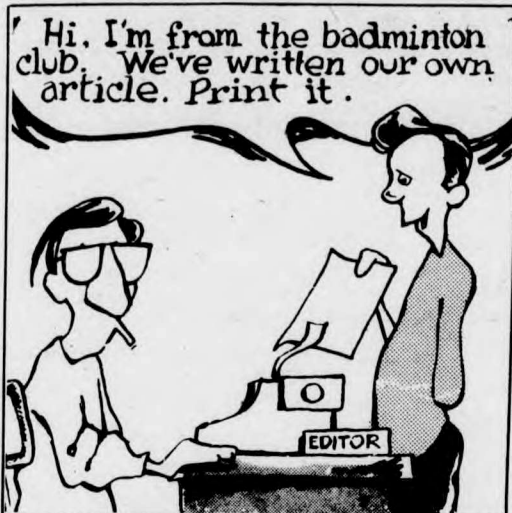


SPORTS WRITING: truth hurts

Steve Simmons
Calgary Sun Sportswriter
Gazette Sports Editor, 1978



Darwin Semotiuk simply wasn't done in those days. Making fun of Tom Arnott's so-called punts wasn't either.

All of a sudden, I was a bad guy. I wondered at the time if Dick Beddoes had to go through this.

All of a sudden, the name Simmons was not warmly recognized in the pungent smelling halls of the athletic building (I can't remember the building's name).

The Mustangs, probably inspired by the cantankerous columns of an overweight, somewhat frustrated jock, went on to win the College Bowl that year.

In the true spirit of victory, they wanted to kill me. I intelligently passed on the post-game celebrations (actually there were several celebrations during the game, which included tearing down the goal posts at halftime) but a few of my colleagues (in those days they were just friends) decided to use their Gazette influence to party with egotistical behemoths.

"Who are you?" one behemoth at the door of the Skyline Hotel bellowed.

"We're from The Gazette," a semi-sobri Bill Daverne replied, reaching for the press pass he had personally designed.

"You're not that 8&*!" Simmons are you?" the monster screamed.

"No," said Daverne. "I don't even know him, he said lying

Several sports editors came and went after Scherberger departed. Actually, it was ironic that Scherberger's departure came not soon after the first controversial column of a man who didn't know better.

Objective journalism

A year of this adolescent, unfair commentary went on until Mark Smyka took over as Gazette editor. Smyka, with a soft spot for sports and a strange affection for the Detroit Red Wings, worked with an undisciplined writer and instilled a value or two about objective journalism.

Three years after the fact, Ken Johnson decrees he is no longer talking to reporters from the Calgary Sun. Johnson, a quarterback of great promise but little production, had been informed he wasn't good enough in the morning writings of a man named Simmons.

He went screaming into the offices of general manager Jack Gotta but Gotta waited more than a year before sending him to Montreal to replace a troubled Vince Ferragamo.

Three years after the fact, Pat Riggan decrees he is no longer talking to the Calgary Sun. Riggan, a goaltender of great promise but little maturity, objected to the fact that The Sun had reported an evening shouting match between he and Calgary Flames' coach Al McNeil. The staid afternoon paper chose to ignore the incident.

Riggan went screaming into the office of general manger Cliff Fletcher demanding to be traded and taken away from a newspaper that prints the truth. He wasn't traded, and funny thing, the newspaper still prints the truth.

Bigoted mayor

Little has changed since the days when Claude Riopelle and Jon Jewell would have rather sacked The Gazette reporter rather than an opposition quarterback.

If Flames' coach Al MacNeil had his way, I'd still be at Western giving Semotiuk, Watson and Hayes a hard time. Come to think of it, I could think of worse places to be.

Except of course, in the dead of winter. Even Calgary, bigoted mayor and all, is nicer in winter.



Translate a game

I sat in the stands, got drunk with my friends, and then hours later attempted to translate a game I didn't remember to paper. I remember thinking at the time this wasn't as easy as it looked.

My second column was written watching the Mustangs lose to the University of Toronto on television. Jamie Bone was marching the Mustangs down field in a belated comeback bid, when a strange interception ended Western's hopes that Saturday.

A column referring to Jamie, as Jamie Bonehead, and his passes as over-inflated watermelons, didn't inear my person to the muscle-men who made up the Mustangs. Questioning coach

Trials and tribulations of a sports editor

Jules Xavier
Sports Editor



Max Jackson, CKWS Sports Director, always says, "If you can't play a sport—be a good one." I've taken this quote one step further. "If you can't play a sport—write about them."

Today, I cease in my existance as Excalibur's Sports Editor, an exclusive position I've heartly enjoyed to an extent.

But before I drift into oblivion I'd like to voice my grievances following my two year tenure.

To be frank, all those hours spent aimlessly covering the Tait beat have left me literally frustrated.

Granted professional media coverage at York is largely inadequate, therefore Excal is the lone voice for extolling York's triumphs. The sports pages over the past 8 months have proved the university community is 'talking proud.'

Presently, there exists a rift between Tait and Excal (where were the invites to the athletic awards ceremonies?), that if not solved soon could see an end to the first-rate coverage offered by this tabloid.

The existing problem stems from Tait. The attitudes of Mary Lyons and Nobbie Wirkowski (varsity athletic co-ordinators) is, at best, second-rate. Lyons harped all year long about increasing certain women's sports coverage while complaining other teams were

receiving more than their share. A leash (perhaps a muzzle) would have been an appropriate tool used by the co-ordinators in keeping their coaches/athletes at bay.

Stu Robbins, in only his rookie season as Chairman of Physical Education and Athletics, is the only saviour Excal has. But he needs time to sort out the existing problems.

I justify (should I have to?) my stance due to the treatment I have received by coaches/athletes alike. This is not to say all have treated me roughly, but there are a select few who I don't wish to reveal.

In my 'volunteer' position I've put up with a constant barrage of verbal and near physical abuse. Steve Simmons, now penning the exploits of Gretzky for the Calgary Sun, says it best about the treatment sports writers/editors receive from their peers.

"All of a sudden, I was a bad guy. The name Simmons wasn't warmly recognized in the pungent smelling halls of the athletic department."

Such is the cost of improving the Excal sports coverage. Everything seems to be taken personally—I've hurt too many feelings (I'm ignored by some). Why couldn't there be more Wally Dyba's-Natasa Bajin's around. They make a writers task less difficult.

What they all fail to realize is my position.

What is published in Excal doesn't benefit teams in terms of arousing spirit on campus (that will be the day).

Instead, it reflects the biases of the Sports Editor and his staff, who attempt the difficult task of giving equal coverage to the various sports.

Treating all varsity teams equally is political suicide (don't I know it). I cannot see a balance between the demands for women's ice hockey and basketball or gymnastics. Can you? I already removed inter-college sports from the paper.

What I've attempted is to give fair and accurate coverage. I print what I feel my readers will be interested in.

Excal isn't a promotional vehicle that can be manipulated by authority figures on campus to expound their personal views.

The athletic department and Excal may not be working together while I'm here, but in the future both parties should at least be on the same side. The attitudes towards Excal has left much to be desired.

I can take constructive criticism about the sports section, but I strongly feel my work speaks for itself.

X-rated: Special thanks to Lynn Cornett (Sports Info.) for her guidance and for listening to all my problems over the past two years...It has been great working together... Elliott and Gary for their patience and understanding.

