

— The BRUNSWICKAN

Red Blazers his main concern but **Savoy wants changes in local women's ice hockey**

By JO-ANNE JEFFERSON
Sports Editor

There is a team on the University of New Brunswick campus that has been around for the last three years. But it's only in the last term that they have begun to be noticed, both by the members of the local student media and the student body.

That team is the Red Blazers, UNB's women's hockey team, and their recent recognition is, in part, the results of the conscientious efforts of their coach, Brian Savoy.

Savoy, a fourth year Physical Education student here at the University, recently agreed to an interview about the girls and his involvement.

What is women's hockey? What rules do you follow?

We kept the rules of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association (CAHA). We play the same game, except you have females playing where you have males playing normally.

How long has it been going on at UNB?

It's been going on about three years here at UNB. I've been handling it for two years. As far as people knowing about it and getting information, I think it's been, with the co-operation of the Brunswickan, only this year that it's been known as far as the Red Blazers, who were the Red Blazers.

People would come up to me and ask if it was a basketball team or something. I think it was through the Brunswickan that people started to realize that there was women's ice hockey here.

What support do you get from the university as far as finances, equipment, etc.?

We get ice time, equipment, money. We have some support. I'm thankful about that too.

What kind of equipment do the girls use?

Full equipment as far as ice hockey goes. You get everything. There's been a lot of talk lately about the violence in hockey, for men's teams. Have you had any problems like that with the Red Blazers?

Not really. They're not aggressive enough. But you should have seen the game against Halifax West and Dalhousie in the tournament we took part in this weekend. It was incredible. You wouldn't think girls played that way. There were injuries, checking cross checking, everything you see in men's hockey.

The toughest team in that game was probably Halifax West, that's how they won the game. They came back, they forechecked, they backchecked, they did everything that a men's hockey team would do and that's the way you play the game.

Is women's hockey prominent in this area? Are there many women playing the sport?

There are a fair amount of teams around. What I would like to see is the Red Blazers in a league to make it more interesting to them. There are four or five teams in this area we could play. We could form a league with them to keep down the cost of travelling.

Later on as hockey progressed we could play teams like Dalhousie. But that requires a lot of support by the university.

Who are the teams you could see forming a league with?

Woodstock, Oromocto, St. Thomas. Leroy Washburn (Athletics Director of STU) has got girls who could play the Blazers but we never had the chance this year.

Teams here in Fredericton, maybe a team from Fredericton High School.

We could promote girls participation in Sports like hockey rather than have basketball you know, the traditional stuff. Why not have women playing hockey instead?

How do you view women's hockey?

First of all I've got a lot of respect for girls and I think that it's important for a coach to make them feel you respect them.

One of the things asked me throughout the year is "Does a coach go in the dressing room?" Well, sure you do but after everybody is decent. Then the coach goes in and gives his speech.

Is it different, coaching girls rather than guys?

Yes. You react differently, you think differently. You gotta tell yourself these are girls you're handling. Sometimes I forget. But I try to stay in the middle of the road and don't make anything special because they're girls. I just treat them the way I think a coach should treat them.

Would you use different techniques coaching girls than you would use teaching guys?

I use the same technique as far as teaching them how to skate and things like that. The only thing is, I'm not as hard on them as I would be for a men's team.

Do the girls vary much in their mastery of skill? Is there a large span between levels of skill or are the girls pretty well equal?

There is quite a difference in the ability between girls. Some girls are good shooters. Some girls are good skaters, but not good shooters. Some girls hustle a lot, you know, they like to be tough, check, but you don't get that with all teams.

That's one of the problems I've

been having, is the attitude. Everybody is not the same. You've got individual characteristics. You try to tie these things down but for a girls team it's hard. It's hard to try to tell them to get out there and go and check the other person. On a girls team, you don't have that kind of thing.

Why?

That's probably because of the false idea of the public who think that a girls hockey team should be a "ladies" team where you don't check, you just play hockey. But that's false. When you get down to the basics, I think, checking and everything is involved.

How did you begin coaching the Red Blazers?

About two years ago, after I quit varsity with the Red Devils, Cathy Collins, who is my team captain today, she asked me if I wanted to coach the team, so from that point on I've been coaching the Red Blazers.

I think if they weren't satisfied they would have fired me a long time ago.

Will you be back next year?

I don't think so. I doubt it because I'm graduating this year.

What Faculty?

Physical Education.

Who will coach next year?

I haven't chosen my coach to follow me next year, but whoever it is better do a hell of a good job. I'm the type that I'll write back and find out how we're doing.

What about your own experience in Hockey, both as a player and coach?

As a player, I played in the different stages, peewee, mosquito peewee (that's in Quebec). Then I played for the Quebec Ramparts farm team. I played there for two years. Then I came to STU playing hockey for them for a year. After that I came to UNB and played with them two years.

Coaching, well, I've coached peewee, bantam, midget and here at university, I've coached the Red Blazers for two years.

When you play yourself you're a goaltender, right? Does this influence how you look at the game of hockey and your perspective of hockey? Would it tend to make you, say, more defensive-minded or do you feel it has any effect at all in that sense?

I think the point is well made here because I think most pro players say that goaltenders make the best coaches and I do believe so. Not because I was a goaltender but because as a goaltender you see all aspects of the game.

You see the forwards, how they come back and backcheck and you see the defense, how they play. I guess you see everything. Sometimes you see far more than what a coach may see.

Brian Savoy is a guy, serious in his attempts to better women's hockey in this area. The Blazers have been fortunate to have him for their pilot for the last two years. UNB could definitely use more people like Savoy and his efforts to make things better for women in sport.

Said Savoy, "I hope next year, women's sports, and especially hockey will be promoted a bit more. I'd like to see more fans out there. Not only friends of friends of players coming out to see the games."

"I'd even like to see people who've never seen a girls' hockey team just come out for once and have a good luck at what women's ice hockey is all about. I think it is important."

For Savoy and for the Red Blazers, it has been and will continue to be so. If success comes from desire and determination, they've got it made.

It's fun and games for contestants *in N.B. Underwater Olympics*



CONTESTANTS AND SPECTATORS both enjoyed the amusingly diverse tests devised to challenge their mastery of underwater skills.



A PLUMBER'S NIGHTMARE is exactly what this event is. It was one of many testing the skills and endurance of the contestants.

On February 28, the UNB Scuba Club sponsored the New Brunswick Underwater Olympics in the Sir Max Aitken Pool. A total of nine club teams, including four from UNB.

The first place overall team winner was the UNB number four squad. The competition included such

events as Dress the Diver, Plumbers Nightmare and the underwater tricycle races as well as many other feats of skill and endurance.

All in all the games were a great success with an increased participation over last year. Next year the organizers are in hope of even bigger and better things.