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Mark Spector

## R.I.P. CJSR

When Bob Steadward took over as head honcho here two years ago, he spoke of how the U of A sports would one day be "bigtime." Well, they have just taken a long stride in that direction.

As of today, CJSR can no longer call themselves the "Voice of the Golden Bears." That tag now goes to 1070 Gold in St. Albert, who will take over the hockey broadcasts starting with the CIAU nationals in March.

I should tell you right now that I have the privilege of resembling a colour commentator on all of the live CJSR sports broadcasts, and there is still the basketball Bears Canada West playoffs on our schedule.

Maybe. Because of contractual things that are too complicated to explain here, the students' station will not be invited to CIAU's. 1070 has those rights, as they will pursue the rights to Golden Bear sports broadcasts next year. Maybe some, maybe all.

Gold's G.M. Doug Shillington wouldn't confirm anything, but rumour has it that they want all of the football games and a split hockey/hoop schedule.

For CJSR, it marks the end of an era which has seen their sports department rise to the top university voice in Canada. The 40 odd games done by sports director Blaine Ostapovich's crew dwarfs the output of any student competition. Yes, even Toronto and Montreal.

Lisa Miller (CFRN), Doug Matthews (CISN), Bryn Griffiths (CHAB), Moose Jaw), and many others benefitted greatly from their airtime there. Certainly my potential media career began there, and has been allowed to branch out mainly because of the skills I've honed while behind the mike at Varsity Arena.

For Athletics, it marks the beginning of an era.

From an insignificant 40 watt setup whose Top Ten include the likes of the Fearless Iranians From Hell and the Butthole Surfers, Steadward and Co. jump to a flourishing young signal.

One can almost hear the champagne popping inside the Butterdome.

If blame can be levelled here, it is at Brent Kane, rookie Station Manager of CJSR, whose arrogance and unprofessionalism opened the door for 1070 Gold this year. It was inevitable, though, a process merely speeded up by Kane's necessary budget cuts, among other things.

For the lucky ones who have learned under fire doing Golden Bear hockey, it is a time to feel fortunate.

I take my hat off to Athletics, Dale Schulha and Bob Steadward principally — this is a giant step for them. As for myself, I'm fortunate, yet sad, to call myself and Ostapovich the last ever CJSR Golden Bear hockey broadcast team.

For our successors, I feel very sorry.

## CJSR considers lawsuit over loss of CIAU's rights Athletics jumps to 1070



CJSR hockey broadcasters Mark Spector (left) and Blaine Ostapovich (right).

by Dean Bennett

In a controversial move, the CIAU Championship Committee has given the broadcast rights for the CIAU Hockey Championships to 1070 Gold Radio. As a result, CJSR, who have held broadcast rights for several years, may pursue legal action.

CJSR first learned of the decision when Sports Director Blaine Ostapovich visited Dale Schulha, a member of the tournament's organizing committee, last Monday. Ostapovich had come to begin negotiations for the tournament, but instead learned the deal had already been made. CJSR Station Manager Brent Kane feels his station has been unduly slighted.

"We (CJSR) have been broadcasting U of A sports for ten years and at a great cost financially," he said. "It only makes sense that a campus radio station support its athletics. But (the 1070 deal) is like a slap in the face... We don't care if another radio station does finals, but we want to do them, too. We're not a big shot radio station with 200,000 listeners, but they (Athletics) have to realize they're not Notre Dame either."

The committee that oversees the championship is from the CIAU, not the university Athletic Department, but Schulha, while serving on the committee, is also Director of Marketing and Public Relations for Athletics. He does not understand Kane's reaction.

"I'm surprised they (CJSR) are all bent out of shape by not getting the finals. The CIAU Nationals were never part of our contract (with them)," he said.

Schulha also disagrees with Kane's assertion of campus athletics being loyal to campus media.

"It's like saying we shouldn't advertise in *The Sun* or *The Journal*; only *The Gateway*. We are reaching an audience bigger than this campus... We have a number of target markets, including alumni, high school kids, and the general public... We should use any med-

ium we choose to get people in the stands. We want consistent, quality coverage of our games."

Although Kane is still in negotiation with Schulha, he and station lawyer Doug Fischer are considering other options, one of which is legal action.

"Our position is that if the CIAU Nationals are an event sponsored by the U of A and staged in their building, then we have exclusive broadcast rights," said Fischer. "We would get a court order to seek an injunction to prevent the U of A giving access to the building (Varsity Rink) to anyone for the purpose of doing radio play-by-play of events."

The CIAU Championships are only one of a host of problems that have cropped up between CJSR and Athletics since they signed their one-year, 40-game contract last summer. The two sides bumped heads as early as September of last year when 1070 asked Athletics if they could broadcast Friday night Bear hockey games. The present contract with CJSR, though, gives the station exclusive broadcast rights, and the compensation CJSR wanted for giving up its exclusivity (\$500 a game or one-third of the profits) was deemed unacceptable and the deal fell through.

Alterations made by CJSR to their broadcast schedule have also caused tension. In the contract it is within CJSR's right to change their broadcast schedule "in consultation with Athletics." Last January, Kane cancelled a hockey broadcast slated for January 9-10 in Vancouver by sending a letter to Athletics on the 7th. "There was no consultation," said Schulha. "They sent us an announcement two days before our team left for UBC. It was not a request." "It was a faux pas on my part," said Kane.

Later in January, when the hockey team rescheduled its regular season games to accommodate their Universiade trip, CJSR revamped its broadcast schedule, axing three costly road games and keep-

ing three home ones. Ostapovich feels this probably didn't sit well with Athletics.

"It's my feeling, and I think it's the university's feeling, that you'll draw your largest listening audience from away games. Your regular (listening) audience will come to the arena for home games... I don't think Athletics was pleased with the changes we made to our broadcast schedule."

"They (CJSR) changed their schedule on a whim," said Schulha. "We were not pleased, but we cooperated because of their (tight) financial situation."

CIAU's aside, the next bone of contention promises to be the broadcast rights to next year's regular season Golden Bear games. Doug Shillington, General Manager of 1070, says they are interested, but there remains a question as to whether CJSR has right of first refusal or not.

"We've got a contract that says they (Athletics) have to negotiate

with us exclusively until June (of 1987)," said Fischer. "After that other offers have to be tendered to us first and if we match the offer, we get the rights... That is how we interpret (the present) contract."

Schulha, although noting the contract has a number of conditions to it, does not agree. "I don't think they have the right of first refusal," he said.

As an end note, Ostapovich has handed in his resignation effective March 15. Although he had planned to resign anyway ("After the Oiler playoffs," he said), the loss of the nationals accelerated the process. "I realize there are problems in any profession, but my primary job is play-by-play man of the Golden Bears and those duties terminate effective mid-March," he said.

Ostapovich does not begrudge the 1070 deal. "As an outside observer and fan, I think it would be in the best interests of Athletics to pursue a major media contract."



CJSR Station Manager Brent Kane

photo Rob Schmidt