

VIEW FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

by Mark Savoie

Last weekend I was fortunate enough to travel to Quebec City to watch our Red Bloomers compete in the national women's basketball championships. Although the Bloomers were unable to win the tournament they did put together a fine effort and played to the best of their abilities. Even their biggest loss (by 18 points) was not an embarrassment, for the Bloomers did play well. The University of Regina Cougars were simply a better, more experienced team. Next year the shoe will be on the other foot, and the Bloomers will be the team with the experience and the talent. As for the Bloomers, there is no disgrace in losing to a superior team, so long as you give your best effort. The Bloomers should only be proud of their performance last weekend. They should also be proud of the individual awards they received from the AUSA this season. Jennifer Hale was named league MVP and was also named to the first All-Star team along with Kara Palmer. Jill Jackson was named to the second All-Star team, while Laura Swift was declared Rookie of the Year in the AUSA.

One of the highlights of the trip was the chance to tour the Université de Laval campus. As this is supposedly a sports column I won't dwell on the tunnels which connect each building on campus, making it possible attend all of your classes without going outside. Nor will I concern myself that their campus bar is far inferior to our Social Club. The truly impressive thing about Laval is the women PEPS. PEPS is a French acronym for Physical Education something-or-other and it has all the sports and physical fitness facilities of UNB and more. It puts our campus to shame. Their main gymnasium makes The Pit look old and pathetic; which of course is exactly what it is. They have an Olympic length eight lane swimming pool replete with two springboards, two 3-metre springboards, and 5, 7, and 10-metre towers. Truly a major league operation. They also have two hockey rinks in the complex, although only one of these accommodates spectators. In truth the Aitken Centre is a better hockey facility than the PEPS, but since events of this and previous years have made clear that Gord LeBel does not consider students to be welcome in the Aitken Centre what does that really matter. It also has indoor tennis courts, an indoor track, and other facilities which I didn't observe first hand. To top it all off, the place has its own parking garage. In short, I was very, very impressed.

A team that does not appear to be giving it their best effort is this year's edition of the Quebec Nordiques. They played the Los Angeles Gretzkys last Saturday night at the Colisée, losing 3-0. The fact that they lost was not so bad. Let's face it, the Nordiques aren't even close to touching the Gretzkys in terms of talent. The real tragedy was that the team is merely going through the motions, and barely even doing that. A lot has been said about the Nordiques playing to lose in order to win the Eric Lindros lottery. And I wouldn't be all that surprised to discover that that was in fact the case at the high management level, but for the players to be as listless as they were was disheartening to behold. The game was one of the most boring I've ever seen, without a single check of note during the entire contest.

The only player on the team who seems to have escaped this general miasma is Joe Sakic. Sakic was to my eyes the best player on the ice for that one game, superior to even Wayne Gretzky. True, he was held without a point, but with the talent he has to work with it is truly remarkable that he has been able to record over 90 points thus far this season. His linemate to open the game was Guy Lafleur, currently enduring his final season in the NHL. Lafleur was the best offensive player of his era, and it was sad to see his play against LA. He seemed to be out of synch during the game, coughing up the puck shortly after receiving it. On his only scoring chance he missed the puck. It's depressing to see a hero fail. He remains a hero in Quebec City, with the crowd chanting "Guy, Guy, Guy" every time he touched the puck. At times it was rather pathetic, with the crowd starting the chant as Lafleur picked up the puck behind his own net only to lose it almost immediately.

As it was LA the Nordiques were playing they had to contend with Gretzky. Gretzky had a routine night, garnering two assists in the course of his night's work. That being said, I was disappointed. Admittedly, it would have been difficult for Gretzky to live up to my expectations, but I still think that had this been an average performance for him he wouldn't be the Godlike figure he is today. Of his two assists one was a nice lead pass to Tony Granato who then cut in from the faceoff circle to beat Jacques Cloutier to the far post. But his first assist was simply a routine pass to Granato, who then made a routine pass to Patrick Sandstrom, who then took a routine slap shot through a routine screen for a routine power-play goal. Big deal. Don't get me wrong, Gretzky was clearly among the elite on the ice, but for this one game he was only 'The Good One', not 'The Great One'.

Female

AUSA Female Swimmer of the Year, Meaghan Seagrave, of the UNB Beavers was named the UNB Athlete of the Month. Meaghan won the 50 m. freestyle, 100 m. breaststroke, 400 m IM and finished second in the 100 freestyle at the AUSA Championships held February 15, 16 and 17th here at UNB. Meaghan's outstanding times qualified her for the CIAU's in Halifax held on March 1, 2, and 3rd.

Coach Andrew Cole was extremely impressed with Meaghan's ability to perform "when the chips are down."

Meaghan is a Fredericton native, and she is completing her first year in the Bachelor of Physical Education program.

Male

Sean Dockrill, co-captain of the UNB Black Bears earned the UNB Male Athlete of the Month for February. Sean was named the Most Outstanding Wrestler at the AUSA Championships, held on February 16th, as he tore up his weight class en route to the gold medal in the 150 lb. weight class. Sean led the Black Bears to another AUSA Championship as the Bears won an unbelievable 7 gold medals out of a possible 10. Sean won the right to represent the AUSA conference at the CIAU's in Regina on March 1st and 2nd.

Sean is a junior in the Bachelor of Arts program from Bridgewater, Nova Scotia.

Join Sports

The season has ended. Next year will be here sooner than you think.



For those interested in writing, lay out, or photography for next season, contact Kelly Craig, Room 35 of the SUB.

Be there!

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Varsity Mania award to Aitken House



Aitken House President, Hal Brothers (centre), proudly accepts the first annual Grande Finale Prize awarded at Varsity-Mania's last big event of the year, February 24. The prize was presented by Coastal Graphics representative Greg Harquail (left) and Varsity-Mania Coordinator Steve Williams (Right)