

4 December, 1987

## Coach Nickelchok speaks

This is a verbatim interview with Red Devils' Coach Rick Nickelchok. This interview was performed to shed some light on the Devils' present predicament.

BRUNS  
What are your main goals now?

Our main goal now is to make the playoffs.

BRUNS  
Why did the players leave?

Why did the players leave? I think that you would have to look at each one individually. From my side the players that did leave were presented with a challenge of leading the team which had become quite young due to academic casualties, etc. The players were to provide the leadership necessary for the new players coming in to be successful. The players that did leave, did not accept that challenge and could not provide the leadership both on and off ice. There was some pressure applied to these players at the beginning of the year. This and various other reasons led to the departure of the players, such as they thought they were losing, etc. Certain players have performed well such as Dean Frost. Jamie Leaman on defense - gets

banged around a lot because he's small, but he's always there. On offense Hugh Hospodar has stood out. Renato Marino, captain, has stood by the team. These players accepted the challenge of a young team.

BRUNS  
Are you satisfied with the goalie you have?

Our top goalie, Dean Frost, is injured. Dean is perhaps one of the better goaltenders in the league and I am very satisfied with him. Our other two goalies, Rob Jeffries and Chris Bailey, are both rookies and have done very well to perform as they have.

BRUNS  
What are your chances of making playoffs?

We have a very good chance of making the playoffs as STU has a 1 and 12 record and the 3rd place team has 4 more points than we do. So we can't just write off the season plus we will be playing the third place team twice more at home.

BRUNS  
What are your chances if you make playoffs?

In the playoffs it will be tighter checking, however not clutch and grab as in the NHL. Goaltending is important and I feel that we have the goalie

that can make the difference and can win games for us.

BRUNS  
What changes may be necessary?

I'm heading out Tuesday for 21 days in hopes of bringing in some quality student athletes. I'll be going to different colleges in Quebec, in Sherbrooke, and Montreal and then I'll be spending most of my time in Ontario. There are two purposes for this which are bringing back players for January and to identify players for next year. One shouldn't expect a massive turnover in players in January as there are a limited number of players available and I won't be taking committed players. I will be bringing in players who are not playing or have just graduated from high school or college.

BRUNS  
Any recruiting going on? Where?

Recruiting is a 12-month job: it does not stop. Maritimes. I spend the second term in the Maritimes. Locally I have watched the Junior B team and the High School. I am going to be concentrating on the Metro Junior "A" league and the PEI Junior "A" league.

BRUNS  
Has the Athletic Department given you any aid for recruiting, infor, etc.?

Yes, the Athletic Department has been very helpful. There's a budget designated for recruiting to allow me to go to these places and make contacts. Our dean of P.E., Dr. MacG is very active in hockey presently and has also aided me with names and contacts, etc. This past fall I coordinated an Alumni weekend which consisted of former Red Devils participating in an intersquad game as well as against STU alumni. The purpose behind this was to get the alumni involved in the program again, as well as to use Alumni for recruiting purposes and potential job contacts for graduating Red Devils. Hopefully, this will assist me in recruiting.

BRUNS  
Will you be resuming the tradition of playing the Maine Black Bears?

Yes, we will. We have been invited to the '88 Maine Xmas Tourney which takes place next December. We had a game schedule for this year but unfortunately it was cancelled at the last minute. Maine cancelled.

I think that it would help the team out to play a team of this calibre.

BRUNS  
Do the Red Devil's problems stem from personality conflicts or is there another

reason such as discipline? (Both on and off ice)

In any team whether it be hockey or another sport you will always find personality conflicts between players and also some players and the coach, however personality conflicts are not the problem that we are facing. Frustration, perhaps, is the best word to describe the predicament that we are in. The majority of our players are first year players and there is a major adjustment necessary to play at the university level. This adjustment has to be made by all players whether they be major junior "A" or high school. This adjustment takes time. Some players need a whole year to adjust while others need half a year. My guess is that the majority of our players will have made this adjustment by the time we get back on the ice in January. I have to give a lot of credit to the players who are now on the team for persevering through troubled times and contributing to the program like they have. As a coach I demand a lot of the time from them. . . and hard work but they still come everyday to play.

Interview conducted by  
JEREMY EARL

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- A Hawaiian Party for 30 people to be held at the Wandlyn (one person and guest will be drawn at each home game).



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