

SPORTS

Spill it out, but not in a song

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SPORTS EDITOR

There was a little sign on the top left hand corner of the sports desk that read 'Excalibur Sports'. It was ripped in half by the time Christmas rolled around.

No problem. We replace the sign, only this time, we paste it to the wall behind the desk. What happens? It get completely torn off.

So now there's nothing there, no sign, nothing--just a nice, clean, boring desk, sitting alongside a nice, clean, boring wall.

The sign will be replaced--someday--but for the time being there are more than a few sighs of relief, now that the year in sports has come to its finale. And the three writers who frequent these confines can breathe a little easier.

Was it a good year? For some it was. Was it a bad year? For others that would seem to be the case. 1982-83 had its share of both ups and downs.

But, like they say, "That's part of the game." In a school that has representatives for just about every sport in the Ontario Universities Circuit, there's bound to be a mixture of good and bad.

Promises, players and money

Promises were made and promises were broken. It always seems that all the hype and zeal which mark the beginning of the year are no longer around when spring rolls in.

Players come and players go--some pursue their careers as lawyers, managers, and accountants, while others turn to greener pastures in the ranks of the pros.

Money--that is, a lack of it--seemed to level off any high hopes in those "best laid plans" coaches always seem to come up with. Granted though, it's pretty hard to keep players on one court when you are paying \$800 in another court--fighting eligibility rights.

It's harder still to put people in the stands when you have to pay janitors \$50 a game to have the bleachers pulled out (not to mention the lowest fan attendance level at York in recent years).

Where do all the cries of money, money, money go? To Knobby Wirkowski, of course--the man in the hot-seat over at Tait. I'm sure many a helmetsman swore Wirkowski was reminiscing his 1952 Grey Cup-clinching bomb, instead of paying attention to their pleas of how to turn a loser into a winner.

But don't get me wrong. York's inter-varsity coaches put in a lot of thankless hours throughout the year, win or lose.

Who other than Yeomen coach Bob Hedley would commute from Oshawa every workday for a 5:00 p.m. hockey practice. Who would travel across southern Ontario, on his own gas money, looking for recruits, and host/coach the annual Toronto High School all-star football game for the benefit

of exposing this city's grade school talent--that's Yeomen football coach Dave Pickett.

The list could go on, but for coaches and player alike, the heat and the toil of 1982-83 will probably be remembered, over many a cold beer, in years to come.

So, without further adieu, here is an oratorial to those memories, of what went up and what went down in the 82-83 sports year.

***Most savoured win** goes to York's Yeowomen hockey team for their upset win over defending champion Lady Blues in the championship game of the OWIAA's.

***Bitter Defeat** has to be the summation of the York volleyball Yeomen's five games match loss to U of T in the semi-final round of the OUAA play-off, marking the first time York was absent from a league championship in six years, and the first time U of T had beaten York at Tait ever.

***Delusions of a play-off berth** go to York's football Yeomen who sought to gain the York football programme their first play-off berth ever, but finished the season a disappointing 2-5, identical to their 81-82 record.

***On the other hand York's** hockey Yeomen made the play-offs despite not knowing each other's names for the first five games.

***Sorry to see ya go...** Yeomen linebacker Mark Hopkins graduates to the defensive backfield of the CFL's Montreal Concordes after starring four seasons at York.

***Shut up and go away...** the pre-game antics of U of T's prior to the annual York-U of T football game.

***Golden Oldies...** York Yeomen gymnastics team, many of whom will be graduating, for winning their ninth consecutive CIAU team title.

***Octopus Award** goes to Yeomen Waterpolo netminder Bryan Robertson whose arms and legs left opposing marksmen shaking their heads, and gained for him recognition as the finest collegiate goaltender in the country.

***The Sore Neck Award** goes to York track star Desai Williams for having to carry numerous gold medals honouring his outstanding performances throughout 1982-83.

***The Donations Accepted Award** goes to the York ski team who still have a \$70 league registration fee outstanding.

***Cat in the hat** is undoubtedly Knobby Wirkowski--just pull him up and he'll say, "I have no money."

***Prayer of the year...** Paula Lockyer's 40-foot swisher at the buzzer in the Concordia tournament, giving the Basketball Yeowomen the consolation championship.

The Best

***Best celebration,** and I'm sure no one will forget, was the uproarious Cheer for Beer Basketball double-header in which 10 free cases of beer were

given to the loudest, most supportive group of fans.

***Best coaching...** York track coach John Millar, who took a borderline thin track team to the OUAA men's team championship.

***Best Rookie...** Ken Norris, who centred York's number one line, along with Bill Elisson and Scott Magdar, scored 26 goals and added 14 assists in his rookie campaign.

***Tug of War...** the Yeowomen Volleyball team strategy of having a tug of war, but, a team that pulls together, wins together as an OWIAA championship pays testimonial to.

***Go the distance...** York cross-country specialists Dave Reid and Nancy Rooks who both won too many events to list here.

***Snob of the Year** goes to tennis star Jimmy Connors who, after getting punched out at a party, vowed never to play in Toronto again, and was already out of the country by the time 9,000 fans had settled down to watch his Canadian Open semi-final match with Vitas Girulaitis at the York tennis complex.

***Foot of the year...** York Yeomen Rucker team's Leo "Clubfoot" Nishio.

***Embarrassment of the Year...** Sports writer Elissa Freeman unknowingly walking into a room full of disrobing football players.

***Expression of the Year...** subsequent remark from a Yeoman, who asked, "What's she doing here?"

***Have we got a deal for you...** Mitch Goldhar, whose \$40,000 NCAA tennis scholarship was traded away for a "red shirt".

***Special thanks** to all those die-hard, nail-biting, cold-enduring, name-calling tooth and clawing York fans.

***See-Saw Award** goes to the York Yeomen Basketball team who switched leads with the Waterloo Warriors a total of 19 times in the final half of the OUAA championship game--which they lost by one point--66-65!

***Best use of a cliché...** "We don't get mad, we get even"--the Yeomen Linebacking corps.

***Rage to win...** York's Angela Taylor, who is ranked number four in the world-watch out, numbers three, two and one!

***Congratulations** to male and female athletes of the year Frank Nutzenberger of the Yeomen gymnastics team and Jo-Anne Beckwith of the Yeowomen squash team.

***This Bud's for you** Enzo Spagnuolo, for taking M.V.P. laurels at the Yeomen Classic Tournament and the OUAA East Division; Desai Williams, for twice tying your Canadian 60m dash record of 6.66 seconds while competing for York this year, not to mention anchoring the York men's team victory in the OUAA's by placing first in both events, and doubling up to pace the 4x200m relay team to the gold.

***Famous last words...** Hockey Yeoman John Campbell, reflecting on the game of hockey: "Hockey has been berry, berry good to me."

To love and to labour not always so in labour of love

ELISSA S. FREEMAN

"The time has come, the walrus said, to talk of many things..."

This line from O. Henry's *Cabbages and Kings* seems to be an appropriate way to start my final article/editorial as there are many things to say and many people to thank.

This year was my first foray into the wonderful world of journalism: it has been, to say the least, a learning experience. People often ask me why, citing that I am a member of the female gender, I write about sports? Well, let's set the record straight right here and now.

First of all, I realise not everybody who reads *Excalibur* is going to peruse the Sports section. But it's for those who are interested in sports, that I specifically write. Only avid observers and/or participants of sports can appreciate an athlete's contribution to the success of his or her team. From my own personal interviews with numerous competitors from a variety of sports, I have realised that the term 'athlete' reaches far beyond Webster's definition which describes an athlete as "a contestant in the games." "Athlete" also means dedication, perfection and perseverance. It can also be defined as beauty, grace and style--which includes everything from a devastating volleyball spike to the acrobatic antics of a goalie in a hockey game to the execution of a difficult gymnastics manoeuvre. It never fails to amaze me the extent to which athletes can push their bodies to achieve the perfection of such difficult skills and end up making it look all so easy.

And that's why I write about sports. I try to share my enthusiasm about what I see, with you, the reader.

Of course, this year Mark and I have attempted to make the Sports section as diversified as possible by giving lesser-known sports their fair share of space. In my case, as I have concentrated on Yeowomen activities, I tried to bring such sports as figure skating, synchronized swimming, squash and hockey to the forefront. Although a few of these sports do not attract large audiences, the performance of their competitors should not go unnoticed.

I also tried to laud the efforts of all Yeowomen teams--as it is one of the purposes of this section to support and promote York sports. But then again, the job of a sportswriter is not unlike that of a baseball umpire: "I call 'em as I see 'em."

If a team does not perform well, then I am going to say so. As far as I'm concerned, there should be no beating around the bush. No matter how highly-touted a particular squad, everyone is subject to criticism at one time or another. And as I have found this year, there are those who find this a bitter pill to swallow. But humility is good for the soul, and as former U.S. President Harry S. Truman said, "If you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen."

Writing for the Sports section took quite a bit of time--but it was truly a labour of love. As I often had to write about number of sports each week, there were times when I was in desperate need for missing details or profound comments about a team's performance. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those people who supplied me with information and encouragement, because without them I may have never made it through the year.

LYNN CORNETT: Your constant support throughout the year has been greatly appreciated, see you next year at the Vanier Cup.

MARY LYONS: Besides juggling around mountains of paper work you probably attended more games than I did, thank you for the much-needed up-to-date sports scores... A big thank-you to all coaches, especially MERV MOSHER, BOB CLUETT, WALLY CLOST SR. & JR. and MARINA VAN DER MERWE whose post-game comments make a reporter's job easier.

KIM TAYLOR: As president of WAC you've taken a lot of flak, but you managed to keep your head above the water, good luck...

KIM MYERS: I hope you're back next year with those fantastic gymnastic articles!...

MARY CICINELLI: Thank you for not only being my phonenummer liaison but also for those entertaining chats in the timekeeper/penalty box while freezing in the arena...
DEBBIE LAMB: Not only are you an outstanding athlete, but also an outstanding person, keep that photographic memory in working order!...

CARMEN (I don't know your last name): Your cheery personality and those technicolour skating results always brought smile to my face, see you next year...
MARIO & DEBBIE: Our fearless photographers! What can I say, you guys were half of this section. Please come back next year...

EDITH and LISA: (See, now you guys are famous) Thank you for patiently listening to my articles (even though you didn't understand them) before they went into print...
PAULA: I couldn't have asked for a better editor. You didn't know a helluvalot about sports, but you still taught me a lot about writing...

STEVE SHUBAT: Who provided me with perhaps my most memorable experience this year, as he led me into a room of semi-nude football players while we were looking for Coach Pickett... and last but not least, **ZWOL-baby:** Whose undying dedication, and not to mention Wednesday night insomnia, got this section down on the flats... and I'll never forget those late night right-before-press-time phone calls: "O.K., Elissa, I need a head--now, don't get excited, just make it 31 characters with 15 for a kicker, and phone me back when you've got something original, O.K.?"... "For sure, man. Right on."