

## Sports editorial: NHL: A league of problems

by: Frank Denis

"So how was your summer?" seems to be a very popular question on campus right now and the answer is often, "Great" or "Not bad". But ask that same question to the bosses of the National Hockey League and if they don't answer "Couldn't have been worse" they're lying.

In the past five months the league has been rocked by a strike, embarrassed by a screwed up trade, and laughed at because of some recent rule changes.

For the NHL, March and April are supposed to be the time when teams are jockeying for a good playoff spot, not a time when players are walking the picket lines refusing to play because the league has not had the time earlier in the year to talk to the players about a settlement.

The strike not only left the fans, the most important people for the NHL, upset, it left them refusing to go to any games.

The Hartford Whalers had a little more than 9,000 fans at their playoff games against the Montreal Canadiens and to say it was because Hartford didn't have a chance against the first place team in their division is not true. That series was decided in overtime of the seventh and deciding game.

Edmonton Oilers General Manager Glen Sather created a state of panic in Edmonton a while back when he said that the team was in jeopardy because they had only sold 8,500 season tickets. For a team that was dominant in the late eighties, that's scary.

Not since Mario Lemieux entered the league has so much attention been devoted to a rookie as it has been to Eric Lindros.

Lindros shafted the league last season when he refused to play for the Quebec Nordiques because of the language tension in the province. If that was not embarrassing enough for the league, the league embarrassed themselves further with the botched Lindros trade which had him traded to both the New York Rangers and the Philadelphia Flyers.

Eventually an arbitrator ruled that the Flyers had the rights to Lindros. If the league cannot decide on its own when a trade is a trade then something is wrong. The Lindros decision should have been made 24 hours after the screw up and not 10 days later by an arbitrator in Toronto.

Rule changes were made over the summer and the scariest and stupidest one involves the league's decision to make the wearing of helmets optional. By doing so the league is hoping that the game will be more appealing for the fans because it will allow them to better identify their favorite players. However what about the most watched sport in the US? The last time I watched an NFL game all the players were wearing helmets. Insurance companies for the NHL are already counting on more payouts next year because of head injuries. Helmets were made mandatory in 1979 and with the recent rule change the league is going back to the old ways.

Image is another problem for the league. Take for example a London, England newspaper, *The Independent* and its story on the exhibition games between the Montreal Canadiens and the Chicago Blackhawks played a few weeks ago.

The paper interviewed a fan named Thomas who had driven from Glasgow to see the games and asked him what he expected. "Blood and gore. I'm looking for slaughter. If I don't get it I won't be coming tomorrow."

The paper then explains the game. "The rules allow a lot of body contact - it's fine to barge and shove your opponent, hold him back, knock him down, get in his way or try to hook his legs out from under him."

The image of the league is the biggest problem affecting the deal and it is for that reason that the league is still without a major US television deal.

Right now the league is struggling and without some proper and responsible management will be in serious trouble. The league has potential. Lets hope that this winter is not nearly as bleak for the league as its summer was.

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Proof that there is light at the end of the tunnel for the NHL; our local hockey card expert Mike Power informs me that card companies will no longer be able to print cards of players until they have played at least one NHL game. What this means is that cards will be hitting the shelves later as companies wait for that first game to be played. A good move.

In the past companies have come out with 700 card sets half of which are players no one has ever heard of and probably never will.

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**This week's trivia question:** Name the four teams that Gary Carter played on before announcing his retirement last week?

Last week's answer: Jonathan Thompson is the UNB student who won the national criterium cycling championships.

# Campus recreation

## FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### Tennis Courts

Four tennis courts located above Tibbits Hall are available on a first-come, first-serve basis only. Reservations for individuals are only accepted during the summer, however, groups can book the courts 24 hours in advance by contacting the Equipment and Facilities Manager at 453-4579 during office hours.

### Ice Skating

Ice skating for UNB/STU students and Recreation members at the Aitken Centre will begin on October 19, Monday to Friday, 12:30 to 1:30 pm. Wednesdays from 1:00 pm to 1:30 pm is reserved for parents who wish to bring their children (family membership is required). Please bring your I.D. to show the recreation staff attendant for admission. No door admission will be accepted.

## NON-CREDIT INSTRUCTION

### Red Cross/Royal Lifesaving Water Safety Instructor II course

This course trains individuals to teach the top 4 levels of the Red Cross Water Safety Program and beginning levels of the Royal Lifesaving Society Program. It runs for 40 hours plus provisional teaching.

Class dates: Nov. 17, 19, 24, 26, 28  
March 23, 25, 30, April 1, 3  
Prerequisite: WSI I + Bronze Medallion + Senior Resuscitation  
Registration: begins October 10 at the UNB Business Office

Registration deadline is Nov. 6

FEES: \$75 + text - for UNB/STU students & recreation members  
\$85 + text - for non-members  
add \$5 after November 8

## INTRAMURAL SPORTS

### \$\$ LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY \$\$

Referees are still wanted for the following sports:

Touch Football	Soccer	Softball
Ice Hockey	Basketball	Volleyball
Floor Hockey	Waterpolo	

Some experience is preferred, training also provided. Please come to the Recreation office and complete and application if you are interested.

### Co-ed Curling Bonspiel

Registration begins October 6 at the Recreation office for a curling bonspiel on October 20 at the Capital Winter Club. Teams of 4 (2 guys/2 girls) with 2 alternates must pay an entry fee of \$10. The last day to register is Tuesday, October 20 at 4pm. Only 8 teams may play, so register early to guarantee a spot.

### Co-ed Innetube Waterpolo

The co-ed innetube waterpolo league will play on Wednesday evenings this term. Registration forms are available at the Recreation office since Sept. 30; the deadline is October 14.

### Men's Basketball & Men's Ball Hockey

Registration for men's basketball and ball hockey begins on Tuesday, October 6. Basketball games are on Wednesday and Sunday evenings. Ball Hockey games are on Mon., Tues., Thurs., and Sunday evenings. Register early to guarantee a place. Minimum number of entries are accepted for each league.

# CIAU top ten

### FOOTBALL

1. WILFRID LAURIER
2. U.B.C.
3. SAINT MARY'S
4. BISHOP'S
5. TORONTO
6. QUEEN'S
7. CALGARY
8. GUELPH
9. WESTERN
10. MCMASTER

### SOCCER (W)

1. MCMASTER
2. MCGILL
3. U.B.C.
4. SAINT MARY'S
5. TORONTO
6. ACADIA
7. ALBERTA
8. WESTERN
9. DALHOUSIE
10. YORK

### SOCCER (M)

1. LAURENTIAN
2. VICTORIA
3. U.B.C.
4. MCGILL
5. DALHOUSIE
6. U.Q.T.R.
7. ALBERTA
8. SHERBROOKE
9. U.N.B.
10. CARLETON

### CROSS COUNTRY (W)

1. WESTERN ONTARIO
2. TORONTO
3. U.B.C.
4. QUEEN'S
5. WINDSOR
6. DALHOUSIE
7. GUELPH
8. MCGILL
9. MANITOBA
10. WATERLOO

### CROSS COUNTRY (M)

1. TORONTO
2. WINDSOR
3. SHERBROOKE
4. WESTERN ONTARIO
5. U.B.C.
6. U.N.B.
7. LAURENTIAN
8. QUEEN'S
9. MANITOBA
10. WATERLOO

### FIELD HOCKEY

1. VICTORIA
2. BRITISH COLUMBIA
3. TORONTO
4. TIE ALBERTA  
NEW BRUNSWICK  
YORK
7. MANITOBA
8. GUELPH
9. QUEEN'S
10. CLAGARY