

SPORTS and RECREATION



Sharif Kahn

Kahn: Squash's king

By MYLES DAVIS

Kahn. The name means nothing to the throngs of hockey and football enthusiasts who inhabit our country, but to anyone who has ever followed the game of squash, it represents the very essence of the game itself.

The Kahns, a family which originally lived in Pakistan but now reside in Toronto, have dominated the game of squash for generations.

Kashim Kahn, the first in the family to take up the game, has captured the World Open Championship an unprecedented seven times in the years from 1950-1960. His son, Sharif Kahn, has won the North American title seven times, the last one in New York just a few weeks ago.

"I first began playing squash at a very young age in Pakistan and fortunately I was good enough to win a scholarship for the game from a school near the western border of England," Kahn told Excalibur this week.

"I developed my skills very rapidly there, and I won my first tournament when I was 13. From there I immigrated to the U.S., that was about nine years ago, and two years later I was given an invitation to come and teach the game in Toronto."

The Kahn family hold a greater domination over the fame of squash than any other family in any other sport, and, in fact, the only player ever to come close to breaking that domination is Jonah Barrington, an Englishman who has won the World Title six times.

"I've travelled to many parts of the world, including Australia, the Phillipines, Japan and other parts of the Far East, and I've found that interest in the game has grown by leaps and bounds in the past few years.

"My purpose during those travels was to try and promote the game in any way possible, and usually that meant giving instructional clinics and group lessons in the various clubs that I went to.

"Overall, I believe that the people on North America have shown the greatest interest in the game of any people I've visited in the world. The future for squash is definitely very bright here."

Since coming to North America, Sharif has found that squash, like many other sports, has changed somewhat in both style and content.

"Years ago, the emphasis was on technique and agility whereas today squash is more of a running and hustling game. Players today devote much more of their practice time to physical training than players did 10 years ago. The result of this, of course, is that a well-placed serve or drop-shot will not win points as easily as it might have years ago," he said.

"It's very comparable to tennis, in the sense that the players today have sacrificed the classic stroke for the ability to go full-out for two or three hours."

More than being a very adept student of the game, Sharif is very knowledgeable about the concept of squash in North America and has a very graphic picture in his mind of where he hopes the game will propel itself in the years ahead.

"Firstly, I hope to see the establishment of a continent-wide circuit for North American pros, in which they could compete from week to week in different cities, thereby gaining exposure for themselves and providing the basis for increased spectator interest.

"Secondly, if this circuit could be set up, I would hope it would attract new sponsors for the players and encourage the development of new equipment such as portable or glass-walled courts which would allow for a greater number of spectators.

"And lastly, if both of these tasks could be accomplished, the television networks would hopefully see fit to televise matches and this, in itself, would complete the cycle and give the game another boost," he explained.

In the future, Sharif hopes to diversify his interests in the game by exposing himself more to the public and promoting squash in cities and towns across the world. He is currently a part owner of a squash club here in Toronto and he endorses squash equipment for various companies involved in the game.

When one considers that Sharif Kahn has 'done it all' where squash is concerned, it becomes evident that it takes no small amount of love for the game to start all over again.

Kahn will be playing members of the Varsity team as well as Dr. Nabil Labib today at 12:00 p.m. at Tait Mackenzie.

York slams Rams on route to championship match with Blues

By TONY MAGISTRALE

The battle for first place in the OUAA's Eastern Division hockey league went right down to the wire for the second year in a row, but this time it was the Varsity Blues who clinched the pennant.

Varsity and York finished with identical 14 and six records this season, but Toronto gained the nod by virtue of their 22-12 scoring advantage over the Yeomen in the four regular schedule meetings.

Going into the final week of action the Yeomen had the jump on first place, holding down a 12 and five record in comparison to Varsity's 12 and six.

However, a 9-5 loss to the Guelph Gryphons two weeks ago at the Ice Palace nullified their advantage.

As the score would indicate, the team's performance against the pesky Gryphons was one of their worst of the season.

Outside of a few sporadic spurts, they lacked the drive and polish which has been instrumental in making the '75-76 season a successful one.

Sports in Brief

York's shieks of the slopes took their first victory of the season two weeks ago, edging out the team from Varsity by a margin of 2.68 seconds over the total number of runs in slalom competition.

The strangest part of the win was the fact that York's team was the only one to have all six men turn in consecutive runs without falls on the slick, icy course at Blue Mountain, Collingwood.

Blair Heslop led the time with a third-place finish overall, turning in a combined time of 77.25 seconds.

Rod Farmer placed seventh with a time of 82.88 seconds, Paul Woodhouse was eleventh in 84.91 seconds and Vesa Siminanein took sixteenth spot with a combined time of 85.79 seconds.

The meet involved eleven universities and York's victory was the first for any York team, past or present.

The team has been invited to compete in the Can-Am Games on March 11-14, which included Slalom, Giant Slalom and Downhill races.

The York men's Gymnastic team took their fifth Ontario championship in as many years on Saturday, finishing with 239.8 points.

The team from U. of T. placed second with a total of 186.1 points, while Western was third with 177.85 points.

Bob Carisse led the Yeomen, scoring 50.50 points.

All of the next four placings went to York competitors also. Steve McLaine was second with 48.85 points, David Steper third with 48.15 points, Scott McLoud fourth with 46.85 points and Paul Maddock finished fifth with 45.80 points.

The York Basketball Yeomen closed out their season last week, losing a playoff match to the Ottawa Gee-Gees by the score of 71-68.



OUAA contenders watch earnestly.

Following the loss, the team rounded out their season with back to back victories, defeating Queen's 7-5 and Laurentian 7-4.

As a result of their second place finish, the Yeomen played host to the Ryerson Rams Friday in a sudden-death quarter final game.

From the start of the second period to the end, the game proved to be an almost complete farce. After leading 2-0 at the conclusion of the first period, York pumped in 12 goals in demolishing the Rams 14-0.

If not for Ryerson goaler Ken Hall, who managed to save 46 shots, the score would undoubtedly have been much higher.

At the other end of the rink, Peter Kostek enjoyed a nice nap, waking up only to stop 14 shots, most of which had trouble carrying over the bumps in the ice.

The first period was the closest of the three, and the only one in which the Rams managed to emulate the standards of OUAA hockey play.

Roger Dory got the Yeomen on the board at the 14 minute mark, whacking the puck in from a goalmouth scramble. Al Avery made it 2-0 with a last minute power-play marker.

The turning point in the match, if there was any, came when the Zamboni left the ice at the end of the first period. York promptly came out and widened their lead to 6-0 while most of the Ram

players began to take up spectating as a new hobby.

The third period proved to be even more disastrous for the Tech-men as York doubled their output, this time adding eight goals to their total.

Ron Hawkshaw led the deluge with five goals, with Bob Wasson potting three and Avery two. Besides Dory, other singles went to Peter Ascherl, Peter Titanic and John Fielding.

Tomorrow, the Yeomen travel to London where they will meet the Western Mustangs in the OUAA semi-finals. Varsity plays Guelph in the other semi-final. The two winners meet Saturday night to decide the Ontario championship.

Pucknotes: In a pre-game ceremony during the season's final game, York president H. Ian Macdonald presented coach Dave Chambers with a plaque from the team commemorating York's 200th victory.

The award and recognition was well-deserved considering Chambers had taken the Yeomen to the playoffs this season and to the Ontario championship last year.

Yeomen centreman Bob Wasson won the Eastern Division scoring title with 42 points, edging out Kent Ruhnke of the Blues. Al Avery won it last year with 41.

Tomorrow's game will be broadcast on CKRY, starting at 8:00 p.m. Tickets for the semi-final are on sale at Tait.

Yeowomen enjoy "the thrill of victory"

The York hockey Yeowomen travelled to the OWIAA championships in London over the weekend, and finally found out what is meant by the thrill of victory.

After finishing the season with a fruitless record in 10 games played, the team upset the fifth place Western Mustangs 3-2 to clinch a fifth place finish in the championship. Western, the host team, disappointed their fans by placing sixth in the six-team tournament.

Goalie Brenda Stewart was the star of the game as she almost singlehandedly thwarted the persistent Mustang forwards.

After the final shot-count, the Mustangs had taken two shots on net for every one the Yeowomen directed.

Linda Berry led the team offensively with two goals, while Carol Trewen added the other. Judy Goodhead and Cathy

Brown also proved very dangerous in the Western end of the rink, although they didn't manage to put the puck in the net.

Following the victory on Saturday morning, the York troops engaged in battle with the fourth-place finishers from Queen's.

York opened the scoring early in the first period when Joanne Sullivan set up Joanne Healy who propelled the puck behind a surprised Queen's netminder.

The 1-0 lead held up until the opening minutes of the second period, at which time the Gaels began to pour on the pressure.

The Yeowomen began to steadily lose their composure through the period as the Gaels banged in four goals.

They added another four in the third period to win the game 8-1.

York's cause also wasn't helped by the refereeing, which at times seemed blatantly biased and incompetent.