

Hockey Yeomen must prove they are the best in the country

The York Yeomen hockey team had finally made it to number one status in the national hockey polls.

After pouncing all comers in the OUAA by scores close to, or over the double digit mark, the people at the CIAU offices had no other choice but to put them as the top team in the country, and two weeks ago they were right to do it.

The Yeomen had been playing as a team with solid performances all-round. They appeared to be unstoppable, and people began to talk, myself included, about the CIAU tournament this year in Edmonton. But then the team fell apart.

The number one ranked Yeomen took a ride down the QEW to face off against the McMaster Marlins, the last place team in the league with a record of 4-17-1. That record was worse than RMC, Ryerson and all the other teams usually mentioned in the same breath as the word basement.

The two teams played before a sparse crowd at Hamilton's Dundas arena, which is too bad because the home team skated away with a 4-2 victory.

To say that the Marlins were happy with the win would be a severe understatement. According to Yeomen head coach Dave Chambers, they were acting as if they had won the Stanley Cup. Well done McMaster Marlins.

It's not the first time Mac has come up with a big win. Just a few weeks earlier the U of T Blues were shocked by a 3-2 loss in the same arena. They also gave first place finishers, Laurier a run for their money only to lose by a two goal spread with a late empty net goal.

There are many excuses you can use for York's loss; they had a hot goalie (York outshot the 42-18) or that Mac was highly motivated for the nation's number one team, but these remain only as excuses. There is only one reason.

With a string of big wins (10 in a row), a 14-1 drubbing of the Marlins the last-time the two teams met and a number one ranking, it isn't hard to deduce that the Yeomen were begin-



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ning to feel pretty high about themselves.

This is a dangerous thing in the OUAA, a league that has its winners and losers, but also a league where any team can defeat another on any given night. With its short schedule the OUAA demands concentration and intensity for every game, not only for games against Toronto, Laurier and Western. The Yeomen left these things at the Ice Palace the night of the 15th.

Chambers said he could see the signs of the big loss coming in York's 7-1 defeat of the Brock Badgers. "We weren't playing well but we still came up with a win by a big score," Chambers said.

"As a coach you try to make sure your team is up for each game. It doesn't matter what you tell them, they're going to take a team that they have already beaten by a score of 14-1 lightly," he explained.

But the ranking people were gracious enough to admit the loss was strange and left the Yeomen in number one spot. After a 6-0 loss to the Varsity Blues last Wednesday all hopes of top national ranking went out the window.

Before the game, the Yeomen seemed to be pumped up. They carried an intense look about them as they prepared for the contest, but once the game started, intense turned to tense as York looked sluggish from the first drop of the puck.

The Blues jumped out to an early two goal lead in the first period, adding two more goals in each of the following frames, making the final 6-0.

The loss gave U of T second place in the OUAA standings and a bye in the first round of the playoffs. But worse than the loss was the way the team lost their composure as the Blues pulled farther ahead. With two thirds of the game gone and down 4-0, the Yeomen began playing hockey with their sticks instead of their heads. Number one ranked teams don't play hockey in this way. Top ranked teams play not only with talent, but with intensity and cohesiveness on a consistent basis as well.

After the loss to U of T, York Captain Bill Maguire admitted his team's performance was sluggish. "When you look at the game tonight, you'd think it (the loss to McMaster) brought us down and judging by tonight it did bring us down. We were hoping that game would get us going and wake us up and realize that we can't just go into every game just to show up to win. I think we're starting to find out now that it doesn't work that way," he said.

It must be said that York finished the season off with a 4-2 victory over Windsor in the border town. Everyone I have spoken too said York played a strong game. Windsor is a tough team at home and the victory should serve as a boost for the players morale and confidence.

Perhaps the losses came at a good time. Before, not during the playoffs.

If anything good comes from the losses, it will be as Maguire says; to make the players realize that the OUAA is not a cakewalk. The losses should act as a constant reminder and shake off the 'we're great attitude' says Chambers. With a win in the first round of the playoffs here Tuesday night this seems to be coming true.

But there still is a big task ahead. The Yeomen have to prove to themselves that they are who they thought they were. Tomorrow night's semi-final game against the Blues at Varsity Arena is where the proving begins.

Third consecutive perfect season for basketball men

By GARY SCHOLICH

The York basketball Yeomen recorded their third consecutive perfect season and will host the divisional playoffs this weekend.

York won all four of its final league games by convincing margins. First, the Yeomen swept both of their games in Kingston, defeating Queen's 90-72, and RMC 109-52.

Then, during reading week, York beat cross-town rival Ryerson 96-76. Although eliminated from post-season contention, the Rams gave the Yeomen a test at the Kerr Hall Gymnasium.

Ryerson grabbed an 11-6 lead as ex-Yeoman Rob Hager scored six of the points for the home side. However York overcame the deficit with a 10-point run of its own, and held the upper hand for the remainder of the game.

At halftime, the Yeomen led 46-35. Stu Levinsky and Mike Sherwood paced York's first half scoring with eight points apiece.

Although comfortably ahead 53-39, York had to weather a Ram rally that closed the gap at 55-50. Yeomen coach Bob Bain was hit with two technical fouls, and Ryerson centre Jamie Voskuil sank three of his four foul shots to instigate the Ram flurry.

Bain said, "The referees did make some bad calls, but I took advantage of this to get the players' intensity up."

Rider finished with 16 points to lead the York scorers along with Mike Sherwood. Stu Levinsky added 15 more. For Ryerson, Voskuil led with 33 points, including 20 in the second half. Hager added another 18.

While Ryerson has developed into a competitive OUAA East squad, the RMC Redmen officially ended their OUAA tenure Saturday at Tait Gym.

Overmatched in skill and size, the Redmen never had a chance as they were slaughtered 117-26. York dominated throughout the contest, even

as the York reserves received most of the playing time.

Although meaningless in terms of the regular season race, the RMC game could hamper York's quest for a national title. Team captains Tim Rider and Mark Jones were both knocked out of the game with injuries.

Rider sustained a second-degree sprain of the medial collateral ligament in his knee. The injury occurred when the game was only a minute and a half old. Ron Hepburn snared an offensive rebound, but col-

lided with Rider on the way down.

Jones suffered a deep back bruise while attempting a dunk. Like Rider, his injury occurred in a collision, this time a minute and a half into the second period. Jones was undercut by one of the RMC defenders.

In terms of the injuries, Bain said, "That could happen in any game. With Mark, I feel that the defensive player didn't quite understand the risks involved in what he was doing. I don't feel that it was intentional though."

Bain did not enjoy this mismatch.

He also said, "There will always be the question of whether we ran up the score. We did not play our starters that much. We played our second and third-stringers a lot, but you can't tell them not to try."

At this time, Bain feels he has to weigh all of the options at his disposal. "We don't know exactly how hard Mark will be able to go. It's a day-to-day problem" he said. "We'll have to wait for the prognosis on Tim. If we can't use him, we'll go with a smaller and quicker lineup and press more."

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