

Where did the Express Go?

May 15, Fredericton
 The Fredericton Express lost today to the Hershey Bears 4-2 thus losing the Calder Cup final four games to none. Hershey went through the play-offs with a record of 12-0 and claimed its seventh title in 50 years. On the other hand this was Fredericton's first trip to the finals in seven years. Despite the Express's good season of winning 33 of 40 home games, attendance was not as big as the Nordiques main office would have liked.

Bears Complete Calder Cup Sweep

May 16, Halifax
 The Nova Scotia Oilers, who have called Halifax their home for four years, are ready to move to Sydney, NS, giving Cape Bretoners the proteam they've sought for years. The team will play out of the city's new centre 200. Approval of the deal is not expected before the last week of June, when the AHL holds its annual meeting in South Carolina. The news may not be all bad for Halifax. Team officials with the Fredericton Express admitted Thursday that the AHL Northern Division Champions are looking for a new home. But they would not confirm reports that the team had its sights set on Halifax.

City, Nords Discuss Three-Year Deal

May 25, Fredericton
 Fredericton mayor Brad Woodside says he is confident the Express will return to the city after a three-hour meeting with Quebec Nordiques president, Marcel Aubet, here last

night. The Nordiques are rumoured to lose between \$300,000-\$500,000 a year and Mayor Woodside says they drop something around the area of \$3 million in this community. Aubut has admitted that he has been in contact with groups in Kanata, Ontario, and Halifax, NS, looking to lure the Nordiques farm club to town, but, Aubut says he wants to see what Fredericton is going to offer him first. Mayor Woodside made it

clear that it will be the Nordiques or no one sponsoring an AHL Hockey Club in Fredericton next season. Developers in Kanata have "a signed contract with the president of a National Hockey League club" for placement of an AHL franchise in the Ottawa suburb for the 1988-89 season. Nordiques vice-president, Maurice Filion, denied they had a deal locked up with the community about 15 miles west of Ottawa. **May 26, Fredericton** Fredericton mayor Brad Woodside says Quebec Nordiques president, Maurice Aubut, is ready to sign on for a three year commitment to preserve the city's American Hockey League franchise ... if

the conditions he proposed yesterday are met by the new June 3 deadline for negotiation of a new lease at the Aitken Centre.

May 27
 It has been learned that the Vancouver Canucks, which had an affiliation agreement

Delay Number Six, And Counting

with the Quebec Nordiques for the past six years, will establish their own farm team in Phoenix, Arizona, in the I.H.L.

June 1, Fredericton
 Fredericton business leaders emerged from a three hour meeting with \$100,000 commitment toward keeping the American Hockey League Fredericton Express in the city. Fifty individual groups said they would contribute \$2000 towards the team. If accepted the Nordiques would agree to a three year deal should similar conditions be met each season.

AHL Express Are History In City

June 4, Fredericton
 Quebec Nordiques president, Marcel Aubut, has been granted yet another extension before he delivers the verdict on whether the American Hockey League Fredericton Express will return to the city for the 1988-89 season. Aubut asked for a deadline of next Wednesday evening at 8pm

June 10, Fredericton
 A final decision on the fate of the seven year old franchise was to have been announced today, but the Nordiques head office asked for an extension until they can communicate directly to Nordiques president, Marcel Aubet. Aubut remains in a Quebec City hospital with high blood

pressure and was allegedly inaccessible to even his most intimate underlings in the Nordique organization yesterday.

June 11, Fredericton
 The local business community representative, Dave Emerson, formally withdrew the offer of a guaranteed \$100,000 line of credit with a commitment to raise an additional \$25,000 to Marcel Aubut, Nordiques president. This ended the marathon mission to save the AHL Express from extinction.

The move apparently forces the Nordiques to Halifax, where they had been involved in negotiations to take over as tenants of the Metro Centre from the departed Nova Scotia Oilers.

The Express end a seven year run in the Capital City having completed their most successful on ice season this past year. The club reached the Calder Cup final for the first time in their history, only to lose in consecutive games to the Hershey Bears.

June 11, Halifax
 The AHL Board of Directors' meeting ended here yesterday - no further ahead than when they convened Thursday morning. Entering the meetings the Edmonton Oilers had a tentative agreement to move to Sydney. That left Quebec Nordiques negotiating with both Halifax and Fredericton as a home for their AHL affiliate. The Nordiques' inability to

finalize an agreement with either of those cities has left Edmonton and Sydney in a holding pattern.

June 23, Halifax
 Quebec Nordiques ended weeks of speculation Wednesday when they announced their American Hockey League affiliate will play out of Halifax Metro Centre next season. The Nordiques, entering their 10th season in the National Hockey League, signed

Oilers move to Sydney

a multi-year agreement with Trade Centre Limited operators of Metro Centre and the World Trade and Convention Centre - at a news conference in Halifax. The deal maintains the AHL's 17 year presence in Halifax but leaves Fredericton without a team in the minor-professional league. The Nordiques operated Fredericton Express for seven years, the last six in partnership with Vancouver Canucks. Vancouver has moved its minor-league franchise to Milwaukee of the International League. Quebec also chose to run an independent affiliate "because it was crucial that we take control of our

Pro Hockey Not Worth The Price

destiny," Aubut said. He said he has given the people of Fredericton "all the opportunity" to keep the Express, which reached the AHL final this year. "(But) they were not able to reach our demands." **June 25, Halifax** The failure of two American Hockey League teams to survive in Halifax did not stop

Quebec Nordiques from moving their AHL affiliate to the Nova Scotia capital Wednesday.

"We know there's two strikes against us," said Gilles Leger, the Nordiques director of player development. "But again, we're here to hit a home run, not to strike out." Nova Scotia Premier John Buchanan said the two Nova Scotia clubs will be backed by the provincial government. Noting the province has

assisted the Halifax-based team for the last 12-14 years by purchasing a block of seats. He said similar contributions, if requested, will be made to the Cape Breton entry. **Today** Vancouver is in Milwaukee, Quebec is in Halifax, and Halifax is in Sydney, and no one is in Fredericton. This winter the Capital City will be a bit more boring for hockey fans, as well as students. Undoubtedly, there will be the odd road trip to Moncton or Halifax, but not everyone has the time. From the school's perspective, they're out the rent of the Aitken Centre (not that it mattered if they had returned under the new contract). And the campus police aren't going to have much to do on Thursdays and Saturdays. Either will the AUC staff, or the conscientious employees and media which covered the games. Despite all this, would we really want the Nordiques back. They wanted \$150,000 from business, \$25,000 from UNB, and up to \$55,000 from the city (it was rumoured), and they want this every year. This is a little too much.