



Batherson turns heads in AHL

Former Acadia Axeman gets his chance with PEI Senators

By Bruce Denis
Sports Editor

When I asked Norm Batherson if he's made the adjustment from an academic lifestyle to an athletic lifestyle, a tell-tale smile rolled across his face.

Batherson will be in town this weekend sporting the number 16 jersey for the PEI Senators as they face the Fredericton Canadiens. The former star of the CIAU Champion Acadia Axemen has quietly turned some important heads around the AHL.

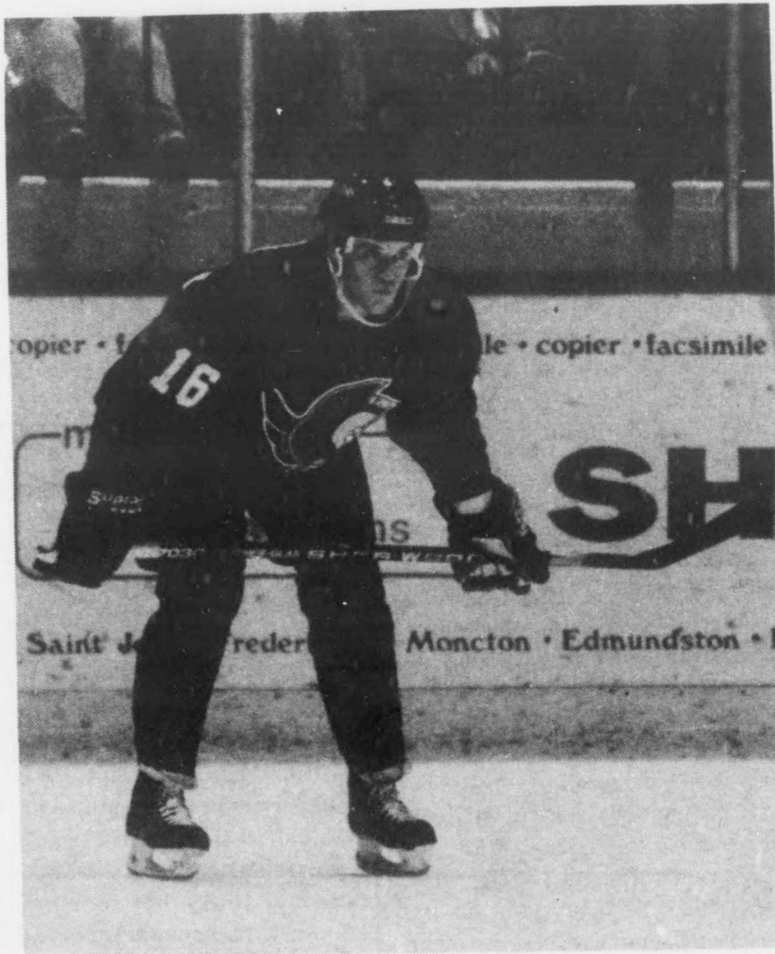
With 8 goals and 23 points in 41 games so far this season, he ranks sixth in team scoring. The jump from CIAU to AHL wasn't easy though. "The guys are more experienced in the AHL, the play is faster and the players are stronger. It's a whole different style of hockey. The college game is intense but there is more of that here."

Batherson, a native of Sydney, NS, played the last half of the CIAU season last year with a tryout invitation from the Senators in his back pocket. After the national championships were in the bag he completed his third year in the Bachelor of Arts program and accepted the invitation.

"I've always wanted to play pro hockey and I knew this was going to be my best chance. I'm 24 now and if I wait any longer I'm not going to get another chance. You don't really think long term anyway, in this game. When I signed the contract it was for the here and the now instead of the future."

The Senators offered him a 25 game amateur tryout contract after deciding they liked what they saw at the training camp held in September. In November they signed him to a one year, 5 figure pro contract.

Though PEI is a less than respectable 13-25-4 so far this season and their parent club, the Ottawa Senators, are even less fortu-



Batherson takes a breather at the Aitken Centre.
Photo by Kevin G. Porter

nate with an 8-34-5 record, Batherson can only see it as a viable opportunity to make it to the NHL. "There's always that thought. You try to focus on your present situation but you always dream of going up there."

As a forward, he has already logged a lot of time on the specialty teams and notes that any progress he makes with the team is an added bonus because nothing was expected of him when he tried out.

He hopes that his success will open doors for other CIAU players who have the talent to play professional hockey but are overlooked as has-beens. "Last year, there were a few guys on our team that could step up into this league, it's just a matter of getting a chance. I hope to prove that the Canadian college

game is stepping up. I think I'm doing that by playing in the AHL."

Despite the glamour of playing professional hockey, he still misses his university teammates. "I still keep in touch with the guys. I spent three years at Acadia and made some pretty good friends. I think they'll be at the Nationals again this year. I miss the guys."

School is still important to Batherson and he expects to take summer courses at Acadia until he completes his degree requirements. After all, while life in the AHL is treating him well now he still only holds a one year contract.

"Things are going pretty well for me. I'm hoping there will be a future for me here. But I'm taking it one day at a time."

— CLUB NEWS —

Scuba Club

The Scuba Club is back in full force this term. The Basic Scuba course has just begun with a class of 33 students. The next Basic Scuba course will be in May.

There will be open pool time this Monday night January 24 from 7:30-9:30 pm. All new members are welcome. You can also stop down at the Club at this time to pick up this term's open water dive schedules. There is a Club dive this Sunday January 23 in the Bay of Fundy. There will be an Ice Diver course put on by the club next month.

So if you're interested in Scuba Diving, or would like to know more about the UNB Scuba Club, come down to see us Monday night or call Kevin Johnston at 472-3103.



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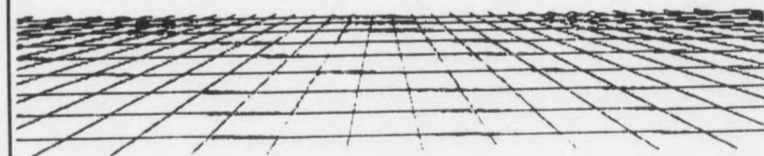
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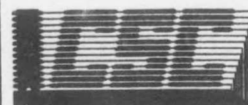


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