

# VIEW From The Cheap Seats

By Mark Savoie

One of the largest pieces of news to come out of professional sports in North America in the last year is the realignment of divisions in the NHL and Major League Baseball. The NHL has elected to get rid of the anachronistic old names of Wales, Campbell, Adams, Patrick, Norris, and Smythe and have replaced these with regional names, following the example set by baseball, the NFL, and the NBA. They have also elected to run a playoff format identical to that of NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman's previous employer, the NBA.

One of the arguments put forward by those involved in these decisions is that it will go further towards allowing all deserving teams into the playoffs. The powers that be in baseball must all be overjoyed by the race in the NL West this season. That one of these two 100+ win teams should miss the playoffs this season is a gross injustice. Except, of course, that it is not. Eventually, over the course of time, it all balances out. For every team that is unfairly denied the playoffs, there is another team that does not deserve the honour, that is in the playoffs. Perfect examples are the 1973 New York Mets and the 1987 Minnesota Twins.

As it stands this season, the drama in baseball was the fight between the San Francisco Giants and Atlanta Braves for the NL West title. With the new playoff format this drama would be lost. Both teams would have known long ago that they were in the playoffs, and so, instead of playing their guts out down the stretch they would have been resting their regulars and tuning up for the playoffs. The Braves - Giants drama would have been completely eliminated. It would have been replaced by another drama in the fight for the wildcard spot. This would have necessarily been a lesser drama, simply because of the lesser quality of teams involved.

Intrinsically, it is obvious that the high level drama is superior to the low level drama. Ergo, it would be better to keep the playoff format as it currently exists. However, the question is not so simple. The problem becomes one of quality vs. quantity. While it is true that the maximum drama of a pennant race between two such dominant teams will be lost, it will be replaced by an increase in overall dramatic circumstances. The increase in playoff rounds creates an extra instance of drama. The increase in routes to the playoffs will allow more teams the chance to be involved in the hunt for the 'last' playoff spot. Ultimately, the increase in quantity of drama will more than make up for the decrease in quality. There will be fewer historic episodes, but there will be more fans still interested in October.

The NHL's playoff changes are not nearly so radical. Instead of last year's policy that the four best teams in each division making the playoffs, this year it will be the eight best teams in each conference.

This does two things. It eliminates a team from sneaking into the playoffs simply because they play in a weak division. It also eliminates the situation of two teams playing each other in the playoffs ten years in succession, as did the Montréal Canadiens and Boston Bruins up until last year. Rivalries are one thing, but that was serious overkill. My only objection to this is that they should take the next logical step and eliminate divisions and conferences altogether, and allow the best sixteen teams in the league to make the playoffs. This was done once before, but was scrapped as being uneconomical and because it eliminated all rivalries. It is, however, the only way to be completely fair, if this is truly the way we want to go.

I am not pleased with the NHL's decision to rename its divisions by regional names. The NHL has a long past of which it is possible to have a great deal of pride. By getting rid of the old names the NHL cuts off a connection with its past. However, they have fallen into the American trap of least common denominator thinking. Basically, what the NHL is saying by changing the names is that hockey fans are too stupid to figure out the divisions without the hint of a regional name. I don't know about you, but remembering Wales, Campbell, Adams, Patrick, Norris, and Smythe is not that much of a challenge to me. Next thing you know the NHL will strip its awards of their historic names. The Hart, Norris, Vezina, etc. trophies will lose all of their historic significance, and will just be trophies. The logical extension of all of this is for the Stanley Cup to be renamed the NHL Championship Trophy. By renaming the divisions the NHL has set a dangerous precedent.

## CLUB SPORTS

### Ironmen...

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This lead was soon shortened to 5-3 as the Mounties converted on a penalty kick. While the UNB backfield was able to make spectacular runs on occasion the lack of support proved costly as the Ironmen were unable to punch through for a try.

Coming into the second half fate struck the Ironmen a cruel blow. Within ten minutes hookers Edward June Park and John Curry had to be carried off the field due to injury. While Eddy will be able to play next game, John, who was playing in his first game of the season due to a broken cheekbone incurred this summer, is out for the rest of the season with a broken ankle.

Determined to avenge the injuries of their compatriots the Ironmen drove the Mounties back. Time after time the Mt. Allison scrum was sent reeling several yards as the forwards gave it their all. Finally, center Shawn Young crashed through three tackles to score a superhuman try that when converted enabled the Ironmen to take a 12-3 lead.

The Ironmen continued to pressure the Mounties and while several times they came inches close of scoring another try, they were unable to increase their lead. However, Mt. A was unable to produce an offence against such pressure and fell 12-3.

While pleased with the win the Ironmen 2nd XV know that they

will have to do much better in two weeks time when they travel to Mount Allison for the rematch.

### Yeowomen Soccer

Hey all you soccer fans-it's that time of year again and the Yeowomen soccer club is well into its season. Membership is high again this year proving that interest in women's soccer here on campus is increasing.

We have played a couple games so far, one against Saint Thomas' Varsity team which ended in a 0-0 tie, not a bad showing for our first time out. We then traveled to U de M on the 23rd of September and returned having tied 1-1. The team we played at U de M is an AUAA team, thus proving that if UNB had a varsity team we could be very competitive in the league, the goal scored in Moncton was put in by Monique Chevarie a first year player with the Yeowomen.

The big, no make that huge news we have to report is that for the first time ever a non-varsity team is going to be allowed to play on Chapman Field-A major coup. Our game is scheduled for Friday October 15th @ 6:00 p.m., so mark it on your calendars.

This game is of great importance to us and to the future of Women's Soccer at UNB so we really encourage you all to come out and join us. There'll be prizes, not to mention good soccer. Keep it in mind. Come out and see the Yeowomen kick some grASS against U de M.

### UNB/STU Scuba Club

The Scuba Club wants everyone, both certified and non-certified divers to join the club. The reason being that we at the scuba club are starting an underwater hockey league and we need your participation.

All you need is a team of 4-5 individuals, a mask, snorkel and fins for every member on your team. We supply the sticks, pucks and of course the water. There will be 3-5 games this term and next term. This will lead the top two teams to the Bottom Time Cup. If you are already a member of the Scuba Club this event is free. Cost for non-members are: students \$5 and non-students \$10.

A schedule of the open pool dates and activities is now available from the scuba club (Sir Max Aitken Pool). Activities include underwater relay races, underwater scrabble, underwater chess and more. Open pool time for this week is Sunday, October 10, 8-10 pm.

There will be no open water dives this week due to compressor maintenance. For more info call Kevin Johnston at 472-3103.

### Bodokai Ju Jitsu

Classes are on Mondays and Wednesday at 7:00 pm on the third floor of the South Gym. Beginners class is now open. Try a few free classes. "The most effective method of fighting ever devised!" For more info contact Randy Breaux, 3rd degree at 457-3009.

## Campus Recreation

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