

Improving facilities 'a step in the right direction'

Everywhere you look, it's painfully obvious that York University is bursting at the seams. York's rapid population growth, coupled with insufficient funding and facilities, has propelled the University into extremely strenuous times. Yet nowhere is this problem more acute than in York's Department of Physical Education and Athletics.

If you have ever seen athletic facilities at virtually any other Canadian university you would wonder how York even functions at all. York's meager facilities are laughable in the face of similarly sized institutions. More preposterous is the fact that many other schools, just a fraction of the size of York, have better gymnasiums, ice-rinks and fields.

If York athletics were merely a low profile campus service, the present scenario might easily be shrugged off. The opposite, however, is true. Athletic facilities at York must attempt to cater to a student, faculty and administrative population of over 40,000 people. And York's own varsity athletic program, is among the finest in all of Canada.

The situation has reached a critical stage. "We are in dire need of proper facilities for a university of our size," says Dave Chambers, Director of Men's Varsity Athletics. "I feel strongly that the university has to recognize the needs of a campus this large. Our physical education building is totally inadequate for both Varsity and Intramural programs, as well as for the physical fitness of the faculty and student body."

It appears that some relief may finally be on the way. According to University Provost Tom Meininger, the administration may be ready to move on this issue. "The need for improved athletic facilities is well known and appreciated," Meininger said. "It is fair to say that these immediate concerns have been initiated from the senior administration," states Meininger.

The administration has handed the ball to the athletic department, and given them an opportunity to propose realistic solutions. As a result, the Department of Physical Education and Athletics is preparing plans that will at the very least, lessen the burden on existing facilities.

According to York Facilities Coordinator Tom Graham, the proposal will consider alterations to the ice rink and the construction of a modest gymnasium complex. "We are coming up with what we feel needs to be done," says Graham.



MEL BROITMAN

"We have some indication from the University administration that they are willing to look at some of the problems we have at the arena and at Tait McKenzie."

York's arena, often called the Ice Palace, is more of a barn than a place of royalty. The facility is woefully inadequate. "The arena was originally built as a practice facility," Graham said. The arena lacks proper washrooms, dressing rooms and an adequate lobby area. Yeomen playoff encounters the past two years have emphasized the arena's shortcomings. The densely packed crowds had little access to washroom facilities and were literally unable to move. The fans who sought warmth between periods, turned the arena lobby into a mob scene. On at least three playoff occasions, the arena was a definite safety hazard.

According to Graham, "We're looking for spectator comfort and safety. That lobby is much too small for people to congregate in. We need an extension built (lobby) as well as centrally located washrooms and a small ticket booth."

"That will make it a little more suitable for games," Graham says. "Also what is obviously needed is a dressing room for the Yeowomen hockey team. They're still keeping their equipment in cold, dingy lockers located at the end of the arena." With additional improvements to all the dressing rooms, as well as the construction of a snack bar, Graham pegs the cost for upgrading the rink at about \$350,000.

Similar to the ice arena, Tait McKenzie was not originally intended to accommodate a substantially large population.

The present Athletic Centre is supposed to be only Phase One of a three phase project. However, the economic difficulties that have delayed York's expansion have placed an incredible burden upon the Tait complex.

"Obviously we would like to have Phase Two to be completed," Graham said. "We have outgrown this building (Tait) by the sheer numbers of the University. The faculty staff and students are being short-changed right now. We could do a lot more for them if we had the facilities."

As Graham says, the Athletic department will propose a 'temporary' solution to the problem. The plan is to build a facility with four training rooms and an adjacent gymnasium. The four rooms will be designated as a dance studio, a therapy room, conditioning /exercise room and a combatives and wrestling room. Presently all of these needs are inadequately served by the overloaded Tait McKenzie Athletic Centre.

The adjacent gym would have no seating, but would actually double gym space for intramural and varsity competition. It would be a big lift to the organizers involved with Recreation York.

"The whole project will cost about two million," Graham said. "But for about \$800,000 we could probably get the dance/therapy/conditioning and combatives rooms (no gym). It would alleviate some of the stress on Tait McKenzie and allow us to expand some of our program offerings and general service."

Although these proposed improvements will certainly help, they are still not serious solutions to the problems. As Graham admits, "We need better facilities than this, but this is a realistic attempt on our part to improve the situation."

So when might all this happen? "We'd like to present the plans to the University administration in the next month," Graham said. "If we see some commitment, we would hope to have this built this summer and have it in operation for the fall of 1987."

The entire project may only be a stop-gap measure, but it is a step in the right direction. Considering how woeful the present situation of facilities and funding—anything at all would have to be a plus. Real satisfaction is a long way away, but it is somewhat comforting to finally see some movement towards that end.

INTRAMURAL ROUND-UP

TORCH HOCKEY

	GP	W	L	T	F	A	Pts.
Founders	9	8	0	1	51	19	17
Bethune	8	6	1	1	34	20	13
Calumet	8	5	3	0	33	30	10
Glendon	7	4	2	1	29	21	9
Osgoode	9	2	7	0	25	39	4
Mac	9	3	6	0	27	40	6
Vanier	8	3	4	1	38	40	9
Winters	8	0	8	0	21	50	0

TORCH HOCKEY

THIS WEEK:
 Founders 4 Bethune 2
 Founders 5 Mac 3
 Glendon 7 Vanier 4
 Bethune 4 Winters 2
 Calumet 4 Osgoode 2
 Calumet 4 Glendon 3
 Founders 6 Winters 0
 Bethune 4 Osgoode 2
 Mac 4 Vanier 3

ORL HOCKEY

THIS WEEK:
 Mac over Scorpions (default)
 Alumni 14 Vanier 2
 Founders 3 Cock & Bull Oldies 2
 Sockets 3 Bethune 1
 Terminators 7 Winters 0
 Osgoode 4 Grads 1
 Founders 7 Bethune 0

WOMEN'S HOCKEY

THIS WEEK:
 Founders 9 Alumni 0
 Osgoode 2 Winters 1

SWIMMING

FINAL RESULTS:

1. Glendon
2. Grads
3. Founders
4. Bethune

WATERPOLO

STANDINGS:

1. Alumni & Osgoode 8 pts.
2. Calumet & Mac 6 pts.
3. Aquaslugs & Stong 4 pts.
4. Winters & Bethune 2 pts.
5. Founders 0 pts.

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will be signing copies of his book, *THE RAINMAKER* at 2:00 pm,
 Wednesday, November 19, 1986— in the Bookstore, Central Square.

(Copies of *The Rainmaker*, regularly priced at \$24.95 each,
 will be on sale at \$19.95 each on November 19th only.)

Refreshments will be provided