



Photos By Tim Clark

# ATHLETICS

# AT

# YORK...

A two month investigation reveals that attitudes towards sports and a lack of facilities are behind the growing frustration of many students with the inadequacy of the athletic and physical education programmes at York. These people are beginning to feel that York has become a bush league university. Most of the problems arise from changes in Ontario Government policy on budgeting university capital projects, conflicting philosophies and lack of communication within the Department of Physical Education and Athletics.

Last year, then president Murray Ross set up a Presidential Committee on Physical Education and Athletics to investigate the problems in the relationship between the branches of the department and to determine the needs of physical education and athletics in the next ten years.

The report recommends a sweeping reorganization of the department and questions its present priorities. The report has not yet been presented to the Senate and President David Slater wants the Academic Policy and Planning Committee to investigate it first. But the reorganization recommended in the report would probably eliminate many of the problems arising from conflicts and lack of communication within the department.

Many physical education students and athletes complain of overcrowding of the various facilities at the Tait Mackenzie Building during the day when most people are on campus.

The Hockey team is presently housed in an Ice Arena that is only the first phase of a three-step plan for ice facilities at York. The team must change in a small room which is supposed to be a trainer's room. Visiting teams must change in Tait Mackenzie, walk to the rink, put on their skates and return to Tait Mackenzie after the game to shower and change back. A plan to turn the skate changing rooms into dressing rooms with showers has been approved but no construction has been started yet.

Last August, stands were approved for the ice facilities. Approval was granted, it is indicated, only because the Department of University Affairs felt that since they were portable they could be used for other things such as football Convocations, and outdoor rallies or classes.

## Fields bad

In addition to the inadequacy of hockey facilities, one must consider the football and rugby field. Three experts on athletic fields, Athletic Coordinator Nobby Wirkowski, groundskeeper Cedric Dobbin and Geography Professor Ian Brookes, a specialist in Geomorphology (landforms) agree that constructing the field from the clay loam landfill obtained from the university during the construction of buildings was a bad idea. The clay retains water and makes the field more muddy when wet than other types of soil would. In dry weather, the clay is like a block of concrete and in cold weather it's like a block of ice. Also, grass does not grow quickly in clay.

Team members have also noted the inadequacy of the goalposts. The posts are square and unpadded. This is dangerous and especially so for rugby players who wear no protective padding.

Athletic Trainer, Mert Prophet, said that the small first aid room now in use is cramped with equipment and is sometimes overcrowded. At one time, he notes, there were long delays in getting equipment installed.

Dr. Arthur Johnson, Vice President (Academic Services) was in charge of campus planning during the early days of the university. He says earlier planning called for a faster pace for building athletic facilities.

"The plan originally called for the building of the second phase of Tait Mackenzie between 1966 and 1969. But, between the first and second phase, the capital formula was established.

"In 1967 we decided to go ahead with the first phase of the Arena complex, which was originally designed as an outdoor arena. We put the walls and roof on so that we could get a better facility.

## Argos interested

"In 1964 we were approached by the Toronto Argonauts who were looking for some alternative to the CNE stadium. The proposal was to build a thirty to forty thousand seat stadium where York and the Argos could play and to rent the parking lots. The concept was eventually dropped because of various problems.

"We were also interested in the North York Centennial Olympic Centre, but the only thing that was built there was the Arena.

"We have always watched the proposals for a domed stadium."

The government's capital budget formula was implemented in 1967-68. One of the problems was that every university could go down to the Committee on University Affairs with a sales pitch and have the formula made applicable to them.

Financial aid for university capital projects is supplied by the Ontario Universities Capital Aid Corporation. There are three categories of assistance:

- a) 85 per cent on the first \$10 million and 95 per cent thereafter for: academic buildings and equipment, dining, student union, phys. ed. buildings and equipment, land purchases and utilities
- b) all costs for medical and health sciences buildings, equipment and site services.
- c) no support for construction of stadia, related playing fields, ice rinks and commercial space.

Dr. David Slater, York University president, served on the Committee on University Affairs while Dean of Graduate Studies at Queens. He explained some of the problems in the capital formula budget. Formerly, he said, University Affairs would support capital projects on an individual basis. There was a 50-50 cost split for athletic facilities.

"Now, of course," he said, "we still have to have project by project approval, but the cost has to come out of the (total) capital budget available. Therefore, if it was decided that we could build an athletic facility, the cost would have to come out of the total for the whole university.

"Even without the present ruling, you can't spend money that would only benefit a few students and you would have a hard time persuading University Affairs to spend the money on athletics, if there were other things needed.

"The basic change was to regard not just specific groups but the entire university. At that time the view was that it was not a legitimate use of public funds to support spectator facilities, but that there should be support for sports, recreation and that these things are an integral part of the student life at university, and, as such, are entitled to support.

"They had to look ahead for several years to discover what was a desirable development of facilities. That you need sports and recreation facilities was recognized, but ... the position of the Committee on University Affairs was that, in the short term, academic facilities were upmost. . .

"There are some sports where building facilities is hard to justify to the taxpayer," Dr. Slater said. "Similarly, it is not a legitimate use of public funds to put in shops, but what is the fair division for the taxpayer in student union facilities?"

"We are looking to the future of York and we will take into account sports and recreation facilities," Slater said. "We not only have to ask what recreation facilities are needed but look at the need for a student centre because I feel that there is some deficiency in student facilities here, despite the college system."

Dr. Slater has asked the Physical Education and Athletics Department to undertake a review of their needs and submit a report.

William Small, vice president administration, said that the review should be ready within a month. If Tait Mackenzie was discussed for the 73-74 building programme it would have to compete with a new college building, lecture hall or Physical Sciences building, he added.

## Phase two

The current Phase II plan calls for a racing pool, diving facility, large classrooms, more gymnasias, physical education labs, a locker area and modern training facility. The second phase of the arena would cost \$1.5 million, adding 3,000 seats, press box, and eight change rooms.

Outdoor facilities planned include a playing field north of the Temporary Office building location and a stadium between the two north parking lots.

The stadium, planned in three phases, calls, first, for a field and track with team rooms under a 2,000 seat stand on the west side. Phase two would place a 3,000 seat bleacher on the east side; the third phase calls for seats around the end zones.

According to Cedric Dobbin, chief groundskeeper, a proper field would cost \$20,000 without a track, stands or change rooms. W.W. Small said that the university had asked for funds for the temporary playing field and an additional intermural field beside the arena, but only the latter was approved.

The Arena was originally designed as a skating rink, facilities manager Bud Price said. All the improvements, such as benches, the mesh, sound system, lighting and clocks were installed later for use by the hockey team.

Arena problems early in the year were the unpainted boards and sticking doors. They were eventually repaired after pressure from Price. At that time, a spokesman said that Physical Plant had

problems getting funds out of the Operating budget and that only necessary repairs were being made. Rusting roof struts in the arena had to be painted and this took priority.

## Bureaucracy

Even if the Arena and Tait Mackenzie additions were approved tomorrow, it would take three years to build them. Ross Dawson, campus planning director, said. The bureaucratic procedure goes like this: After approval by the Academic Planning and Policy Committee, the Senate and the Properties Committee of the Board of Governors, a project committee is formed with the dean, chairman of the department, two or three faculty or staff, a couple of students, and consultants from Campus Planning and Physical Plant. They take about three months to make a report.

The Board of Governors hires an architect who, working with the project committee, prepares working drawings of the building. The project then goes to a finance committee for about a month; complete blueprints take six months more, with construction completed after another 18-19 months.

Some physical education students have complained about another problem — the university's "Ivory-Tower" approach to the subject. The courses may be relevant, but they aren't made up as well as they could be.

Athletes have criticized the poor organization within the athletics programme.

There is no contact, before the season, of the general student body who might want to know about trying out for football or hockey. (The athletic handbook was mailed after registration and did not reach many students.)

Coaches on some teams don't spend enough time upgrading the playing skills of team members; they expect them to be at top form, even if just out of high school.

Other complaints: poor scheduling, too little contact with other universities, low morale among coaches and staff, and poor upkeep of equipment.

Some sources, within or close to the Department of Physical Education and Athletics, have said there is a basic philosophical conflict, causing inefficiency and low morale.

A few extremists, they say, favour an abstract approach to physical education, recreation and athletics which means a low priority for team competitive sport. Others prefer the American emphasis on team competition, but the majority of the staff apparently hold a middle of the road position.

Nevertheless, according to these sources, one or two of the "low priority" group have seized the reorganization of inter-collegiate sport in Ontario as an opportunity to put their ideas into practice. They are opposing York's entry into the new league.

The report of the Committee of Physical Education and Athletics could clear up this problem, if their recommendations are put into effect.

Their major proposal calls for the department to be reorganized in an integrated system with three equal

divisions — recreation, physical education and athletics — with the entire department eventually recognized as a separate faculty within the university.

Other recommendations call for a full time director with a Ph.D and the rank of full professor to administer the faculty, assisted by three directors for the divisions; that eventually all directors be full professors, and that the rest of the staff be members of the faculty with degrees; that the departments encourage maximum participation; and that the support to programmes and facilities be increased substantially.

## Undesireable trend

Physical education at York, the report says, is dominant over the other activities, which is an undesirable trend, at the expense of recreation and athletic needs.

The report stresses that instructional and recreational programmes be given a higher priority so that each student can have the opportunity to acquire new skills and interests. Since physical education and athletic programmes currently involved only a small minority of students, it suggests that the recreation programme be made more attractive to the student body at large.

Most department members favour the report. When questioned on the proposals, John Saywell, dean of arts, said: I think they are very good, with one reservation — that the Director have a degree as recommended, instead of a wrestler who is interested solely in Athletics.

"I think the phys ed. programme is one of the best in Canada ... graduates ... can go into administration or community work. Therefore, much of the course is concerned with the academic. . .

"When we get a College of Education," Saywell said, "we will probably add courses that will be oriented towards high schools. The most important thing is to insure that athletics are not allowed to dominate the rest of the department."

President Slater also likes much in the report: "The general idea of the recreation appeals to me a great deal ... It is quite important to insure that the programme in recreation and athletics is very well developed. In intercollegiate athletics, if we are going to be in the game ... then we will have to have adequate facilities and, unfortunately, the report doesn't address itself to finances.

"In other universities," Slater said, "a few spectator sports make a profit and pay for the rest, along with financial help and athletics fees.

## Student controversy

But "there is a controversy among many students on whether the athletic fee should go to support athletics or recreation.

"As far as the athletics are concerned, I feel that the new league will bring about a new era in sport in

Ontario and we will have to make sure we can come to the standard in facilities.

"On the matter of the organization, I would rather not comment at this time," Slater said. "I hope that it can be submitted to the Academic Planning and Policy Committee of the Senate early in the new year, and there the programme and the financing can be examined."

The last — but not least — problem is the lack of communication. Nobby Wirkowski, coordinator of men's athletics, noted recently that the players on the various teams had not come to him with their complaints about facilities.

When interviewed, Dr. Bryce Taylor, Director of Physical Education, seemed unaware of the departmental problems. As far as he knew, he said, the facilities in Tait Mackenzie were not overcrowded, and the football field was in good condition.

He commented that he was in favour of keeping facilities that would benefit the majority of students, but he would not elaborate further. When asked about the ice arena problems, he said: "The ice arena doesn't involve many students, though."

What about the intercollegiate hockey, broomball, or pick-up hockey? These, he said, also didn't involve many students. When asked about students concerned about not getting into the new league, he said "We'll be going in football probably, but there's still problems to be ironed out in hockey and basketball, and anyway the whole thing has to be approved by the university."

The lack of communication is even more clearly revealed by the fact that the report of the Committee of Physical Education and Athletics has not been released to the Men's or Women's Interuniversity Councils or the Intercollegiate Councils. Outside the department and the administration, no one seems to know it exists.

When contacted, W.P. Scott, Chairman of the Board of Governors, said that in the search for outside funds, the Board priorities were buildings and scholarship funds.

"The Board has always had an interest in sports at York," he said, "but this is the first time I have been contacted about problems at York in athletic facilities."

The slowdown in building due to inflation, the conflicts within the department, the different priorities and the lack of communication have all worked to make York a minor league university.

# ...A BUSH LEAGUE ATTITUDE

By Robin Rowland

