

Mark Jones; ex-York basketballer at TSN

by Josh Rubin

To sports fans, last year's CRTC decision to allow The Sports Network (TSN) to broadcast on basic cable was indeed very welcome.

As a result of the decision, many members of the York community have also been given a chance to see a familiar face. Mark Jones, a past stellar guard for the basketball Yeomen during their glory-years of the early and mid 1980s when they were perennial OUAA champions, is now working at TSN. Jones currently co-hosts the 11:00 p.m. edition of Sportsdesk, TSN's regular sports news programme. *Excalibur* spoke with Jones last week.

Jones said he was able to join TSN in large part through being in the right place at the right time. In Jones' final year of play for the Yeomen, York was playing the University of Victoria in a regional final and TSN was covering the match. After the game, which the Yeomen lost, Jones offhandedly remarked to one of the broadcasting crew that he now had a lot of time on his hands — did TSN have any positions for students? After that, everything fell into place for Jones.

"As I was told to do, I called TSN when we got back (from

UVic) on Monday. I had an interview on Tuesday and, by Wednesday, I was working."

Jones' first assignments at TSN included writing the scripts for highlight packages which appear on shows such as the one he currently co-hosts. Pouring over the tapes of countless professional sports matches, Jones had to make note of where exceptional plays occurred.

These days, Jones starts preparing for his show first thing in the morning by reading the sports section of all of Toronto's major daily papers. Then, he scans various papers from across the continent, searching for any bit of information which could be used on Sportsdesk.

Jones heads into TSN's Leslie Street studios around 7:00 p.m. to catch up on late-breaking stories, and to go over that evening's show. Before the show, he heads into the make-up room, and then is ready to go on air. After the show, he takes care of any loose odds and ends, and often leaves the studio at 1:00 a.m. or later.

Jones is happy with TSN's new five-year deal with the CIAU to broadcast a football game of the week. He dismisses the fear that the deal is the beginning of some of the same type of problems that plague NCAA football as paranoia.

"One (a T.V. deal) doesn't necessarily mean the other...for

every bad apple in NCAA football, there are at least 10 good ones," said Jones. He feels exposure is something the CIAU can deal with and, in fact, needs. "There have been a lot of good players over the years who have received no coverage, but you have to start somewhere."

When asked about the current state of York's basketball programme, Jones said he felt York was competing in a tougher league, both in the playing and recruiting sense. "Time was, when York was the school to go to for basketball in Toronto," he said. "That simply isn't the case these days."

Being with TSN during its coverage of the Dubin inquiry into banned practices and drugs in sport, Jones had a chance to hear some of the sordid details of the Ben Johnson affair. However, Jones says that during his playing days at York, he heard rumours from people, in positions to know, that Johnson was being injected with animal growth hormone. Growth hormone is commonly used among athletes to allow tendons to endure the strain by steroid-produced gigantic muscles. Jones also says he knew of at least one football Yeoman who was taking steroids.

Jones doesn't foresee the testimony at the Dubin inquiry having any far-reaching interna-

tional effect, as other nations are ignoring the proceedings, and calling it a Canadian problem.

He also stressed the need for greater education about the morality and dangers of steroids, as opposed to strict random testing programmes which he supposes will be implemented as a recommendation of the inquiry. "Athletes have always been one step ahead of the testers, and I don't see that changing," he said. In any case, Jones feels there simply isn't the money available to make programmes like York's new random-sampling of urine to be effective.

As far as the future of Canadian sports broadcasting goes, Jones feels it is following in the footsteps of the United States where strong specialization and local cable broadcasts are breaking up the vast monoliths of network TV sports. Jones sees this trend as something positive saying that, anytime there is an opportunity to further local rivalries, it can only be good for sports.

For budding sportswriters, Jones had one final piece of advice. "Stick with your school work... Today I am using things from courses that I had no idea would be useful for what I am doing today." Jones says sports broadcasting is indeed a rewarding career, but one should not forget there is more work to those shows than meets the eye.



Hey! Don't just sit there.
Do something with your life.
Come into Excal and write sports.
Just ask for Jacob or Josh.

CORRECTION:

The Molson Export Players of the Month were announced in last week's Excal Sports section. Also nominated for their performance during the month of October were: Debbie Jansen (Swimming), Ross MacDonald (Waterpolo), Jeff Buchanan (Soccer), Eddie Watt (Badminton).

MEMBERS OF THE YORK COMMUNITY

I would like to inform you of the formation of the **ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOL**. Our mandate is to raise the awareness of alcohol-related risks on campus. Until now, alcohol policy has been managed through the University Food and Beverage Services Committee. Growing concern over alcohol-related injuries and deaths on university campuses has reinforced the need for a separate alcohol policy committee with a wide-ranging mandate and broader community representation.

Cora Marie M. Dusk
Chair

TERMS OF REFERENCE - - ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOL

The Advisory Committee on Alcohol will monitor and review all alcohol related activities and policies at York while making a concerted effort to develop a comprehensive alcohol education program. The results of our study shall be reported jointly to the Provost and the Vice President, Finance and Administration.

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