

sports

SPORTS EDITORIAL

University athletics just as important as university academics

"Who in the hell cares about nuclear disarmament with a pennant on the line?"

Earlier this year this comment was made, half mockingly, in our December joke editorial. Why half mockingly? Because although the threat of nuclear disarmament hangs over all our heads, there is something about the promise of spring and our favourite baseball teams competing that overshadows our worst fears. Does anyone in this country dare fantasize a world series between our beloved Toronto Blue Jays and Montreal Expos? *God dammit*, it would be better than the whole country winning the 649. Mulroney could sell Canada to Michael Jackson and nobody would care. Yeah, we would all be wearing one glove and shoving Pepsi down our throats, but we'd have two pennants to console ourselves with.

There is something magical about sports, that people outside sports will never grasp. There's an implicit loyalty between a fan and his or her favourite club that can't be captured in words. Anybody who's had a favourite team knows the scenario. You pour your heart out to your favourite team, and when they lose you lose, and when they win you win. Who can't remember the collective groan of this city when the Jays blew it down the stretch to the Tigers last year, and to the Royals in 1985. It was hardly 25 foreign-bred losers, it was the whole bloody nation.

Sports gives us an opportunity to manifest our desire for competition through our individual representatives. Sports presents us with our heroes and our goats. Sports symbolizes our greatest hopes and desires. Sports teams afford the populous a chance to identify themselves with their city.

At York University we have some highly competitive teams,

but few fans. Why? Is it because nobody wants to identify themselves with this monolithic concrete university? Could be? But an even better point is that we at York continue to promote the ridiculous concept that universities only symbolize academics. Of course universities symbolize academics. A university is a place that is inherently elite, and consequently ends up promoting excellence. But to say that excellence is only confined to academics is completely misleading. Excellence pervades all areas, including athletics. We challenge anybody to say that York's national victories in men's hockey and women's track and field do not constitute excellence. In fact they prove that this university is the best in the country at something. If we shouldn't be promoting that, what the hell should we be promoting?

2,000-plus frenzied fans at Varsity Arena cheering on their athletes proved that people *do* identify with this university. When was the last time 2,000 students collectively showed up for anything, except to graduate. The answer to curing apathy at York is hardly a restructured college system. Who really needs to be reminded of academics any more than we are now? Students devote 15 class hours a week to academics, not to mention an unlimited amount of time allotted for homework. Going to school is a full-time job; in their spare time students need something else.

Students should derive something from university other than intellectual enlightenment. We can read literature, solve equations, or study human behaviour anywhere. What we need at York is something to identify with. Sports at York can provide us with that, proving that athletics are just as important as academics. A pox on anyone who doesn't realize that.

Athletic awards banquet honours best players and coaches at York

By MARIO PIETRANGELO

York University's athletic awards banquet was the climax to a very successful year. The event was a who's who of intercollegiate athletics, and included plenty of tongue-in-cheek humour.

The festivities began with opening comments from York University President Harry Arthurs. "About six weeks ago, in February, a phenomenal streak began. (During this period), we won no less than four championships, including synchronized swimming, gymnastics, track and field, and volleyball. I don't know what the men were doing during this time, but I hear they also won gymnastics," said Arthurs. Later in his speech, Arthurs congratulated the hockey Yeomen on their CIAU Championship win saying, "we are all enormously proud that York won."

Lindsey Adams then took the podium in a toast to the York coaching staff. "These unique individuals have touched something in our lives," Adams said.

Perhaps the most inspiring speech of the evening came from Yeomen swimmer Peter Darvas. "Most of the people here tonight will not receive any awards," said Darvas. "But there is something that separates us from the rest. We are all winners; winners take chances, and don't give up. . . There are no losers in sports, only people like us, winners."

Darvas was followed by Norm Gledhill. Gledhill also made reference to the outstanding season of the hockey Yeomen, and praised York's exceptional coaching staff. In addition, Gledhill signaled out Pat Murray and Mary Lyons for their "excellent job working under severe circumstances." In a remark directed at Arthurs, Gledhill also said, "Our budget, Harry, is not what we would like to see it."

Pat Murray, in her speech, made reference to an *Excalibur* article written by Mel Broitman which read, "Tradition is one of the most important elements that permeates consciousness. . . At York University, tradition is still in its infant stages of evolution." Murray indicated that one tradition she wants to see continue at York is athletic excellence. While one tradition she hopes to see end is that of inadequate facilities. This brought thunderous applause from all in attendance.



Best in the nation: The Yeowomen track and field squad proudly displayed their CIAU pennant at the athletic banquet last week. From (L to R): France Gareau, Karyn Humber, Andrea Hastick, Lesa Mayes, and Hester Westenberg. Taking athlete of the year honours at the annual awards banquet were Yeowoman France Gareau and Yeoman Nick Kiriakou.

Murray said she wants to see this year's athletic successes continue, and called for an end to inadequate athletic facilities. Murray's comments were met with enthusiastic applause from all those in attendance.

York Provost Tom Meininger also earned a round of applause, and a great deal of laughter for his remarks. "The basketball team is here, but the football team is not. (Wherever it is), I hope that it's far away," Meininger quipped.

One of the few football Yeomen in attendance, Dan Murkus, explained his presence by saying that he "was the only guy (on the team) with any class." Football coaches Nobby Wirkowski and Frank Cosentino did manage to show up, and appeared none the worse for the good-natured ribbing.

But the focus of the evening were the various awards presented to York athletes and coaches. The Yeoman hockey team won the Most Improved Team award. The choice was a little puzzling, as the Yeomen have been a consistent force in the OUA for the past four seasons, winning four consecutive OUA titles

and two CIAU national championships over that period. The Yeowoman track and field team, who came from obscurity to win the provincial and national championships might have been a better choice.

Graduating athlete Cheryl Thompson won the Bryce Taylor Award for her contribution to athletics, while Lindsey Adams, Megan Hurst, Cheryl Piper, and Connie Wrightsell all won awards for athletic excellence.

The highlight of the evening, was the presentation of awards for male and female athlete of the year. On the women's side, France Gareau was honoured. Gareau won five gold and three silver medals in leading the Yeowomen to the OWIAA and CIAU championships. "It's nice to be appreciated for your efforts," said Gareau. "It keeps you motivated for the next competition."

In the men's division, top Yeomen scorer Nick Kiriakou took the athlete of the year honours. "I feel very privileged to be the winner of this award," said Kiriakou after the ceremonies. "I just loved going to the rink to practice, we were always ready to play, and we wanted to win."



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