

VIEW FROM THE CHEAP SEATS

by Mark Savoie

If any of you are regular readers of that great bastion of American sex and sports, *Sports Illustrated*, then you know that the single largest flaw in the sport of hockey is that fighting is allowed by the NHL and has not yet been banned. They express great hopes that in today's enlightened society the NHL will replace fighting with something more befitting a major sport... perhaps some scantily clad cheerleaders would do nicely. Anyway, this is a response to their call to ban fighting.

Hockey is played at a faster pace than any of the major sports. Also, hockey has a greater history for fighting than any of the other sports. Fighting is part of the origins of Canadian hockey. Played by soldiers on frozen rivers and ponds with tree limbs as sticks and frozen turds as pucks, the game of shinny was extremely rough and unregulated. When someone slashed, hooked, elbowed, etc... you knew there was no referee to send him off the ice for two minutes. There was nothing to discourage him from doing it again...except you. Given the escalating nature of such conflicts, it is not surprising that the occasional fight broke out. These fights would not necessarily be belligerent in type, but would often have the nature of a friendly pugilistic battle. Friends could fight friends on the ice and still remain friends. In those days it was still considered gentlemanly to resolve a dispute with fisticuffs.

Hockey has evolved greatly since that time. There is now a referee to punish transgressions, and it is no longer quite so necessary to resolve problems on the ice with your fists. However, since the attitude that fighting in hockey is acceptable is ingrained in the origins of the sport it will be difficult to change that attitude in today's players and spectators.

The question is "Should we try?" My answer is a question. "Why should we?" The next time you see a fight break out in a game of hockey played at a competitive level ask yourself what percentage of the crowd is standing for the fight? The answer is over 90%. Why are they standing? Is it so that they can leave in disgust? Of course not! They're standing so that they can see the fight better. Maybe hockey fans are all bloodthirsty, but I really don't think that we're all that different from the legions of fans who reminisce about the old Oakland Raiders and the Dodger/Giant brawls of the fifties.

If hockey was not a checking game it is doubtful that fighting would be a prominent part of the sport. So maybe we should ban checking in order to eliminate fighting? Again, of course not! Periodically, you will see an NHL game where there is little or no checking. During these games you will also see little or no excitement. I don't know why, but it seems that the skaters don't really come into their own unless there's a lot of hitting going on out there as well. Maybe it's self preservation. The little speedsters might think to themselves "I've got to get moving, otherwise that 230 pound 6'4" defenceman is going to make me part of the boards." ... I don't know.

But, I hear you ask, what about football? Football is far more violent than hockey, and yet they don't have fights on a regular basis. This is true. The difference is that football has very definite hitter and hittee. Only on turnovers does offense get a chance to really hit the defence. In hockey, if someone hits you and gets the puck, it becomes our job to hit him and get the puck back. Again, escalation. The possibility for escalation in football is nominal, hence the absence of fighting.

A minor point: In hockey when Wayne Gretzky comes sailing in over the line it is perfectly legal to knock him on his butt (doing so is another matter entirely). In basketball when Micheal Jordan takes off from the foul line it's not even legal to tap him on the wrist, let alone knock him down. If it was legal to knock him down two things would happen. First, his aerial show would be grounded and second, there would be fights. But then it wouldn't be basketball. Take away fights, and then it won't be hockey.

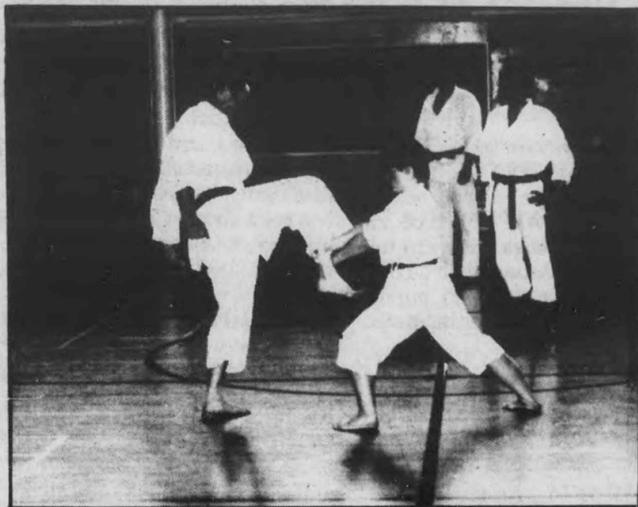
In important hockey news the Hamilton Carter Selects have reached the halfway point of the Monsignor Boyd Ball Hockey League with a record of 4-4-3 with 91 goals scored and 101 goals against. This is on the strength of a six game lossless streak which has seen the team recover from its 1-4 start. Leading goal scorer and point getter for the team is Randy Bell with 18 goals and 26 points. Leading the team in assists is Robert DiDiodato with 18. Penalty minute leader for the club is Mark Savoie with 22 minutes in the box. The club is currently in sixth place in the ten team league, of which the top eight finishers will make the playoffs.

Karate Club Kicking

The Daishin (Japanese word meaning "Big Spirit") Karate Club recently held a one day combined clinic and grading at the Marshall D'Avray Hall gym - south gym located on the University of New Brunswick Campus. Its guest instructor was Sensei Louis Comeau from Dieppe, NB. He is the Maritime director of the Japanese Karate Association International Canada (JKAIC) - Shotokan style, with 20 years involvement in Karate.

During Sensei Comeau's stay the participants received a wealth of valuable instruction. All aspects of the art were touched upon. The club hopes Sensei Comeau will return in the spring of 1990.

The Daishin Karate Club first opened its doors to the public in September 1987, at the Fredericton High School. There were about ten beginners. Since January 1988, the expanded club has been located at the Marshall D'Avray Hall gym. It is primarily composed of University students. The club members



Wanda MacNaughton blocking Sensei Comeau kick while Carrey Carlie and Bob Dunbar watch

range in age from 17 to 36 years old. The main objectives of the club are not only to increase one's self defense skills but also to increase one's physical, mental and spiritual well being.

Sensei Rene Leger, a 2nd degree black belt is the head instructor of the Daishin Karate Club.

Classes are offered on Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 9 to 11 pm and on Sunday afternoons from 4 to 6 pm.

Rene and his "Big Spirits" welcome you to join them, whether it be as an active participant or as a keen observer! See you there!

Varsity Schedule

Saturday, January 13

Hockey UNB at STU
7:00pm at LBR
Wrestling Queens Open
Volleyball (M) UNB at UdeM
Volleyball (W) Acadia at UNB
7:00 pm LB gym

Sunday, January 14

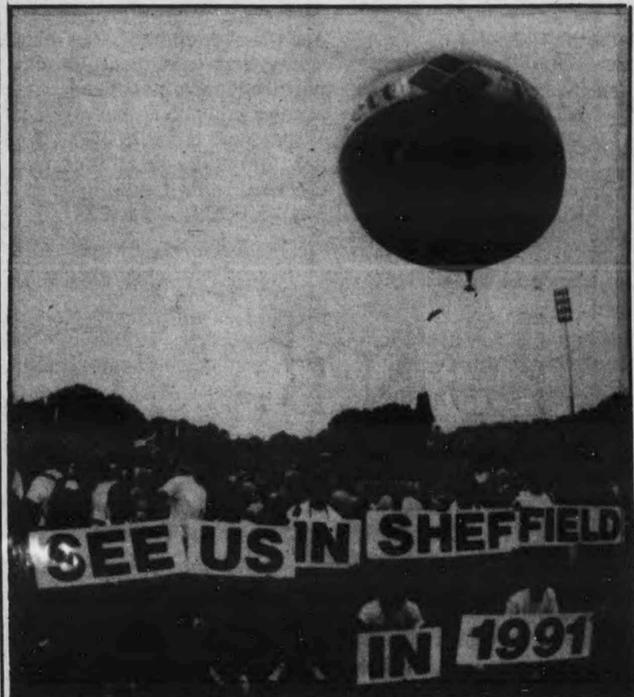
Volleyball (M) UNB at UdeM
Volleyball (W) Acadia at UNB
1:00 pm LB gym

Tuesday, January 16

Basketball (M) UNB at UMPI

Thursday, January 18

Basketball (M) UMFx at UNB
7:00 pm LB gym



The University Games: story next week

CIAU Top Ten Rankings

Hockey (M)

1. Calgary (1)
2. Alberta (6)
3. Moncton* (3)
4. Waterloo (5)
5. Manitoba (4)
6. UQTR (10)
7. Wil. Laurier (2)
8. Western (8)
9. UNB* (10)
10. York (7)

Basketball (M)

1. St. FX* (1)
2. U. Vic (3)
3. Western (2)
4. Alberta (5)
5. UBC (4)
6. Concordia (6)
7. Lakehead (NR)
8. Calgary (7)
9. Winnipeg (8)
10. UPEI* (NR)

Swimming (W)

1. McGill (1)
2. Alberta (2)
3. Laval (3)
4. Toronto (4)
5. Montreal (5)
6. McMaster (6)
7. Calgary (8)
8. Brock (NR)
9. Waterloo (10)
10. Guelph (9)

Swimming (M)

1. Calgary (1)
2. McGill (2)
3. McMaster (3)
4. Laval (4)
5. Alberta (5)
6. Toronto (7)
7. Brock (NR)
8. Western (10)
9. Guelph (8)
10. Laurentian (9)

Volleyball (W)

1. Manitoba (1)
2. UBC (2)
3. U. Vic (3)
4. Calgary (4)
5. U. Sask. (5)
6. Regina (6)
7. Alberta (7)
8. York (8)
9. Ottawa (9)
10. Laval (10)

Volleyball (M)

1. Manitoba (1)
2. Sherbrooke (4)
3. UBC (3)
4. Waterloo (2)
5. U. Sask. (5)
6. Laval (6)
7. Alberta (7)
8. Calgary (8)
9. U. Vic (9)
10. Dal* (NR)

* denotes a school in the A.U.A.A.