

## Sports editorial: Marketing UNB sports by Bruce Denis

It is quite evident that there is an increasing problem with attendance at local university sports events. Recently, I have had the opportunity to sit in on some informal discussions about the state of existing sports marketing strategies here at UNB and some possible changes.

There is no single answer to attracting fans to varsity sports events. The proposals that seem ideal to some, spell disaster to others. The constant debate inhibits both the good and bad marketing schemes from ever being implemented.

For example, if the university were to allow the sale of alcoholic beverages at varsity sports events and encouraged loud and rowdy support of the home team, it is quite possible that there would be a considerable increase in attendance, particularly at hockey games. Most students enjoy becoming excessively intoxicated and screaming at the top of their lungs for two and a half hours while watching the home team whip the asses of their foes. This would be dubbed "a good time" by any student with a GPA under 4.0.

This scenario sounds great. "Sell beer! Make money! Attract students! Promote school spirit!" But it isn't quite as pretty as you might think. Drunk students also means rowdy students. Even an increase in Campus Police couldn't prevent the eventuality of mishaps. The prospect of having some 1500 drunken students at the Aitken Centre is a time bomb for both the university administration and visiting teams. UNB also has to maintain a certain amount of dignity. Drunken students do not project a particularly good image to the local public or to visiting media.

Also, the UNB sports program is sponsored by local businesses and select alumni. Neither of these contributors would be anxious to attend games with a group of rowdy students. If they don't attend games then chances are they won't sponsor the teams.

Other, intricate marketing strategies have been proposed but the university has neither the time nor the money, not to mention the manpower to implement them. Most involve extensive planning, a considerable amount of money and dedicated personnel. Obviously attendance at varsity sports events has not become enough of a problem for the university to take drastic actions. However, with the steady decrease in sports funding and the everpresent fear of losing some varsity sports teams, the program has to begin paying for itself.

There has to exist some means of generating at least a mediocre interest from both the student and general populations. Rumors are afloat that this will be the last year of varsity mania, a very scary prospect as varsity mania events are consistently the most attended games. The loss of varsity mania could have disastrous repercussions on varsity sports at UNB.

Also, it was absolutely mind boggling that the Mark Jeffrey hockey game, which was such an overwhelming success last year, was not made into an annual affair. It was simply the best possible scenario for developing hype and excitement and the STU-UNB rivalry would have reached new heights if the game hadn't been lost in all the paper work. You know you have a good thing going when 3000 people buy tickets to see a Red Devils game. These students may have been the drunken, rowdy group I have defamed earlier but once a year, this type of crowd is tolerable.

Once again, there is no single solution to promoting varsity sports, although everyone may think they have the "one and only." The most important factor in attracting fans is having a good marketing staff. Everyone has some criticism about how the sports department can promote sports but very few people actually get involved. The most viable answer to sports promotion is man-power; the university needs dedicated students, and lots of them.

On a final note, I visited both the Acadia and Dalhousie hockey rinks last weekend to cover the Red Devils road trip. I was amazed at the fan support at both these games. Acadia was standing room only (3000 people in the arena and only 1 bathroom with 1 stall and 1 urinal!) and Dalhousie was almost as full. Perhaps their marketing schemes are better than ours, then again, they could have wanted to see the Red Devils, representing a school with a clean reputation.

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Cycling news: Believe it or not cycling fans, the 1993 professional season is already three days old. The G.P. du Cafe in Columbia began on January 27 and ends this Sunday. The European season gets underway on Tuesday with the annual Ruta del Sol in Spain. Kind of makes you start thinking about getting on the old bike, doesn't it? Good news for Brian Walton fans. The young Canadian star has signed with Saturn, formerly a dominant American amateur team that is following in the footsteps of Subaru-Montgomery by turning professional and heading off to Europe. Unfortunately, veteran Steve Bauer has yet to strike a deal... Speaking of Subaru-Montgomery, the young American team has gained enough FICP points to enter World Cup events this year and expects to ride the Tour de France. Eddie B. was right; two years ago no one believed him when he said his team would ride the Tour in the next two years, now it is likely it will... One major change in the world of bike racing involves track racing. The international governing body has decided to drop all events that are not Olympic events; the Demi fond in particular. Also, the World Championships will no longer distinguish professionals from amateurs. All cyclists will compete as one category. This is yet another nail in the coffin of a great sport. The most heart breaking fact is that Mike MacCarthy will be forever remembered as the last world professional pursuit champion.

## Devils drop two on the road

### #1 Acadia shuts out UNB while Dal wins 6-3

by Frank Denis

In what was billed as a preview of the AUAA hockey finals, the Acadia Axemen shut out the visiting UNB Red Devils 3-0 before a sold out crowd of 2,500 last Saturday night in Wolfville, N.S.

Acadia with an 18-1-1 record has been the #1 ranked CIAU team for most of the year while UNB was #5 in the national rankings.

Acadia opened the scoring early as Paul Sutcliffe beat UNB defenceman Mike Cavanagh 1 on 1 and then goaltender Chris Somers to notch what would turn out to be the game winner.

The Red Devils thought they had tied the game at 1 however referee Wade Power signaled that forward Jamie Colvin had kicked the puck in the net and ruled no goal. UNB did not put up much of a fight over the call.

Early in the second period Acadia also had a goal disallowed as Power said that he blew his whistle prior to the puck crossing the line.

The score stood at 1-0 until Scott Farrell blasted a shot from just inside the blue line past Somers. Mark McFarlane

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rounded out the scoring for Acadia with his goal at the 5:09 mark of the third period.

Red Devils assistant coach Rob Beatty says that he and the coaching staff were satisfied with their team's effort.

"Our game plan was to contain Acadia and not give them much room. They only had 24 shots so we did a pretty good job. The difference was that they scored on their chances and we didn't."

UNB did not have a lot of chances, 18 shots to be precise most of which goaltender Dennis Sproxtton had no problem seeing and stopping.

As far as perhaps a possible playoff showdown with Acadia goes, Beatty says his team will have to keep on doing what they've been doing.

"We'll have to get more shots the next time and finish off our checks better. We didn't play that

bad a game. If we had gotten a goal early in the game we would have been fine.

"We realized tonight that we can beat them in their rink as we played even with them for the most part."

On Sunday the team travelled down to Halifax to face the Dalhousie Tigers in what was expected to be a physical game. The expectations lived up to the billing as referee Peter McDonald called 67 minutes in penalties.

Andrew MacVicar led the way for Dal with 4 goals as Dal handed UNB their second road loss 6-3. Also scoring for the Tigers were Ken MacDermid and George Wilcox. Replying for UNB were Trevor Boland with a pair and Toby Burkitt.

Former UNB goaltender Scott MacDonald made 32 stops to get the win. Somers started the game for UNB, but was pulled after Dal's sixth goal and replaced by Greg Reid.

The loss was costly for UNB as defenceman Dan Sherstenka took a slap-shot in the mouth.

Sherstenka lost some teeth and also suffered a broken jaw. It is expected that he will be out for 6 weeks.

## Sears and Lukeman shine for UNB

### Beavers do well against AUAA competition

The AUAA Invitational shows that it will be a very tight race for the championship banner. The weekend was a well fought battle between Dalhousie and UNB, with Dal edging the win by 306 points to UNB's 249. The full weekend meet held at Acadia University was a dress rehearsal for the battle to follow in just 3 weeks time.

Highlighting the meet was Rae Sears a first year athlete from St John. She destroyed the national qualifying standard in the 200 backstroke by more than 3 seconds. This is a feat rarely done by swimmers before the conference championships. For this accomplishment she was named UNB's athlete of the week.

Jason Lukeman was named UNB male athlete of the week. He posted a lifetime best time in the 100 metre butterfly qualifying for the national championships and also winning the event. This 1992 UNB Rookie Athlete of the year also went on to win gold medals in the 50 and 100 metre freestyle races as well as his contribution to 2 gold medals in the relays.

Team captain Sean Penny, the 5th year chemical engineering student, lead the team in one of the most gruelling races in swimming, winning the 400 individual medley. First year swimming sensation Iona Allen also shared gold in this event as well as the 100 and 200 metre butterfly. Watch for things to come with this lady.

First year recruit from Scarborough Ontario, Sean Perreira has turned out to be a

definite asset winning three gold medals in both breaststroke events and the medly relay.

The team now goes into a taper in a little more than a week in

preparation for the battle against Dalhousie and the ensuing National Championships.

Medal performances were as follows:

### Top 3 Results

<b>400 Freestyle</b>	Iain Tennent	4:12.66	silver
<b>200 Backstroke</b>	Rae Sears	2:26.84	silver
	Sean Penney	2:13.26	silver
	Adam Sparkes	2:16.59	bronze
	Jason Lukeman	52.64	gold
	David Pelkey	54.49	bronze
<b>100 Freestyle</b>	Iona Allen	5:02.72	gold
<b>400 Individual Medley</b>	Sean Penney	4:49.85	gold
	Iona Allen	2:21.50	gold
<b>200 Butterfly</b>	Iain Tennent	2:11.80	silver
	Jamie Bragg	2:16.63	bronze
<b>200 Breaststroke</b>	Nicole Bailey	2:54.39	silver
	Sean Perreira	2:31.21	gold
<b>400 Medley Relay</b>	Rae Sears, Nicole Bailey		Silver
	Iona Allen, Heather Palmatter		
	Sean Penney, Sean Perreira		gold
<b>1500 Freestyle</b>	Iain Tennent, Jason Lukeman		
	Tim Brown	17:04.41	silver
	Iain Tennent	17:06.06	bronze
<b>200 Freestyle</b>	David Pelkey	2:00.91	silver
<b>100 Backstroke</b>	Iona Allen	1:07.05	silver
	Sean Penney	1:03.01	silver
<b>50 Freestyle</b>	Jason Lukeman	24.07	gold
	Paul Halmazna	24.90	silver
<b>200 individual Medley</b>	Nicole Bailey	2:39.78	bronze
	Sean Penney	2:16.36	silver
	Sean Perreira	2:20.10	bronze
<b>100 Butterfly</b>	Iona Allen	1:05.85	gold
	Jason Lukeman	57.92	silver
	Iain Tennent	58.49	bronze
<b>100 Breaststroke</b>	Nicole Bailey	1:23.73	bronze
	Sean Perreira	1:09.51	gold
<b>400 Freestyle Relay</b>	Heather Palmatter		
	Rae Sears	4:16.47	
	Iona Allen		silver
	Paula Crutner		
<b>400 Freestyle Relay</b>	Paul Halmazna	3:34.76	
	Iain Tennent		gold
	David Pelkey		
	Jason Lukeman		