made.

But eventually parents and the players themselves saw the benefit of wearing the gear, and mouthguards were made mandatory in the Cooksville Hockey Association.

About the same time, Wood publicly pronounced there was very little good-quality protective equipment available for athletes. His remarks and a meeting with government officials in Ottawa led to the establishment of a new branch of the Canadian Standards Association called the Technical Committee on Protective Equipment for Hockey and Lacrosse.

Although the name suggests otherwise, the committee now deals with almost every sport. And, aside from devising better types of equipment, Wood's group also suggests proper injury treatment and prevention for team trainers,



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coaches and the players themselves.

Eventually, the efforts of Wood and the committee attracted attention from around the world. Today their innovations and recommendations are applied in the United States, Sweden, Finland and several other countries around the globe.

Perhaps the most profound effect Wood's efforts have had can be seen a statistic. There have been no serious facial injuries in Mississauga hockey in 12 years.

Wood concludes the CSA award is "a great honor," but he says he doesn't need accolades to encourage him in his work.