

Alex Hardy

Sports Chatter

Many times in the past, masses of University of Alberta sports fanatics have confronted Gateway with the question: "Are the quotes you print the same as the coaches and players give you?"

To satisfy the fans, Gateway sent freshman sports reporter Oliver Shagnasty to the opening Golden Bear hockey practice of the season Thursday. It was billed as a rookie tryout, but the veterans came around to relive past glories. Unknown to Oliver, a tape recorder was fastened to his chest. Following is his report:

OLIVER: "Gee, I'm frightened. This is my first big assignment. Now I know how Red Smith felt when he covered his first World Series. I wonder what's expected of me? I guess I'll go see the coach, Clare Drake, and get things 'clare'ified (pun—just 2,000,103 more and I'll be even with Don Sheldon.)"

(Oliver trots into Varsity Arena and down a long, narrow corridor. He spies a room with "HOME TEAM" initialed on the door. He hesitates, then slowly opens the door.)

OLIVER: Gawrsh!! That man over there must be the coach. He's SO handsome. He looks like Punch Imlach with hair. And he's wearing one of those exclusive big-time-coaches' hats, just like the one I saw on channel 9 television back in Carrot Creek.

(Oliver waddles up to introduce himself.)

OLIVER: Uh, hello Mr. Swan . . . I mean Magpie . . . or it is Scarecrow? Er, just what IS your name sir?

C. DRAKE: Clare Drake, son. Sorry, but no minors allowed in the dressing room. You might develop wrong ideas about athletes.

OLIVER: What do you mean, Mr. Coach (or should that be Mr. Ice Foreman, or Mr. Head Mentor?—All I see is that man with the big pads—he must be my idol, Dale Harder—drinking from that bottle . . . and foam is coming from his ears. And there's that other man in the shower with that cheerleader and those knee and elbow pads. He must be Dave Jenkins, the other goaler. I've seen his picture in Police Gazette.

C. DRAKE: Quiet! Somebody might be listening. Those Gateway people are prettry snoopy this year.

OLIVER: But Mr. Drake, sir. I'M the Gateway people.

C. DRAKE: YOU! You must be joking, son. Gateway has always been blessed with upstanding, clean-cut young men like Bill Winship, Barry Rust, and Gary Kiernan for sportswriters, not tiny runts like you. Let's face it son, they could clean cannons with you. You're skinny enough to wipe pens with.

OLIVER: That was funny Mr. Drake, Excuse me while I laugh.

C. DRAKE: Don't let it break you up son.

OLIVER: Say who's that small, skinny fellow over there? Is he your mascot?

C. DRAKE: No sonny, that's Jim Fleming, a forward. He weighs 140 pounds, if you throw in the blisters on his heels. The other fellows have to be careful not to step on him in the corridors. Watch him carefully son. He's friendly, but so skinny that if he wrapped his arm around your shoulder he'd cut you.

OLIVER: But Coach, I thought Mr. Fleming graduated last year?

C. DRAKE: Shhh! Quiet son. If the league found out we'd have to forfeit the championship. Saskatchewan and Manitoba are always looking for ways like that to beat us.

OLIVER: Sorry, Mr. Drake. Say, who's that mean-looking man sitting in the corner?

C. DRAKE: That's Howie Green. Before a game he has the same disposition as a rooster with a sore toe.

OLIVER: I see. Who's that man peering in the hourglass over there?

C. DRAKE: That's Rod "Butch" Hyde, son. He's the slow member of the team. He can walk as fast as he skates. He couldn't beat a covered wagon at anything over 100 yards. Butch is so slow that starvation is an added hazard when he's on the ice.

OLIVER: Gee, Mr. Drake. Do you think I could talk to one or two of the players. Huh, Mr. Drake, huh?

C. DRAKE: Yes, but make it snappy. We practice in 11 seconds.

OLIVER: Sure thing Mr. Drake. Say, there's Ed Wahl, the centre from Calgary. Hi, Mr. Wahl.

ED WAHL: Hello kid. You going to write something good about us this year?

OLIVER: Gosh, I sure hope so. Tell me, Mr. Wahl, are . . .

ED WAHL: Remember, kid, my name's Wahl . . . W-A-H-L. Remember that and we'll get along fine.

OLIVER: Sure, Mr. Ed . . . I mean Mr. Wall.

ED WAHL: Not Wall, you green banana. Wahl . . . W-A-H-L.

C. DRAKE: OK men. Time to start practice. Everybody on the ice. (players slowly file out).

OLIVER: I better go now, Mr. Drake. Do you mind if I use these great quotes you gave me?

C. DRAKE (astonished): Of course I mind. Come here son. I'll give you some quotable quotes.

OLIVER: (moves closer, eyes aglow, pen in ready position): Gee, you really mean it? That's ginger peachy-keen.

C. DRAKE: How about this: We'll have a fine team this year. We have some fine players, and with the fans' support we'll have a fine season.

OLIVER: I hate to stick my nose in your business, Mr. Drake sir, but don't you think you're being a little provocative?

C. DRAKE: Maybe you're right. Take out the "fines". Now how does it read?

OLIVER: It reads: We have a team this year. We have some players, and with the fans' support we'll have a season.

C. DRAKE: That's better. Well, I've got to go now. See you later, bird.

OLIVER: Goodbye Mr. Drake. And good luck.

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Constructed a bridge of great beauty,
But a reckless young man
Drove his car on the span,
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down came bridge,
down came Newty.

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