

## NHL coach Dave Chambers wants to come home



Former Yeomen coach Dave Chambers.

by Dannis Koromilus

The man who led the hockey Yeomen to their first ever CIAU title wants to come back to York.

Dave Chambers, who is currently an assistant coach with the NHL's Minnesota North Stars spoke to *Excalibur* from his office at the Met Centre in Minneapolis.

**EXCALIBUR:** Was the leap from an interuniversity level of competition to a major league like the NHL dramatically different?

**CHAMBERS:** Well, I think a couple of things helped me along the way on that. I coached Canada's national junior team which was high level and, even at York, we had a couple of ex-pros and major junior players. I would say it really hasn't been that much different as far as the players are concerned. The big difference is the extensive travelling. We play 40 away games, sometimes travelling across the country for four or five days straight, playing three games out of the five days.

**EXCALIBUR:** How does the road affect the coaches and players on your team?

**CHAMBERS:** You learn to respect how difficult it is for these players to play in a body contact sport and play three or four games a week. Then you must consider the travel and realize that you have to be strong both physically and mentally to do it. I think the college player finds the biggest difference, while the junior player is already used to playing 70 or 80 games a season with a lot of bus travel. The college player, whether American or Canadian, finds that not only the travel, but the speed and the intensity of the game requires adjustment.

**EXCALIBUR:** Is there a difference between the American and Canadian attitude towards hockey?

**CHAMBERS:** In Minnesota there is. College and high school hockey are very big here, even though our [pro] team hasn't done too well in the last few years. I just finished watching a high school tournament where 17,000 people showed up to watch.

**EXCALIBUR:** Is the same enthusiasm shown towards the North Stars when they're playing in the Met Centre?

**CHAMBERS:** As I said earlier, the team hasn't been too successful in the last five years, so the attendance figures are usually around 13,000. We would have to get about 15,000 people to break even. There are only two million people here, and when you consider the Vikings football, the Twins and all the cultural activities you can participate in, you see there is a lot of competition for the entertainment dollar.

**EXCALIBUR:** What is the American view of violence in hockey?

**CHAMBERS:** I think that the people who come to the games obviously accept it as part of the game but I think there is a large number of people in Minnesota who relate more to the high school and college hockey where as in Canadian college hockey, if you fight you're out of the game.

**EXCALIBUR:** In your organization, to what extent does the managerial hierarchy interfere with the actual operation of the hockey club?

**CHAMBERS:** The manager's name here is Jack Fiera and he pretty well let's the coaches coach. Some managers are more hands on than others, but here he just looks after the administrative side of things and drafting new players. It depends on the personality and the philosophy of the management. But he's very good on that.

**EXCALIBUR:** Would you consider spending the rest of your coaching career in the NHL?

**CHAMBERS:** Well, this has been a good experience for me. It's the only coaching I hadn't done, but I would like to return to York and teach in the coaching programme. I gained a lot of experience dealing with the elite athlete at this level, and I look at it as how it will help me in the long term, in the academic way.

**EXCALIBUR:** From your exposure to the NHL this season, and witnessing the demands each game poses for each player, especially the younger ones, what advice would you give an aspiring pro-hockey player in university or college?

**CHAMBERS:** Any university player has to devote his primary energy to his education, and then to developing and improving his hockey skills. The student has to make sure he gets an education just to make sure he has an option if he doesn't make it in the NHL. A lot of junior players don't get the education they should. The odds of making it are very slim, so it is very important not to abandon one's education.

**EXCALIBUR:** How do you feel about your team's chances in the playoffs this year?

**CHAMBERS:** We'd obviously like to get by a couple of rounds in the playoffs. [North Stars management] is rebuilding this team, so they don't think they are going to win the Stanley Cup this year. In the Norris division, I think any team has a chance to win it, as it is pretty close. Chicago is most likely favoured to win, but there are a lot of factors in the playoffs, goaltending is one of them. This is a young team with a young defence, so they're looking more long term. I have a one year option on my contract. My decision will be based on whether the owners take the franchise elsewhere.

**EXCALIBUR:** So regardless of whether you coach one more year with the North Stars, you will be back at York in the '91-92 season?

**CHAMBERS:** Yes, my plans are to come back to York. I've really enjoyed working with the players here, they've been very receptive. They are very motivated, it's their job, their livelihood.

**EXCALIBUR:** How did the motivation of the players you coached at York compare with the paid professionals in the NHL?

**CHAMBERS:** You know, it's interesting that you ask that. I didn't find much of a difference at all. In fact, I found all the players at York highly motivated. There are a lot of younger players in the NHL, so there is a lot of coaching to be done. Basically all the players that get this far are the ones that are constantly trying to improve their game. The ones who don't have this motivation just don't make it.

## Tom Arnott named new football coach

by Josh Rubin

The football Yeomen have a new coach.

Laurier assistant coach Tom Arnott, who has been with the Hawks since 1986, was announced as Nobby Wirkowski's replacement last Wednesday.

In his time at Laurier, Arnott has helped to build a past OUAA doormat into a team that has consistently competed for the provincial title.

Indeed, in Arnott's second year with the team, the Hawks went all the way to the CIAU final, losing to the UBC Thunderbirds by a mere two points.

## Yeoman and Yeowoman of the year

by Josh Rubin

Track and field coach Sue Wise is one happy person these days.

She can afford to be, too, after both the Yeoman and Yeowoman of the year awards went to members of Wise's team.

On the women's side, CIAU 600m and 1000m champion Nicole Sinn took the award.

For the men, it was pole vaulter Kevin Lake who was named outstanding York performer.

Both Lake and Sinn had earlier been named as CIAU all-Canadians.

Wise seemed pleased with her athletes' awards. "It was a nice way for Nicole to cap off the season." And as for Lake's award? "Kevin's consistency was the reason he got the award. He won every competition he was in and improved his personal record by 50 centimetres."

Other awards handed out last Thursday were for most improved teams (volleyball Yeowomen, badminton Yeomen) the

Saunders Cook award for perseverance and dedication (wrestler Roy Suh Wah Sing).

Special recognition awards were given to George Guppe for his work with the cross-country team, and departing football coach Nobby Wirkowski.

On another sporting note, *Excalibur* has learned that Yeoman hockey coach Graham Wise won't be going to Michigan Tech after all. It seems that the vacant coaching job has been offered to former New York Rangers coach Herb Brooks instead.