

Huck: A little big man

By VIC GRANT
Tribune Sports Writer

If it was leadership Winnipeg Jets were looking for, then they got it from their little man.

Jets needed someone to lead them out from the deep, dark, depths of despair so they followed Francis Huck, the little guy with the heart the size of a mountain.

Jets haven't suddenly righted themselves all the way, they haven't corrected everything they've been doing wrong and they haven't conceded themselves another World Hockey Association pennant, but they've taken a step in the right direction.

Jets won a hockey game in the Winnipeg Arena Sunday night and they did it with a little determination, a little hard work and the leadership of Huck.

Jets turned back a challenge from Quebec Nordiques with a 5-3 victory. You realize the importance of winning this game because it was Jets first in their last six games. They were in danger of falling into fifth position in the league's West

Division and they were in danger of losing sight of Edmonton Oilers, who are running a strong first.

Jets didn't start this game much differently than they did the previous five. They let Nordiques jump into a 2-0 lead, although if you counted possession of the puck, the score should have been reversed.

Jets came back to get even again, like they have many times before but, this time, instead of falling back again and hanging by their fingernails they carried on with their momentum and were winners going away.

It was Huck and a change of attitude that may have turned this tide.

Huck works the same way game in and game out. He spares nothing, but that's the way Fran Huck has always played. He was the tenacious attacker, the opportunist, the one who instilled desire that was lacking.

Huck scored three of the five Jet goals and he worked diligently for all three. His teammates took heart after watching him score his first two and when the game drew to a



close it was more than just one man working with ferocious desire.

Jets couldn't put themselves in any better standing than a 2-0 deficit in the first period, but they were back on even ground in the second intermission at 3-3 thanks to Huck. They kept coming in waves in the third.

They made mistakes in the first period that they've made many times this year. On the first Quebec goal Jimmy Hargreaves committed himself deep in the Nordique end and it presented the visitors with a two-on-one break. Guy Dufour and Pierre Guite vs one defenceman and Joe Daley. Dufour won

when he converted Guite's pass on Daley's doorstep.

Goal two for the visitors was the perfect example of a planned power play. J. C. Tremblay came slowly out of his end with the puck and, by the time he hit centre, Boom Boom Caron was blitzing for the Jet corner where the puck was waiting. He just slipped the rubber to Andre Gaudette, who was gliding down the slot alone and a blink later it was in the Jet net.

The score at that point was in favor of Nordiques, but the puck spent most of its time with Jets, yet they couldn't pass it right or finish off a play to score.

The change started in the second period. Huck got Jets going when he stood his ground in front of Quebec goaltender Serge Aubry and deflected Ken Stephanson's point blast down and under.

But, Francois Lacombe got that one back when Jean Guy Gratton gave the puck away in his own zone.

Then it was Huck again, unassisted, at least it went into the record book that way. Stephanson charged at an


opposing forward coming out of his own end and scared the stuffing out of him. He deserted the puck and Huck, who was travelling at least 100 mph, ripped a slapshot that Aubry never saw and never will.

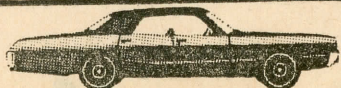
Then Gratton made amends scoring his first goal by changing the direction of a Joe Zanussi blast.

Huck settled the issue as early as the 57 second mark of the third period. He wheeled into the Quebec zone, committed grand larceny by stealing the puck off Dale Hoganson behind the Nordique net, then came out front and slipped it between Aubry's legs.

It was finished off by Gratton, who scored on a Winnipeg power play after Danny Johnson had scrounged the puck out of a corner.

The game's complexion may have changed for good in the Jets favor when Jimmy Hargreaves and Pierre Guite tried to establish some authority with fists. It was a saw-off decision, but Jets seemed to get the greater lift and carried it on through the remaining time.

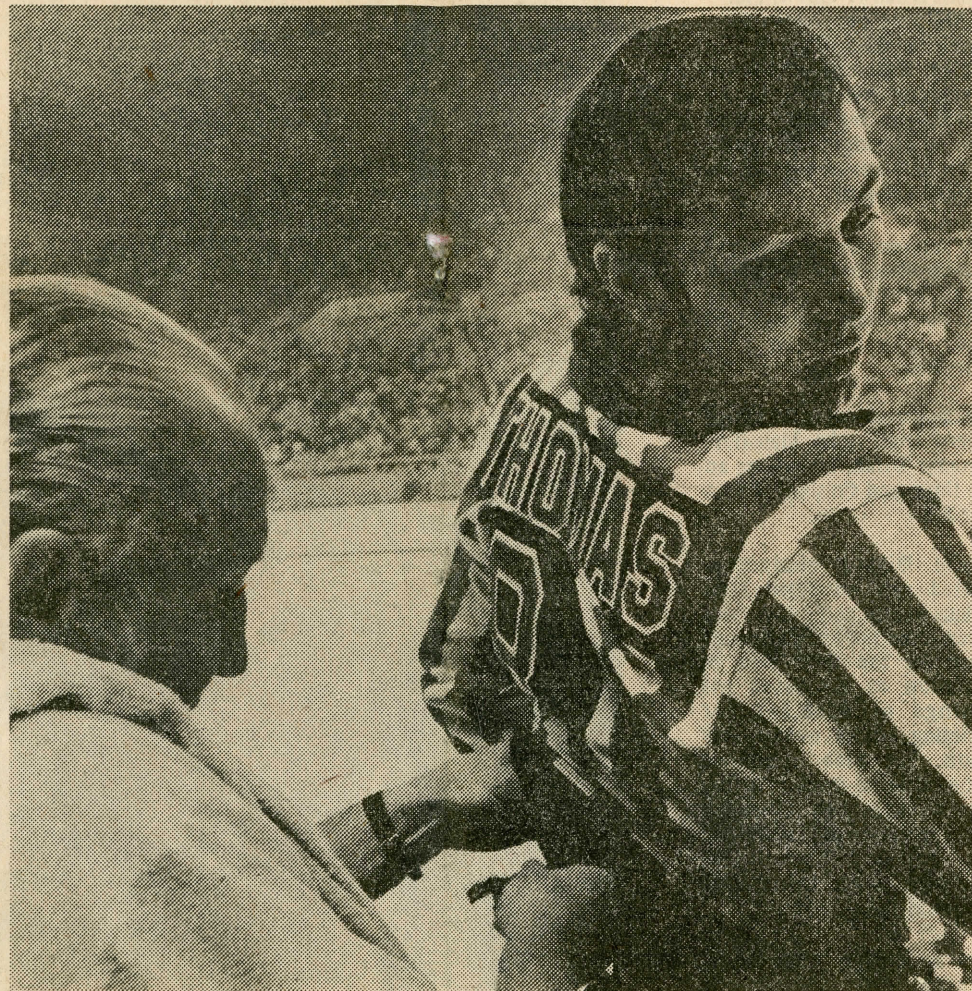
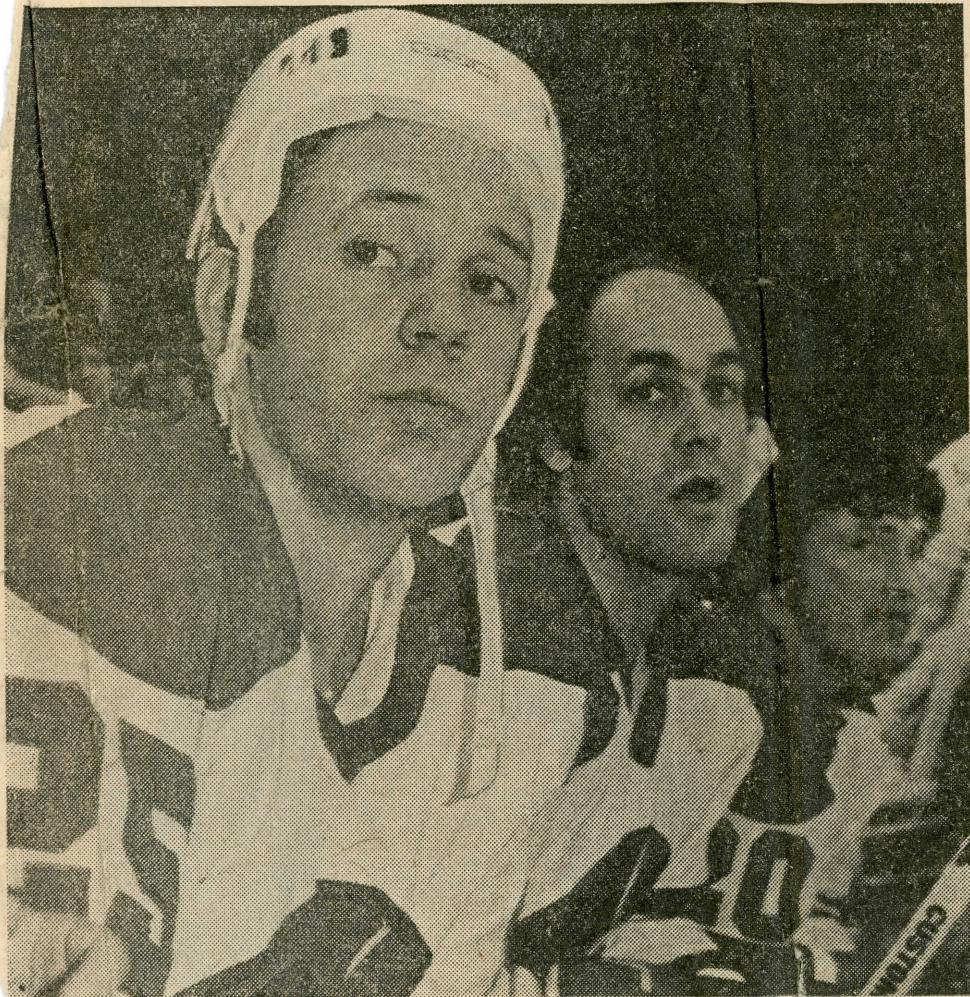

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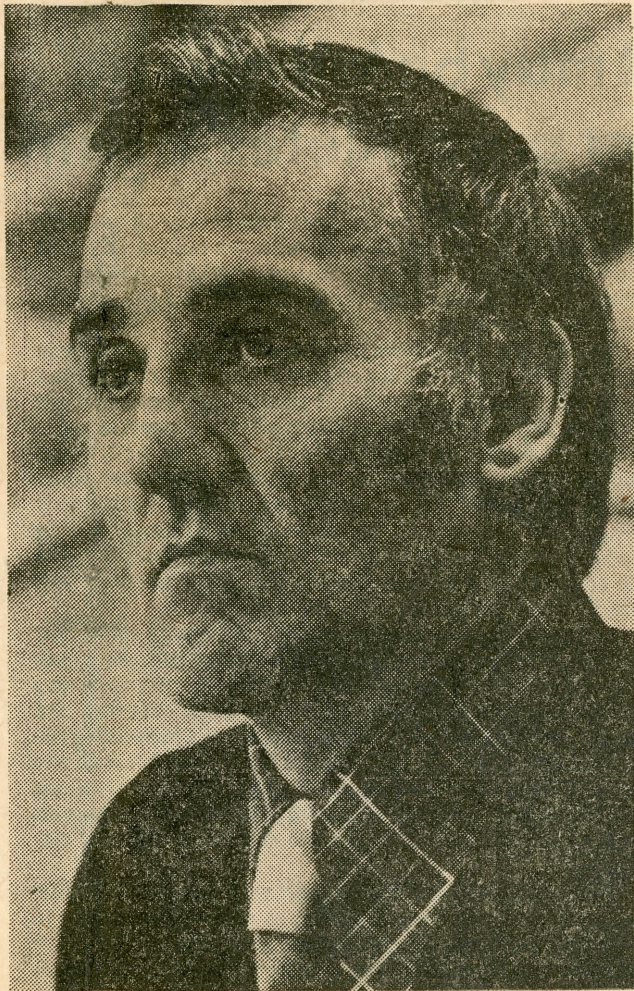
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The man of the hour, for Winnipeg, was Fran Huck, left. Man of the hour, as far as ref Ray Thomas was concerned, was Jets' equipment man, Doug Guittart. Neither of



which impressed Quebec's Jacques Plante, right.