

Participation for fans in '83

By MARK ZWOL

The problem with fan participation at York University in the past several years hasn't been with a lack of winning teams that don the red and white, because there are certainly enough trophies in the Tait foyer to contest that fact.

No. The problem is with the fans themselves, who, for the most part, can be counted on one hand at the majority of York intervarsity athletic events.

They just don't seem to be having fun watching any of the York teams (both Yeowomen and Yeomen). And when fun is absent from fan participation, it all adds up to a big zilch for school spirit.

Granted, there are a number of diehard red and white fans, bless their final second victory - tortured souls. But if you were to walk into the Tait gym at the height of the basketball season, or stroll into the ice palace during the hockey playoffs, chances are the majority of supporters would be from the visiting school.

Who's to blame? Well, really no one. It is difficult to put the finger on any one reason and say that's the problem with fan participation or school spirit at York. Some things are just meant to remain low-key.

It is for this very reason - the low-keyed nature of fan support at our school - that the York athletic department has decided to shift into gear and do all it can to strum up support for the red and white.

Angello Kioussis, who is involved in athletic administration at York, has come up with a detailed list of events, centred on fan participation, that should put the fun back into rooting for your favorite team.

"We are primarily trying to create university spirit at York," Kioussis explained. "There are not too many university functions that create university spirit, and since sports encompass all of York, we thought it

would be a good idea to start there in an attempt to get fans out to the games."

It all starts with the York Yeomen football season which kicks off Saturday, Sept. 24, against the Waterloo Warriors. During the half-time intermission, the first annual York University "Kiss Off" will be staged on the field.

The "Kiss Off" competition is quite simple. It is open to any couple willing to hold a smooch for a designated period of time.

Any number of couples are welcome, the more the better, because the Canadian record of 30 couples holding their pucker for five minutes (set at Carleton last year) stands to be bettered with any kind of turnout.

It's all for a good cause in addition. The minimum \$2 entry fee from couples will go toward the Toronto Star Santa Claus fund and the Toronto Sun Sunshine fund charitable organizations.

Plans for a picnic/tailgate party coinciding with the Oct. 1 Laurentian vs York football game are also in full swing. A rock-and-roll band will perform live on the field two hours before the 2 p.m. game, and as an added attraction, an intercollegiate earthball game is scheduled for the half-time festivities.

Fans are invited to bring their barbecues and coolers and come out and enjoy the festive mood. And, in case of rain, the band will play live indoors after the game.

Last year, such events as the Grudge Race and Blitz 82 went a long way towards bringing the York student body together for a friendly little feud with cross-town rival U of T. And this year shouldn't be any different.

Kioussis is aiming to get the college student councils to organize an official "grudge week" during the

week of October 3, which will see separate colleges band together for events against various college reps from U of T.

The week will be topped off with each of the participating colleges sponsoring a dance on individual nights of the week, culminating with the CYSF's "pep dance" to be held as a highlight before the big game.

York's Basketball/Hockey seasons should by no means end up second-rate as fan interest is concerned. The Yeowomen/Yeomen Basketball doubleheader against the U of T will be highlighted with 50 giveaway dinners for two which will be given to ticket holders throughout the evening.

Such restaurants as the Keg and Unicorn are participating in the draw, which should spell a great night out to the tune of \$2,500 in dinner giveaway prizes.

The surface of the ice palace will get a new coating - of \$1 bills - when the annual dash for cash takes place during the Yeomen hockey season.

A single ticket holder will get a chance to collect as many \$1 bills off the ice surface as he or she can in a pre-determined time period.

In addition, the world peanut-eating record will be up for grabs for any fan who is willing to eat his way into the Guinness book of World records. A "Slide-A-Thon," along the ice surface, will also take place with prizes going to the longest cruise.

"I'd like to see people have a good time," Kioussis explained. "People should be able to go to our games and have some fun, the kind of fun that will be memorable for years to come."

The first "Toga Olympics" will be slotted for the winter months as well, and is open to all colleges. For more information, contact the Athletic Department at the Tait McKenzie building, at 667-3734.

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