

# Sports and Recreation



"That's all from the Freestyle Salt Mining... now back to Moscow, and the Marathon Lying Competition..."

## Nyet, nyet soviet says vocal York professor

**Hugh Westrup**

Though international support for a boycott of the Moscow Olympics continues to grow, Canada's position remains neither here nor there. Recent estimates from the US State Department are that over 50 countries—among them, Saudi Arabia, Britain, Dominican Republic, Australia—are committed to the boycott. Yet the Liberal government, in a retreat from its Conservative predecessor's position, has said it will stay uncommitted for another month.

In spite of this climate of indecision, there are those Canadians who remain adamantly in favour of the boycott. The Canadian Equestrian team and the Olympic Trust, an organization which has raised \$1.7 million for Canada's Olympic teams, are both opposed to sending our athletes to Moscow.

Here in Toronto, the voice of York Economics Professor John Ridpath is one that has been raised in favour of the boycott. Ridpath, a former Olympic hopeful, views Canadian participation in the games as an "immoral sanction of totalitarianism, human slavery and mass murder."

Although there are those idealists who maintain that sports and politics are separate, Ridpath says that for the Soviets, there is no such distinction. He refers to a piece of propaganda which is

being circulated behind the Iron Curtain. It states: "The decision to offer the honoured right to hold the Olympic games in the capital of the first socialist state in the world was convincing proof of the universal recognition of the historical importance and correctness of the course of our country's foreign policy, the vast contribution of the Soviet Union in the struggle for peace and its contribution to the international Olympic movement and development of physical culture of sport."

For other examples of the politicization of sport, Ridpath refers to the International Olympic Committee's decision on the participation of Taiwan and South Africa. Because of the dispute between Red China and Taiwan the latter has been requested to change its name, anthem and flag in order to qualify for the 1980 games.

South Africa has been banned for denying blacks the opportunity to participate. The disbarment of South Africa follows from the Olympic ruling that "race, religion, and politics" should not be bases for refusing athletes entry into competition. Yet, says Ridpath, the Soviets routinely exclude people on these grounds.

Ridpath also charges the Soviet Union with violating the amateur status ruling of the Olympic code. "In the Soviet Union, like all totalitarian regimes, sports

receives massive government support. Athletes hold nominal jobs but their salaries are really for their athletic skills."

Ridpath believes that democratic nations should boycott totalitarian regimes totally—in sports, culture, and economics. Any kind of outside support of totalitarian regimes only strengthens the positions of the rulers rather than infusing the country with foreign values.

"The strength of these evil societies is parasitically gained from the good societies," he says.

Why is Ridpath speaking out on the issue?

"I feel you have to do what little you can in defense of human freedom and dignity when the opportunity arises. Support for the boycott is one way for me to show it. By speaking out you can contribute to public consideration of an issue, open people's thoughts."

Meanwhile, the "Potemkinization" of Moscow goes on in preparation for the summer games. According to reports from the *Washington Post*, Soviet authorities are currently identifying "drunkards, psychotics, disorderly persons and Jews who have decided to emigrate." These people will be sent out of the city during the games. School children are being warned that foreign visitors will offer them "poison chewing gum and explosive toys."

## Baseball heads largest sports list

**James Carlisle**

What is the biggest sport on campus? Hockey? Football? Tennis? Wrong! With 16 teams and more than 500 players the York Baseball Association is the largest sports organization at York.

Now, don't get us wrong! The Toronto Blue Jays have nothing to fear (although after last season...), but baseball has become remarkably popular at this university. In fact, with the introduction of a major league team to Toronto the whole city has come down with a touch of pennant fever. In the Jays case that's amendable to get-out-of-the-cellar fever, but nonetheless...you get the idea. And

apparently York has not been immune.

In the YBA the game is Co-ed Slow-Pitch Softball and the emphasis is on fun and participation (once again no comparison to the Blue Jays is intended) with prowess in the pub considered at least as important as skill on the field.

The teams, composed of faculty, staff and students, come from all across the campus. Among others there is representation from the libraries, Ross building, Biology, Stong, The Cock and Bull, Psychology and Osgoode.

The teams play a regular schedule (at least once a week) from early May to September at

the Vanier diamond and on the new field near Keele Street.

The first organizational meeting took place just after press time Wednesday and enthusiasm was running high. "Everyone is looking forward to a terrific summer of softball and the social events that follow," according to Steve Dranitsaris, Chairman of the Association.

According to Jamie Savage, coach of last year's league trailing Steacie Fighting Frogs, "it's going to be a great year. We're going for the pennant."

For more information on the league and its season, call Steve Dranitsaris at 667-3154.

## No sports show

**Gary Cohen**

Remarkably enough, another year is coming to a close (I don't know—where did it go?) and this being our last issue, it seems appropriate that a few things should be said that haven't been said before.

In the past, York has not particularly prided itself on the achievements of its athletes. Yes, certain teams and individuals have distinguished themselves and gained a certain modicum of recognition, but overall many Yorkites have broached the subject of athletics at York with a tinge of embarrassment and a mile wide streak of apathy. Sometimes one wonders if anyone outside the athletic community on campus really gives a damn.

Toronto has a reputation of loving losers and to a certain degree, this attitude seems prevalent at York. People are more apt to hark back to the seventeen straight losses incurred by the Yeomen football team several years ago than to speak of the ten-time national championship men's gymnastics team. And in most cases, the people doing the harkening have seen neither team.

Well, unless I miss my guess, that attitude is going to have to change. Almost right across the board, each of the athletic programs at this university has made great strides. With very few exceptions, all of our teams are better than they have ever been before and the prognosis seems to indicate that they will get nothing but better as time goes by.

Despite the cynicism of the campus detractors, the evidence shows that through the dedication of coaches and athletes alike, York now has an athletic program that we can take pride in.

But where the athletes have taken great strides forward, the student population at large has lagged behind. It is true that the basketball team was able to draw 1,200 people to its OUA playoff games, but this figure dims in comparison to the 2,500 people who attended the high school all-star game held here several weeks ago.

It is true that a stadium on campus would greatly enhance the possibility of drawing larger crowds to certain sporting events. The Ice Palace (there's a misnomer for you) was meant to be a training facility and is not built to accommodate large crowds. This is one for instance, and to an extent the point is valid, but the apathy towards athletics on campus is evident elsewhere and cannot be written off on this objection.

The embarrassingly puny budget which is allotted to York's athletes (in proportional comparison with that afforded other university programs) is a further indication of lacking enthusiasm that not only haunts athletics at the gate, but also in the board room.

As sports editor this year, the indifference has hit home for me in a different way. Certainly the small crowds at events has caused me some chagrin, but not half as much as the problem I have had getting people to write about sports. People on the staff of this newspaper drool at the opportunity of writing news or entertainment articles, but mention sports and they are suddenly struck deaf and dumb. If I'd been a leper, it would have been easier to assign stories.

Rightly, student politics or the newest band on campus seem to be perceived as important issues. These are the things writers want to cover and these are the events and issues which people respond to by writing letters and making their voices heard. The same attitude is not afforded sports.

The on-campus "intellectuals" have adopted a snobbish attitude that snubs sports. Unlike in smaller university cities than T.O. (London or Brandon, for example) where university teams draw great support, the more sophisticated, cosmopolitan York population seems to feel that university teams are passe. Yawn. "How dull!"

This haughty posture seems to me to be a crying shame for two very solid reasons.

First of all, we have some excellent athletes on campus; people who merit recognition for the dedication and hard work that they put into their endeavours. On that basis alone, they deserve support, but the argument does not stop there.

A strong athletic program can bring a university prestige that it could not accrue from any other source. A reputation that is built on athletic prowess carries over to all facets of the university. It suddenly becomes a place that people know about and may want to attend. It is this status and recognition that lies at the heart of any program; unfortunately, York has not taken proper advantage of this possibility.

The recognition and interest must first be generated on campus. If the student body takes a tangible interest, others will follow suit. The time is right for the people who should support and cover sports at York to get off their butts. Dispelling apathy that threatens to atrophy any facet of university life is beneficial and commendable. And in the area of athletics it is long overdue.



James Carlisle