SPORTS

Page demands excellence

BY GORDIE SUTHERLAND

Former Dalhousie hockey coach Pierre Page should be able to motivate the Quebec Nordique players to achieve a higher level of play, say two former Tigers.

Page, 43, took over as Quebec's head coach early last week, replacing the fired Dave Chambers. Page also keeps his position with the team as general manager.

Current Dalhousie coach Darrell Young played for Page from 1977 to 1979. He says Page demands a consistently high level of performance from his players.

"He doesn't expect it, he demands it and there is a difference there," says Young. "I think Pierre with his fiery nature will motivate a lot of players to achieve."

The Nordiques, under Chambers, stumbled through their first 18 games, compiling a record of 3-14-1. Quebec newspapers suggest Chambers' dismissal resulted from his inability to motivate the play-

Can Page provide the required

Halifax Junior 'A' coach Jim Bottomley also played for Dalhousie during the Page era. He recalls how Page drew out every morsel of talent the Tiger teams possessed.

"He instilled a never die and a never quit attitude," Bottomley. "We were just a good, hard-working hockey team. We may not have had the talent of some of the other teams but Pierre

had us working and as a result we won championships with him."

Page coached at Dalhousie for a nine year period ending after the 1979-80 season. In his final season, Page guided the Tigers to a first place finish in the Kelly Division. He completed his coaching career at Dalhousie with an overall record of 89-85-9.

The last time Dalhousie won the conference title was under Page in 1978-79. Both Young and Bottomley played on that team

> He may have inherited a sinking ship

which finished second at the national championships, losing to Alberta in the final.

After coaching at Dalhousie, Page became an assistant coach with the Calgary Flames. He then moved on to Minnesota where he was the head coach from 1988 to 1990. Page is credited with molding the North Star team which appeared in last season's Stanley Cup

"Guys like Dave Gagne and Brian Bellows in Minnesota started the best part of their careers under Pierre," says Young, also a scout with the Washington Capitals.

The first test of Page's discipline came last Tuesday when forward Owen Nolan objected to the way Page juggled the lines. According to the Quebec media, Page took Nolan off the ice for a one-on-one discussion. The story writes, "On his return there was a great deal more spring to Nolan's step."

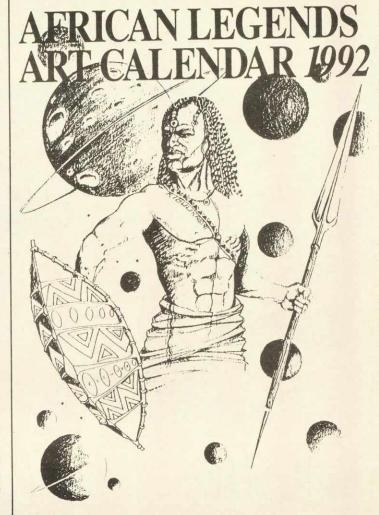
Both Young and Bottomley recall times when Page pulled players aside for discussions of a similar

"He wouldn't put up with a subpar performance from anybody," says Young. "Whether it was the 20th or the number one player on the team, he didn't think twice about pulling someone aside and telling them exactly what he thought.'

Page lost 7-3 in his debut on Monday Nov. 18 to Pittsburgh. His team also split two games with the Montreal Canadians last week, winning the first 5-2 in Quebec and losing the second 5-3 in Mon-

He may have inherited a sinking ship but Bottomley says Page can bring his Minnesota magic to Que-

"He's very dedicated, he wants



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