

# Sports

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Is it all coming to an end?

## Apathy leads to decline of Red and White



"The Red and White Society is a university-wide service organization located in Winters College, offering a wide range of social and cultural activities designed to generate a fuller awareness of university life in the student . . . The ultimate goal of the Red and White Society is the destruction of student apathy and the realization of the student as a politically relevant unit within the University community, although there were nasty rumours last year to the effect that all the Red and White Society was trying to do was have a good time."

— from the Winters College Handbook ('72-'73)

By WARREN CLEMENTS

The Red and White Society, led by the folks who post those suggestive invitations to hockey games and hire the buses to attend them, faces oblivion.

"At the current rate," predicts member John Schaw, author of the posters, "the Red and White will either die out by next year or become a small clique."

The reason is that interest in the society's activities has died this year. "Nobody wants to go to football games because the team always loses," Schaw explains. "At one Queen's game there were five of us attending, and 200 drunken, screaming Queen's fans with cheerleaders running all over us."

"And we're also pretty upset with the fair weather hockey fans around this place. When the hockey team wins, they come out. When it loses, they don't come out."

### ORIGIN IN FOUNDERS

The society originated a few years ago in a small cubby-hole in Founders, and moved to Winters two years ago when that college offered them a larger room. Although all York students are theoretically members of the Red and White, the core members — those who regularly attend the games — number 30, and 50 to 100 persons sit with the core and drink.

The only executive is a president, Eric Tuori, who takes care of the money and administrative duties; the others put up the posters and engage in drinking contests. A recent contest pitted the Red and White against the Absinthe Coffee House, the rugger team, the Open End, the Orange Snail and a local high school.

Critics complain that in its advertisements and in practice, the society appeals only to those fans who are willing to wash down a few cans of beer while they cheer.

"Well," answers Schaw, "if we tell people they can drink and be rowdy, the drinking people will come out to start with, and then the non-drinkers will follow. Besides, if you get a little hammered, you yell a little louder."

Critics have also argued that by using sexist insults in their posters ("U of T Fags", "fag fry", "Ottawa G-Stringers"), the society members propagate the image of the sports enthusiast as an ignorant 'jock' who drinks hard, balls hard and has a brain which would fit quite comfortably into the navel of a flea.

### ATTRACT ATTENTION

"That's nonsense," retorts Schaw. "Half the guys who come to our games can't play sports. They're crocks, with busted knees. They can't make the Varsity teams, but they want to do something for the school; they don't want to sit home on their asses."

"The idea of the little comments is to get people to stop and read the posters. If you put the word 'burlesque' at the top of a sign, people will read it — it has nothing to do with the posters. The idea of the posters is to get to as many people as possible as cheaply and as easily as possible. There's chauvinism in the posters, but not in the organization. A lot of girls read them and go out to the games."

"We try to insult the other teams, create a rivalry between universities. Rivalries are what fill the stadiums, and you can't start it ten years from now."

He cites the example of the annual institution of the Ramfuck, so named because "we always cream the Ryerson Rams." That, however, is one of the few successes they have had; their setbacks would fill a long list, not the least of which was the decision to move the York football games to the CNE stadium.

"I can understand why they moved down. The astroturf cuts down the number of injuries, and the other teams didn't like dressing in the ice arena. But a lot of York people don't want to make the trip to see the games, and you have to pay for the buses and for admission to the stadium."

### NO FACILITIES

They tried to cheer at the basketball games, but the crowd was openly hostile to the society's drum and siren. And at the Ice Palace, hockey attendance was marred by sub-zero temperatures. Heaters were promised in the fall, and finally installed by Christmas, but they have yet to be plugged in, thus rendering the arena about as hospitable as the meat cooler in your local food store.

"York has no facilities, no stadium and no status. If the hockey team starts winning, they might have a chance of receiving donations from alumni — if we ever get enough alumni. And the people at York don't give a shit. This is a commuter school. Most of the students have their social life at home."

"Everything fails here," adds Gloria Agnew, one of two social coordinators at Winters. "We can't even conceive of having a homecoming, because nobody would come home."

"If we create student participation, maybe then social events will start to succeed. If people start going to games, that could build up a greater York spirit. They'll feel something for the school itself, a sense of tradition. It's a very nebulous thing — like Queen's tradition of tearing down goalposts at the end of a game. When the posts were converted to metal, the Queen's people would go out the night before the game with hacksaws."

### SPLIT IN BAND

The Red and White tried to form a band to compete with Lady Godiva's Marching Band, a 35-piece group composed of Varsity engineers, but half of its members — in a McLaughlin branch called Colonel Titfart's Marching Band — have broken away under a new leader who wants "something like a fraternity, with initiations and the whole bit", according to Schaw.

The society also wanted to publish a program of athletic events, starting with basketball and hockey, but they couldn't line up a sponsor. CYSF refused to allot them a budget until Christmas, and the \$800 promised has subsequently dwindled to \$500, out of which the Red and White has taken enough to fix a couple of sirens and buy a new one.

"It's a shame," says Schaw. "Red and White could have been something really good. But whereas last year we could charter and fill two buses to an away game, this year we had trouble filling one. And if somebody started a York cheer, only half as many fans as last year would respond."

## Rugby squad set to meet Welsh opponents in May

This coming May, the York University Rugby Club will be hosting a rugby team from Wales. Last summer, the York club travelled to Yugoslavia to play a series of matches there against local opposition.

What prompts this interaction with teams and players from other countries? How did these arrangements come about and how did the players finance the trip and how will they host the Welsh team which is coming?

The answers to those questions provide an explanation as to why rugby is played from the Fiji Islands to Singapore and from New Zealand to Sweden. The answers also give an insight into the unique traditional social atmosphere which surrounds the games.

From the playing point of view, these exchanges and tours offer an opportunity to test one's muscles and prowess against teams from other lands and to learn the different techniques and approaches to the game prevalent in other countries. The visit to Yugoslavia was the first effort in what is planned to be a continuing series of such trips. The opposition was not that strong with the result that York won all its matches.

The Welsh team coming this spring is an entirely different matter as their players come from what is recognized to be one of the rugby centres of the world. Their background in the game is much stronger than that here in Canada, both in playing experience and in the technical aspects of the game. Playing against them will provide a young and rapidly progressing York team with the opportunity to learn and progress that much faster. The Welsh team will be here for three weeks and playing eight other games during their stay. The Welsh squad will be playing on campus May 27.

Trips between club teams and national teams of various countries are very common and indeed, are one of the pleasant side benefits of rugby. The experience of seeing the sights and meeting the people of other countries such as Yugoslavia is never to be forgotten. Unlike most North American sports, rugby players

meet and socialize with one another (usually over some form of bubbly refreshment) after the game, regaling one and all with stories of how good they used to be or how great the teams they used to play with were.

This social side is not confined only to post game gatherings. It spills over to outlets such as the broom-ball games, golf and squash tournaments, the Jocke Strappe Choir, dances, boat races, and other various activities carried out by the York Club. Indeed, it has often been remarked that the social part of rugby is damn near as important as the playing side.

This philosophy plus the feeling that every one should be able to play, regardless of his size, weight or level of ability has undoubtedly helped the recent rapid growth of the sport throughout the schools, universities and clubs in Ontario. The fact that the players buy their own uniforms, raise and/or pay the money for trips such as the one to Yugoslavia, has probably fostered the group spirit and sense of accomplishment experienced by members of the York squad and rugby players the world over.

The York Rugby Club now functions year round and is one of the few on campus who have kept their former undergraduate players connected with the team and actively supporting it. It might also be because rugby is a lot of fun as well.

### Tourney set here

This year York University will play host for the 25th annual Golden Ball basketball tournament to determine the all-Ontario high school basketball champions.

Sixteen teams from across the province will be competing, with the matches to be held in the Tait McKenzie gym from March 20-22.

Admission is \$1.50 for all games except the finals where the admission will be \$2.