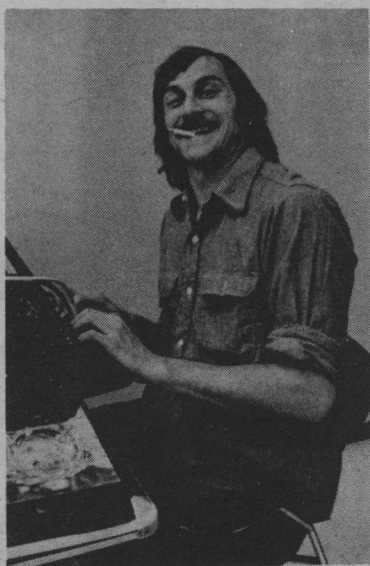


the fifth quarter



Paul Cadogan

The utter shambles that was passed off as officiating in the Canada/Russia hockey series just ended, with the Russians winning 2, Canada winning 1, the teams tying three and the officials winning 2, makes a body wonder about the selection process that determines these gentlemen fit to occupy their positions.

I talked with a gentlemen in the USSR and he gave me the details.

It seems that prospective referees are taken into a large brightly lit room where they are given some tasks to perform. First they are shown diagrams of the human body, upon which the areas of the gluteus maximus (ass end) and the elbow are very clearly delineated.

They are given up to an hour to fathom this out for themselves, then they are asked to distinguish between these portions of the anatomy upon their own persons. Those who need more than a hour to arrive at the wrong conclusion are seriously considered.

The surviving candidates are then shown pictures of the hammer and sickle of the USSR and one other country's symbol in a word association test. There are two correct responses: for the hammer and sickle, one may answer with a simple "yes" or a smug grin; the other one must be viewed with scorn or expressions of self righteousness. All those who respond in any other way are shot.

The last test is extremely difficult for these men: They are taken into another room two at a time. In this room is a 30-calibre machine gun, an operator for said weapon and a supply of victims; in one corner is a clock; in another corner there is a caged lion that hasn't eaten for a week.

When the clock starts, the machine gunner opens fire on the victims and the lion is released upon those same victims. The referee candidate is asked to watch for twenty minutes. He is then removed from the room and questioned as to what happened. If he did not see anything except that the clock seemed a little slow, he is a member of the ranks of European referees.

He carries his stupidity into every game like a knight carrying a standard into battle.

He ruthlessly ignores some things sometimes for some teams and catches other teams doing things that they do not even know about.

In short, he regards consistency as a quality reserved for mules. His life is a long and happy one as long as he continues to wreck games and offend the sanity of a rabid skunk when refereeing a game.

Canada would be well advised to forget about any further series with the Soviet hockey team until their officials come up to an acceptable standard. Such fiascos as Team Canada tolerated this time around just don't warrant the effort required to maintain themselves in a series where the calibre of hockey is potentially excellent.

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