

# Gretzky can't take licks and splits

By DIM MATHESON

Edmonton Oiler 19 year old superstar Wayne Gretzky has announced he will be leaving the team and the NHL to return to junior hockey!

"It was all true; everything they said about me was true," cried the obviously distraught child prodigy in the dressing room after the Oilers had been eliminated by the Philadelphia Flyers.

"I can't skate well enough to play in this league," lamented the young hock jock, "and I can't take the pounding from the big guys. Jeeze, who was I trying to kid anyways?"

When questioned about the fact that he had tied the points total of NHL scoring leader Marcel Dionne, the pubescent puckster confessed to what may be the most shocking revelation of the season.

"You wanna know what I

really scored this year? Six goals and seven assists. There was a mix-up when they put the names on the sweaters. Look, I'm not 99; I'm 27. Dave Semenko really scored all those goals."

"I know I should have told some one but Dave doesn't read (the sports pages) and nobody could tell us apart with our helmets on. I loved it all; the interviews, signing autographs, the 7 Up commercial, the 15 year old girls ... but when they started talking about me winning the Calder and Hart trophies, it was too much. A guy's gotta have some pride."

Gretzky, who has one year of junior eligibility left will not return to his old team in Ontario, but will play next year for the St. Albert Saints of the Alberta Junior Hockey League.

"Sure, it's a tier two team but that's probably where I belong right about now," admitted the Boy Blunder. "Still, they turn out some pretty good

hockey players. Nobody ever doubted Mark Messier (a fellow, 19 year old) could play in the NHL."

With the Saints, Gretzky hopes to improve his skating and build up some weight and strength. Although his experience in the NHL and the WHA has probably stunted his development as a hockey player, he remains hopeful that after his final year of junior and three or four more years in the minors he might earn another shot at the NHL.

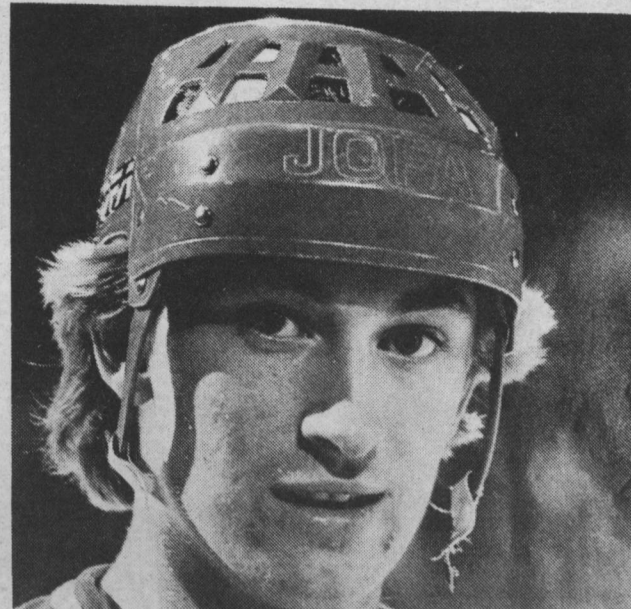
"Look, I'm still young. I know I don't have a lot of God-given talent but I can work hard. Remember Jimmy Roberts? He was always my idol."

Semenko was in hospital and could not be reached for comment. Big Dave or "Cement head" as he is affectionately called, is recuperating after a successful operation to increase the size of his brain with silicone transplants.

## BEHINDS ON THE BENCH

The identity of next year's "super coach" has not been revealed. Possible names are: Clark Kent, Peter Parker, La-

mont Cranston and Bep Guidolin ... anyone interested in a "summer snow" program should call the Oiler's player office. Ask for Don.



Gretzky before exposure as no-talent bum.

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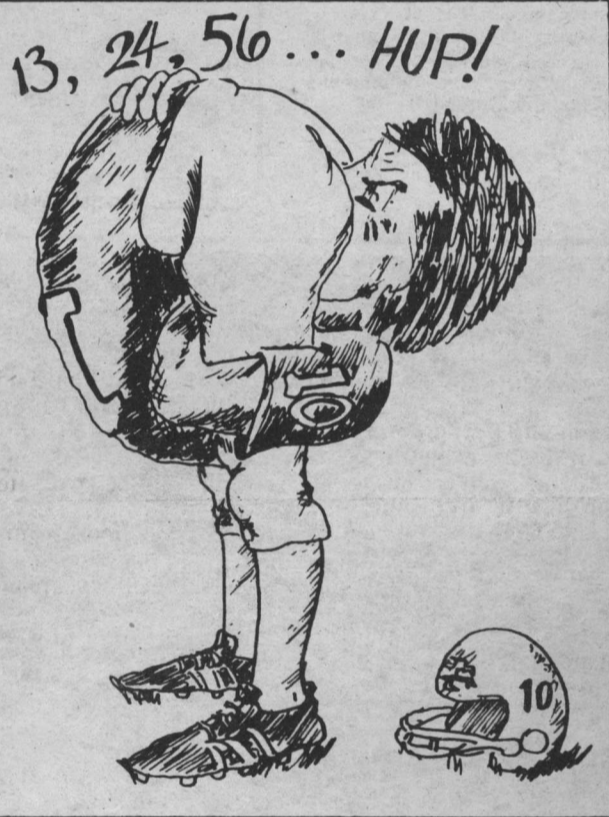
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