

Everyone wins at IWK Charity Cup

BY LEVEL CHAN

About 200 fans were on hand at Dalhousie Memorial Arena on Saturday as the defending champion Alumni All-Stars faced-off against the 1998 Howe Hall All-Stars. In what proved to be a chippy and intense game, the Howe Hall All-Stars doubled the Alumni 6-3 to take the 1998 IWK Charity Cup.

As Howe Hall head coach David "Super" Brophy put it, "it was a great game. The boys kept the intensity high and never gave up. Zane and RJ were great in nets and there were a few great goals by Ben Cotter, Mike Waterbury and Joe Walsh."

Intensity was the word as the Alumni jumped to a 2-0 lead by the end of the first period. Things began to look like the 7-1 rout that the Alumni handed out last year.

But Howe Hall responded with two goals in the second to go into the final frame tied at 2-2. The partisan crowd really got into it when Howe Hall took its first lead of the game and never looked back. Shoddy Alumni defence led to

several odd-man rushes which handed Howe Hall the victory. A spirited Alumni comeback effort was easily handled by the strong Howe Hall team.

"Teams were more evenly matched this year so everyone got into it, both the fans and the players... and the sportsmanship still showed," said Howe Hall captain Blair Neil.

"Howe Hall pride shone when Blair accepted the Cup on behalf of the team," said event organizer and Howe Hall Sports Rep., Ann-Margaret McCuaig.

Charles Maxner, Howe Hall residence co-ordinator and captain of the Alumni team, was happy to take this writer's attention away from the game, noting, "For us [Alumni], it's a chance to reminisce and, as important as the game is, we always look to the post-game."

However, McCuaig is the first person to emphasize that the event is more than a game.

"This is a great opportunity for the alumni to come back and to relive their residence hockey days," she said.

"It's a chance to share stories with the current residents and a chance for us to reflect on the fact that... uh... we're getting slower. Congrats to the young guns," added Maxner.

What's not getting slower is the amount of money being earned by the event. Over \$700 was raised this year for the IWK Grace as well as sponsorship money for new jerseys

that will be used annually.

"I was very happy with the financial sponsorship that we got which enabled us to purchase jerseys for both teams," McCuaig said.

Sponsorship for the event was provided by JJ Rossey's, Moosehead Breweries, the Dalhousie Alumni office and Cleve's Sporting Goods.

In addition to helping a great

cause, the Charity Cup illustrates the immense role that residence hockey continues to have in the Dalhousie community.

This is something that has to be preserved for future students. The event was thoroughly enjoyed by all who were a part of it and special thanks must be extended to Ann-Margaret McCuaig for doing an awesome job. Until 1999...

CIAU awards first-ever women's university hockey championship

BY MATT DWYER

MONTREAL (CUP)—Following the success of women's hockey on the international stage, the sport has awarded its first Canadian national university championship.

On Mar. 1, after a six-team round-robin tournament, the Concordia University Stingers defeated the University of Toronto Varsity Blues 4-1 to capture the Golden Taft — the CIAU women's hockey trophy.

For Concordia players, the victory was especially sweet as it was the first of a kind.

"It's incredible," said Mai-Lan Lé, the Stingers' second-line left winger. "After the Olympics, this is the biggest female hockey event. It's a big step for women's hockey, and for women in general."

Team captain Kari Colpitts agrees. "We're so excited to be the first ever to win the gold medal," she said. "Everybody remembers the first one. To be able to host the tournament, put on a good show and then win it is something that no one will ever take away from us."

"It's a great feeling." For some of the sport's veterans, the championship is vindication for the years when women's hockey was often

ridiculed.

"It puts a stamp on our sport," said Concordia coach Les Lawton. "Nobody took it seriously 15 years ago. Even the players themselves didn't."

One of the biggest obstacles the sport has encountered over the years is the inevitable comparison to men's hockey. Women players have had to endure discrimination and sexism because they were not viewed as capable of playing such a male-dominated sport.

"We had to struggle through a number of things to get on par with the men," Lawton said. "There's a lot of trailblazers who had to dress in their own dressing rooms and get picked on by the boys, and stuff like that."

Regardless of past problems, the sport is now booming. Player participation is increasing steadily and fan support is flourishing — the Stingers and Varsity Blues played to a sell out arena in the championship game.

Tom Allen, president of the CIAU, says after years of discussion and planning, recent growth in Canadian women's hockey aided the decision to initiate the national championship. He added Canada's success and popularity at the World Championships and other international events influenced the union's decision.

"It was certainly prudent for the [Union] to jump on women's hockey as quickly as we could," he said.

Karen Hughes, head coach of the Varsity Blues, says she is looking forward to the sport's continued success and growth.

"I think you're going to see it grow, hopefully at the university level and club level in Canada," she said.

There is talk of establishing a professional women's hockey league in Canada, but both Lawton and Hughes say they have concerns about the viability of such a venture.

"I think you may see some start at these professional leagues, but I'm not sure how successful that will be yet," Hughes said.

"Women's hockey is not like men's hockey. We don't have a junior draft where they go to the NHL," Lawton said. "The women have other lives. Either they are students or they're working."

"I think you're going to have a tough time having players giving up either their academics or their careers to play hockey."

With files from the Concordia Link

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