

Poor facilities a black mark on OUAA

An embarrassment to Canadian university hockey. Clearly that is how I would describe the venue at which the McMaster University Marlins play their home games.

Last Saturday evening, while most Canadians were positioned in front of their sets watching the Leafs, Canadians et al, one of the finest university hockey teams in the land were donning their gear in a virtual meat freezer.

"This is a disgrace," claimed Yeoman goaltending coach Steve Knish, referring to the facilities. Besides the obvious dilapidated surroundings, Knish was also disgusted with the fact that the Yeoman game was delayed 90 minutes due to a power failure earlier in the day. Unfortunately no one contacted the York team to let them know.

Down the corridor, behind one of the three ice surfaces that make up the Wentworth Triple Rinks complex (home of the McMaster Marlins) the Yeomen are found in their so-called dressing room. As they lace up their skates, the players' breaths are visible in the damp, cold and dimly lit room. The stench of beer pervades the stale air in the cramped quarters. Water and other liquids cover the floor.

"You've got to overcome a fair deal to play well here," understates Steve Knish. "How do Dirk and Lou feel about it?" asks Knish rhetorically of Yeomen addi-



MEL BROITMAN

tions Dirk Reuter and Lou Kiriakou—veterans of minor-professional hockey.

"You know, you're trying to build up Canadian hockey. Some of the guys are seeing this for the first time, and are wondering, what is this!" fumes York head coach Dave Chambers. "It's bad for college hockey and it hurts the league (OUAA)."

When the Yeomen finally stepped out on to the ice for the pre-game warm-up, Chambers stayed behind to speak with Serge Hache, the team therapist. "Make sure the room's (dressing) locked. You get a lot of theft here too," Chambers said.

The McMaster University hockey program once proudly rivalled the best in all of Canada. It is a shame that the tradition established by the likes of McMaster all-Canadian Rick Mastroluisi (1980-84), the OUAA all-time career point leader, is in danger of being lost in the dregs and dirt of Wentworth Triple Rinks.

While Hamiltonians were busy erecting their Cops

Colusiem and catering to the National Hockey League Board of Governors, they have ignored one of their main public facilities. Wentworth Triple Rinks does not have to be such a "hole in the ground." Proper and steady maintenance could overcome most of the problems. The arena itself is not as appalling as the shocking neglect of its upkeep. At least at our own York Ice Palace, there has been a concerted effort to make the best of what's available.

Ironically, the Yeomen/McMaster hockey game provided an entertaining and exhilarating glimpse at the rise of Canadian college hockey. Unfortunately the high calibre of play only served to emphasize the contrast of the woefully inadequate facilities.

I've often been engaged in debate, comparing the calibre of college hockey in Canada and the United States. Recently the standard of play in both leagues (CIAU and NCAA) are so familiar that the argument may be negligible. After last Saturday night in Hamilton, the real differences were borne out. The athletes, coaches and competition may be interchangeable, but in many cases the facilities are worlds apart.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Having rested himself for a week, the ever-poignant and revelant Mel is back. This time he's out to beat his previous record of 17 consecutive columns. Confident that he'll be able to do it, we at *Excalibur* say, "Go get 'em, Mel!"

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