

VIEW From The Cheap Seats

By Mark Savoie

One of the tragedies of varsity athletics at the university level is that women are given short shrift. Here at UNB, where our most successful teams historically are women's teams - these being women's basketball and field hockey - the problem is less visible than at other institutions. And yet the reception given to the Red Sticks (field hockey) last year for their achievement of being runner-up for the CIAU title paled in comparison to the boisterous reaction of UNB students to the Red Devils (ice hockey) for making it to the national semi-finals in 1984.

Granted, ice hockey is a much more prominent sport in the Canadian psyche than is field hockey. Yet one can not imagine the same outpouring of emotion were it the Red Blazers (UNB's unofficial women's ice hockey representative) who were bringing honour and glory to the university. The same could be said for basketball. At present the women's basketball team is very popular; interest in the team is far higher than is interest for the men's team. But were our men's team to actually put together a winning streak longer than one game I'm sure the tide would turn. All of a sudden the choice between men's and women's basketball on this campus would be weighted towards the former.

The fact of the matter is that the majority of sports fans are male. This is not a genetic thing. Men are not inherently more interested in watching others compete than are women; at least not to any significant extent. It is, however, a cultural thing. When boys are growing up it is expected of them that they have an interest in sports. They are expected to collect hockey cards and to identify the teams and players, and to follow the leagues throughout their respective seasons. Because of the pressures of conformity it is the rare male child who escapes becoming a sports fan to one extent or another. The pressure to become knowledgeable in sports is not felt by women to a similar extent. As a result fewer women become interested in sports.

As I wrote a couple of weeks ago money is the driving force behind sports. Since the sports watching public is predominately male it stands to reason that they will be most interested in watching male's compete. This is, of course, sexist. However, it is something of which I can understand. Although not appropriate for an ideal world, here in the real world it is perhaps understandable that men are more able to relate to the performance of male athletes as opposed to that of female athletes. This means that, all things being equal, men's sports will consistently outdraw and thus outearn women's sports.

At the professional level I have no problem with this. If more people will pay more money to watch the men's golfing US Open than is the case for the women's golfing US Open, then to me it stands to reason that the prize money awarded to men should be the greater. However, if and when crowd draws become equal or is reversed, then the prize money should change accordingly.

At the university level things should be different. Universities should be a bastion of equality; a place where doing what is right should be of greater importance than doing what is coldly pragmatic. There can be no doubt that economic realities must be recognized, but getting black ink at the bottom of the spreadsheet should not be the deciding criteria. Unfortunately, much of the image of universities as bastions of freedom of thought and expression is merely a myth. This means that traditional male sports of high profile such as hockey and football get the bulk of funding, since they in turn can create the most revenue.

What with the lamentable passing of UNB's football team over a decade ago, this sport can no longer be criticized as a funding hog. Hockey, on the other hand, is a different story. Both our men's and women's ice hockey teams have enjoyed a great deal of success in recent years. Our men's team gets a great deal of funding. They made a trip to Alberta for a tournament a few years back; they've made a couple of trips to Maine to get their butts kicked by the Black Bears; and they play in the only professional quality facility on campus. The women's ice hockey team (Red Blazers) get a mere token degree of funding as a registered club. Beyond that they have to beg for facilities, for equipment, and for opponents. When they do find equivalent competition they have excelled, but without an official status they remain a second class entity.

An argument against making the Red Blazers a varsity team is that there is no league in the AUAA in which they could compete. This is true enough, but the breakthrough has to come somewhere. Women's ice hockey is a rapidly growing sport. It would be to UNB's credit if it were to be at the forefront of the movement. If UNB established a team there is a possibility that other schools in the AUAA would follow suit.

Unfortunately, the bean counters will tell us that we can not afford to fund another varsity team. In that case, it may be necessary to eliminate a men's varsity team. This would be appropriate, as then there would be an equal number of men's and women's varsity teams. My suggestion is that we eliminate the men's volleyball team. This is a team playing in a virtually non-existent league (three entries) and with a long history of non-success. It could be replaced with either the Red Blazers or soccer's UNB Yeowomen (see "The Front Row").

I find myself disagreeing with the Michael Jordan love-in that followed the announcement of his retirement. Reporters and commentators in the States have been falling all over themselves to say how wonderful it is to see an athlete retire while he's still on top. I disagree. Basketball has made Jordan a multi-millionaire. I would rather see someone give as much back to the sport that made them rich and famous as they possibly can. By quitting now Jordan robs basketball of his skills for another seven or eight years. I have more respect for Nolan Ryan and his attempt to give everything he had to his game than I do for Jordan's so called classy retirement.

THE BRUNSWICKAN PRESENTS A

SPORTS WRITING SEMINAR

Featuring
Charlie Gillis

OF THE TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Tuesday, October 19th
Room 203, SUB
8:00P.M.

RUSSIAN
PRINCE^{REG.}
VODKA

PRESENTS

NEW stuff

Russian Prince Vodka and  Magazine would like to expose you to some great new music. Be one of the first 125 people to respond to this offer and receive a **NEW STUFF** CD--FREE! There's a new CD every other month, available only through your subscription to  Canada's new music magazine. Here's an act that previously appeared on a **NEW STUFF** CD and is now touring Canadian campuses.



WHISTLER - October 11
VANCOUVER - October 15 & 16
CANMORE - October 19
REGINA - October 22
SASKATOON (U. OF SASKATCHEWAN) - October 23
TORONTO - October 29
DETROIT - October 30
GUELPH - November 3
WATERLOO (U. OF WATERLOO) - November 4
OTTAWA (U. OF OTTAWA) - November 5



"MARBLES" - the new album by KING APPARATUS


Having stomped their way from Halifax to Hawaii and all places in between over the past few years, Toronto's KING APPARATUS released their new CD "MARBLES" to eager fans and new subjects alike. "MARBLES", written primarily by Vocalist Chris Murray and Bassist Mitch Giro, features the single/video "MOTHER TOLD YOU" and the latest single "STRONG PHYSICAL TOUR".

Catch **THE STRONG PHYSICAL TOUR** when it muscles its way into your town soon!

Even if you are not one of the first 125, everyone who responds will be eligible to win:

- One of the following: a **NIKKO** Remote Mini-Stereo System, a **NIKKO** 5 Disk Drawer Stereo Remote Multi-CD Player, a **NIKKO** Portable Compact Disk Player, or a **NIKKO** Deluxe Integrated Telephone Answering System or
- One of fifty packs of **TDK** tapes

NIKKO
TDK

Mail completed coupon to  Impact Campus Offer, Roll Magazines Inc., 219 Dufferin St., Suite 100, Toronto, Ontario, M6K 3J1

NAME: _____ AGE: _____
UNIVERSITY: _____
ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____ POSTAL CODE: _____

No purchase is necessary. To enter and be eligible to win, a person must be a resident of Canada who has reached the age to purchase beverage alcohol and who is not an employee of, or a member of the immediate family of, or domiciled with, an employee of FBM Distillery Co. Ltd., its affiliated companies, the Provincial Liquor Boards, their licensees, agencies, Roll Magazine Inc., advertising and promotional agencies, prize suppliers or the independent judging organization. Chances of winning depend on the number of correct entries received. For complete contest rules write to: Impact Campus Offer, Roll Magazine Inc., 219 Dufferin St., Suite 100, Toronto, Ontario M6K 3J1. Contest closes December 17, 1993. Winners will be drawn on January 10, 1993.