

SPORTS

Dutch Treats & Maple Syrup: Davis Cup Preview

This weekend, Canada's national tennis squad will try to gain a berth in the Davis Cup's elite World Group. Excal's Josh Rubin previews both Canada and its oponent, the Netherlands. Please note that all York students presenting valid I.D. at the gate will be admitted free.

Although, as of late, the Netherlands is more famed for its exploits on the soccer pitch than on court, they still won't be easy pickings for the Canadians.

With a pair of young stars who are rapidly rising in the pro ranks and a couple of solid veterans, the Dutch have a very balanced

side.

They will be led by 24 year old Paul Haarhuis, who last year shot up to number 57 in the rankings during his first full year on the tour. Another top Dutch youngster is Mark Koevremans, who also started to shine last year, ending off '89 in 63rd spot.

One of the older players on the Dutch team, Tom Nijssen is also the only one to have played any of his potential Canadian oppo-



Canada's Davis Cup squad. From the left; Chris Pridham, Martin Wostenholme, Andrew Sznajder, Glenn Michabata and Grant Connell

nents. Nijssen defeated Grant Connell in 1989, but was dumped the same year by Glenn Michabata.

For both Canada's team and Tennis Canada, a win against the Netherlands would be a vindication of sorts.

For the team, it would show that they finally belong on tennis's top rung. For Tennis Canada, it would show that their much vaunted four year pro-

gramme (System 92) is paying off.

The Canadian side will be led by the talented but volatile Andrew Sznajder, who finished off last year in 56th spot. In Canada's two previous Davis Cup series (vs Brazil and Paraguay), the 23 year old Sznajder won all four of his singles matches.

Canada's other singles player is likely to be either Grant Connell or Martin Wostenholme.

Against Paraguay, Wostenholme swept both of his matches while Connell split his against Brazil.

Doubles should be the real strength of this Canadian squad, however, as Connell teams up with the veteran Glenn Michabata to form one of the top pairings on the ATP tour.

Other potential singles players for Canada include 25 year old serve and volleyer Chris Pridham and doubles specialist Michibata.

The Davis Cup explained (finally!!)

by Josh Rubin

To the novice fan of international tennis (and indeed to some veterans), the Davis Cup format can be pretty confusing.

Vague ramblings about zones, groups, ones and twos have become par for the course for many tennis lovers.

Adopted in 1981, the present Davis Cup system has three different tiers of play: Regional Zone Group Two, Regional Zone Group One and finally, the World Group.

It is this last level, the elite 16 team World Group, which Can-

ada hopes to enter by beating the Netherlands. The World Group is also where perennial tennis superpowers such as West Germany, Sweden and the U.S. do their playing.

For Davis Cup purposes, the world is divided up into three geographical zones: the Americas, Asia-Oceania and Europe-Africa. For administrative purposes, the Euro-African Zone has been divided into two sections, A and B.

In turn, each of these four sections are split into two levels of play: Group I and Group II. Each

year, the top teams from each Group II advance into their respective Group I. Obviously, then, the bottom teams in each Group I are relegated to Group II at the end of every season.

In Group I, the teams play in a single elimination format to determine both a group champion and runner up. For Canada, this step came when they defeated Paraguay this spring to become the American Zone Group I champs.

In order to finally qualify for the World Group, the Group I champs still have to get past the previous

year's first round losers. For Canada, this is the stage we're at right now. The losing country of our match against the Netherlands will once again be relegated to Group I play next year.

In the World Group itself, the sixteen teams are divided into four quarters, each of which has one strong, seeded team. From there, a straight-forward single elimination takes place. Eventually, the four quarter champions play semi-finals, and then lastly, the final is played to determine the Davis Cup champion.

The format for individual Davis

Cup series remains the same at all levels, however, with four singles matches and one doubles match. In a distinction from ATP match play, though, there is now a tie-breaking system; a set is won only after a player leads by two games or more (with at least six games).

The final puzzle in Davis Cup tennis is that all the matches in a series are played to their conclusion, whether or not the series outcome has already been decided. Thus, some 3-2 series wins are not really as close as they appear.

The Ice Palace: it's not in the boonies for nothing

Sporting Goods is a weekly column written by the CHRY sports department, examining Varsity athletics at York.

by Michael Krestell

With the glaring exception of the York Yeomen hockey team there are not many positive things associated with the Ice Palace. OK, maybe one thing: location, after all it is on campus. However, if you have spent more than a few minutes in this human meat freezer then you know what I am talking about. If not, then allow me to acquaint you with York University's biggest joke this side of the proposed entry pavilion.

From the moment you enter the "facility" (and I use the term lightly) you know you are in trouble. After all, shouldn't the home rink of the incredibly successful York University hockey programmes at least have a concession stand? And how about the size of the lobby; it holds approximately thirty people comfortably but because the temperature inside the arena is well below freezing, and I mean well below, between periods fans cram the

area in sardine-like fashion to avoid hypothermia.

Take heart, though, you can buy a coffee to warm your insides but you better have exact change and bring your own mug because the coffee machine rarely works and it often forgets to dispense a cup. Besides, you wouldn't want to drink too much in any case. Heaven forbid you have to use a bathroom. There is only one for each gender and I don't know

"... but somehow the improvement of athletic facilities is consistently sidestepped by the ninth floor brain trust."

about the women's but the men's has room for two, three if you count the sink.

Did I hear someone ask about the dressing rooms? The Yeomen quarters are completely inadequate. The entire team shares two showers and Coach Graham Wise's office is large enough to store a broom, dustpan and maybe a mop. But hey, it's better than the visitors' dressing room, they don't even have a working bathroom, and between periods they can often be found lining up behind the fans to use the men's

room.

Let's face it. When the Ice Box was erected some fifteen years ago it was a dinosaur of a building and now it's not only out of date, but also rundown.

When Coach Wise recruits future Yeomen he can't show them their new home rink because he is afraid they will go to Toronto or Western or anywhere else that has a real hockey facility.

What makes all of this so hard to swallow is that everywhere you turn on campus these days you see construction. Now don't get me wrong. I agree that York needs a student centre. It also needs new residences, and York Lanes will be a worthwhile addition to the University.

But what about the athletes who devote their own time and effort to York University. Don't you think it's about time they got something in return. The Ice Palace is obviously brutal, and The Tait Mackenzie Complex desperately needs expansion, but somehow the improvement of athletic facilities is consistently sidestepped by the ninth floor brain trust.

Remember it's not just the Varsity athletes who suffer because of inadequate facilities. The entire student population is affected by it. They are our facilities as well.

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