

VIEW From The Cheap Seats

By Mark Savoie

Trevor Koot of New Brunswick won a bronze medal in the air pistol event at the Canada Winter Games in Grande Prairie, Alberta last week. He won this medal despite being the fourth best person entered in the event, simply because Andrew Bedford of Saskatchewan (the best person entered) was disqualified for wearing a T-shirt having a Levi's logo. This is a violation of the sport of shooting's rules stating that no commercial advertisements may be worn.

Aside from the obvious injustice to Mr. Bedford, this is also a huge injustice to all athletes for whom this proscription is made. A decade ago Jim McMahon of the Chicago Bears was fined a substantial sum of money because he wore a Nike (or Adidas or something) headband on the sidelines. The NFL has a rule similar to shooting's forbidding its athletes from wearing such headgear, since it supposedly could be used to advertise on behalf of a corporate sponsor.

What is so wrong with this? Why shouldn't athletes be allowed to advertise for corporate sponsors? Why should only the executive levels of a sport be the only ones allowed to advertise during an event? The NFL sells advertising rights (through television) at ungodly prices, but nevertheless refuses to allow the competitors—the ones actually doing the work—the right to wear a simple headband bearing a logo.

The argument that sports promoters will tout as their excuse for why all forms of advertisements must be banned from the athletes' use is that they don't want the athletes to become human billboards. They feel that the purity of their sport will somehow be corrupted if the athletes are plastered with ads. In a sense, they are right. I, as a fan, would far prefer to see sporting events devoid of commercial advertisements. However, I acknowledge that advertisements have become a necessary aspect of the financing of sports, and so I accept TV time-outs, ads along the boards at the Montreal Forum, cyclists plastered with ads, and things like the Official Condom of the 2002 Olympic Games, some restrictions must still be made; it must remain possible to easily identify athletes and teams. The advertisements must not become so dominating that they overshadow numbers or team colours and logos. So long as they don't go beyond this, athletes should be allowed to wear ads. Fans of English football know that European football teams have no qualms about using their players as human billboards. Most, if not all, football teams in England have the logo of a corporate sponsor on the front of each jersey rather than the crest of the team. To the best of my knowledge, this has not led to fans abandoning the sport in droves or a lessening in the quality of play. The same would be true if it were the athletes themselves handling the ads.

Team sports are actually a bit of touchy subject so for the sale of ads by individual players, since the need for uniformity amongst a team's player is so important both for the fan's appreciation of the game and for the player's ability to identify his/her teammates. No such an argument can be made for an individual sport such as shooting. When either Trevor Koot or Andrew Bedford steps up to the range for his shots, any spectators are going to know who they are watching, regardless of how many advertisements may be worn. Therefore, any argument that advertisements on the shooters would detract from the sport is spurious at best. In fact, it does not seem completely unreasonable to me to believe that Andrew Bedford might have a very good case should he decide to sue the Canada Winter Games to get the gold medal that he earned. I am not a lawyer, and try to divorce myself from legal matters as much as possible, but it seems to me that this could be considered as an unjustifiable restraint of trade.

Both sides of the baseball strike have set new lows in terms of standards of behaviour in recent weeks. Major League Baseball, in one of the most stupidly misguided business decisions I have ever heard of, is going to try and get Little League baseball teams to pay for the right to use nicknames like Expos, Red Sox, or Blue Jays. From a purely legal standpoint, they have a point. They paid for that corporate identity, and therefore have a right to demand payment for its use. The stupid part is that in a sport already having a serious image problem, they are now alienating a whole new generation of fans. Major League Baseball has seemingly forgotten what a boom Little League can be in terms of free advertising. An eight year old boy who plays on a team called the Tigers will often become a Detroit Tigers fan for life, and will eventually be happy to pay for that privilege.

The players, on the other hand, are in danger of losing what little fan support they have, by taking an unnecessarily hardline bargaining stance. Most people, regardless of which side of the strike they favour, understand that major league baseball players will be justified in protesting the use of replacement players (scabs) during the regular season. The players, however, have upped the ante by saying that all players playing in spring season games will also be considered as scabs. Technically, the players are right; since the spring season games will be played by MLB teams such as the Expos and Blue Jays, the players in those games are ostensibly representing major league baseball. The reality is far different from this. Minor league players have long played a major role in spring season games, and MLB has declared that it expects them to do so again his season. This puts minor league players in the very uncomfortable position of choosing between MLB and the Player's Association. This is patently unfair to them, and an extremely unjust stance for the Player's Association to take, since minor league players are not given protection by the association. Were minor league players given this protection, then the stance of the Player's Association would be justified, and the possibility of the use of scabs during the regular season would be eliminated as well, since the association would then consist of so many baseball players that not nearly enough would be left to even create the illusion of major league baseball.

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Field Hockey

Babineau takes on V-Reds, Thompson prepares for Pan-Ams

Reds host indoor field hockey toumey

by Maria Paisley
Sports Editor

Some things never change and some people never lose that Midas touch.

Former Varsity Reds field hockey player and 1993-94 CIAU Player of the Year, Josette Babineau, returned to play against her former teammates at the UNB Invitational Indoor Field Hockey Tournament on the weekend. As a Red Babineau lead the AUA in scoring. She proved that she had not lost her touch by being named top scorer with 16 goals. Babineau is now playing with Club Espoir which is led by five former all-Canadians.

In the Championship game Espoir led the Reds 4-3 at the half and never looked back defeating UNB 7-3. Reds Co-captain Charla Currie, and Megan Nesbitt, and Diane Rogers each added one in the losing cause. Currie was the top Reds scorer with six goals.

NCAA ranked University of Maine, the Quebec Provincial Selects, Bishop's University, Club Espoir, and the Varsity Reds participated in the round robin tournament.

Reds goalkeeper Krista Thompson used the tournament as a tune-up for the upcoming Pan-American Games in Argentina in March.

Reds Assistant Coach Stacey Bean describes indoor field hockey as "quick and has a lot of different rules" than the outdoor version. For one thing there are six players rather than the 11 in outdoor field hockey. Bean believes that these differences "make the game a lot more exciting and a very good spectator sport."



Former Red Josette Babineau takes on Reds goalie Krista Thompson in Championship Game. Photo Jud Delong

Bean has been working since November to develop a program as UNB "never really had a solid program." The team is comprised of varsity players with one or two high school students who practice with them every now and again.

Currently the Reds are practising three times a week, which, according to Bean "is quite a bit in the off-season". In addition, the Reds have attended a number of tournaments. Bean states that "playing indoor field hockey is great as the ball control has to be so much more precise as it is the matter of inches inside. You might get away with it outside, but it really helps your ability especially when you play on turf."

The Reds will be looking for some new recruits—two goalkeepers, as the Reds won't have any. UNB will be looking for about four or five other players as well. Krista Thompson will be leaving the team this year and Tammy Jewer may be leaving if she is accepted to Veterinary school.

Wrestling

Wrestlers disappointed with Nationals

by Mark Savoie
Bruns Sports

"It was a very disappointing tournament." That's the sentiment of Varsity Reds wrestling coach Don Ryan about the CIAU championship held last weekend in Calgary, Alberta. "We went out there expecting to win a couple of medals, and came back empty handed."

The tone for the tournament for the V-Reds was set in the first match of the first day. In this 52kg clash UNB's Terry Pomeroy went up against Brock University's James Crowe, a complete unknown to the UNB squad. He proved able to upset Pomeroy in that opening match. This meant that the best finish that Pomeroy could hope for was a bronze.

Crowe went on to win the MVP of the tournament, pinning all of his opponents with the exception of Terry Pomeroy. Brock University is the home of the National Training Centre for wrestling.

The loss by Pomeroy in the first round triggered a domino effect for the entire team. Every other wrestler on the V-Reds also lost his first round match, including 57 kg class co-captain Jason Pleasant-Sampson. Pleasant-Sampson was placed in a tough pool, opening against the eventual weight-class winner, and was only able to capture a sixth place finish.

"All of the other athletes on the team were shocked when Terry [Pomeroy] lost in the first match," said Don Ryan. "It had an effect on how they wrestled. People looked up to Terry and to see him lose made them really conscious of the opposition. When you lose emotion like that it's really hard to get it back."

There was some controversy over Pomeroy's bronze medal match. Pomeroy started well but allowed seven quick points in the middle of the match to put himself down 10-4 with one minute left in the five minute contest.

He threw his opponent to narrow the gap to 10-8, and then was able to keep the other wrestler's back to the mat for over half a minute. Most observers present thought that Pomeroy had earned a pin, but the referee disagreed. At the close of the match Pomeroy remained two points in arrears and UNB's best chance at a medal had been lost.

The fourth place result in the 52 kg weight class was a personal disappointment for Pomeroy. He wrestles at the international level for Canada at the 48 kg class, but was forced to go up a class since the lightest weight wrestled at by the CIAUs is the 52 kg class. James Crowe, on the other hand, actually came down a class to wrestle at this weight.

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