

VIEW From The Cheap Seats

By Mark Savoie

Congratulations to *Sports and Women Illustrated* for selecting Don Shula as their sportsman of the year. After all, it is truly important that we recognize the aptitude that allows a man to coach his team to five consecutive losses to close out the season, including a must-win that wasn't at the hands of the awesome and mighty New England Patriots. I mean, Bobby Bowden had Charlie Ward taking snaps so you can't give him credit. Joe Carter plays for Toronto so you can't give it to him. And Mario Lemieux plays hockey of all things! Besides, Hodgkin's Disease isn't all that serious anyway. I mean, it's only cancer! So hats off to *Sports and Women Illustrated* for once again delivering an astute analysis of the sporting world of 1993.

Real (as in non-sarcastic) congratulations to Mike Johnston, head coach of the UNB Red Devils and assistant coach of Canada's Gold Medal winning junior squad. Although it is true that the lion's share of the credit must go to the players, the coaches must also be commended for patching together a team of no-names and instilling in them the confidence that the rest of the country did not have. Johnston's coaching has also shown itself with the Red Devils; a team that started the season playing uninspired hockey, but has of late been matching last year's performance.

Speaking of teams who have been impressive, the undeservably anonymous UNB Reds are 8-0 in AUA women's volleyball play. For some reason, volleyball at UNB has very little exposure on campus. Part of that is probably the fault of this newspaper, which devotes more ink to the glamour sports of hockey and basketball than it does to the less well known sports.

At the professional level nothing much has happened over the holidays that could be considered exciting. For we long suffering Patriots fans the final four games of the season were enjoyable, but other than that the NFL season has been relatively plaid. Toronto hasn't even managed .500 hockey since their season starting ten game winning streak was ended by Montreal; a team that has been threatening to drop below .500 for most of the season. In basketball, the play of the Seattle Supersonics and Houston Rockets has been inspiring, but for me the most exciting sports story over the holidays is the Dallas Mavericks. The last I looked they were 2-26. Do you realize how bad you've got to be to go 2-26? That's Red Raider territory!

This year could be an exciting one for sports enthusiasts. Besides the regular fare of playoffs, tournaments, and regular season play; we will also be blessed by the Winter Olympics in Lillehammer, Norway. Canada's Olympic hockey team is in serious trouble, but in the other sports we look to be more competitive than usual. We even have a chance at a repeat medal performance in a nordic event, that being Miriam Bedard in the women's biathlon.

Even more exciting than the Olympics is the upcoming Football World Cup. (For you no-minds out there that's soccer). Although I am horrified at the blatant over-commercialism and pro-American boosterism which I'm sure will ensue - i.e. the mockery that was the pool lottery - the combination of efficient American telecommunications and friendly timezones could make this the most entertaining World Cup ever for English speaking North America. If the sports fans of Canada and the United States can avoid their soccer myopia they will see why soccer is the most passionately loved sport in the world. All you have to do is ignore the insipidly moronic blatherings of *The Globe and Mail's* Al Strachan. Strachan says that soccer is boring to watch! 'Don't think so, Al!' Brazil can pack 250,000 people into a stadium for a regular season game, and they ain't all there for the somnolence. Strachan's bleatings are characteristic of the prejudices usually seen in the aforementioned *Sports and Women Illustrated*. While it is true that soccer is not a sport of instant gratification à la basketball, it must be remembered by all those who share Mr. Strachan's views that since all games will be televised they will be able to engage in an activity giving instant gratification while they are watching.

If you go out of the professional ranks into university sports where the professional athletes are students you finally get some excitement. Watching the bowl games was a pleasure. The Cotton Bowl saw gutsy performances from both Texas A & M and Notre Dame. Notre Dame overachieved all season long, but were still in the hunt for the national championship had Texas A & M not overachieved in this game and put the fear into Lou Holtz and Co.

The Fiesta Bowl was equally pleasurable. It wasn't all that competitive, since Arizona romped 29-0. But the fact that the team they beat is probably more qualified for entrance into a federal penitentiary than a university brought joy to my heart. No school has been so blatant, nor so slick, at breaking recruitment and playing rules as the University of Miami Hurricanes. Their conduct on the field has been particularly atrocious. No team (not even the NFL's Oakland Raiders) has ever shown the same degree of arrogant disregard for their opponents or for even the slightest modicum of sportsmanship. Seeing them get kicked around the field didn't hurt my feelings a bit.

The highlight, of course, was the Orange Bowl. #1 vs. #2. Florida State was favoured by seventeen points over Nebraska. There's a whole lot of respect going on for ol' Nebraska. Even this esteemed pundit thought the same. As a result, after going near braindead on eight hours of football (Fiesta Bowl, Carquest Bowl, Cotton Bowl, Rose Bowl, Sugar Bowl, and Orange Bowl) I decided that since Florida State was going to win by 30 anyway I'd watch HNIC instead. This meant that I missed the best game of the day. Not only was Nebraska competitive, but with their field goal with a minute plus left they went ahead. Unfortunately for of us who love prohibitive underdogs, the weakest aspect of Florida State's team (the field goal unit) came through and claimed the national title. Whether they deserve that title is questionable. They finished 12-1, but Notre Dame finished 11-1 and beat Florida State head-to-head. But that discussion is the topic of a whole 'nother column that I don't want to write.

CLUBNEWS

Yeowomen Soccer Club

It's the end of another successful outdoor soccer season for the Yeowomen. The Yeowomen proved to be unbeatable outdoors with a 2-2-0 season. We showed that we could hold our own and beat top ranked AUA teams such as St. Mary's, Mount A, an U de M. Thanks to everyone who turned out for outdoor this season, especially our coach, Miles Pinsent and our trainer, Jeff Faulkner.

But just in case you thought this was the end, we would like to remind all you past, present and future soccer players that indoor season is just beginning. Our first practice in the new year will be held on January 16th at the South Gym (2-5 PM). The following practise will be held on January 23 at the South Gym (2-5PM). For further information feel free to contact Bea Scholten (457-0554) or Megan William's (459-3064).

Last but not least we would like to sepecially thank our great sponsors. THE SOCIAL CLUB, for providing us with a great place for our nights on the town, and to ROB the MOOSEHEAD REP for always providing us with great prizes!

UNB Cheerleading Tryouts

Any male or female interested in becoming a part of the UNB co-ed cheerleading team should come to the SUB Ballroom at the following times:

Sunday, Jan. 16, 6-8pm

Monday, Jan. 17, 6-8 pm

For more information please contact Tammy Oram at 454-7995.

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To help get things rolling, you might want to line up a potential co-signer. And for more information, drop by your nearest Bank of Montreal branch today. We'll do all we can to put some weight in your wallet, and some "Happy" in your New Year!

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