

# SPORTS



MARK ZWOL

## Pucks aren't the only shots this backliner takes

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John Campbell has always loved the game of hockey. At 22, he's been playing since he was about four-foot-nothing and as he says, "Hockey has always been good to me." That would seem to be the case.

While never playing for a championship winner during his three seasons in the York rearguard, Campbell has nonetheless enjoyed some productive terms in his red and white cooperalls. Take this season, for example. Before the Christmas break he had a total of 28 points in nine games with the Yeomen which was good enough to gain him recognition as one of the premiere college backliners in the country. And with a big letter "C" on his jersey. Coupled with the bubble-gum card stats that are otherwise commonplace knowledge in the various rinks around the OUAA, Campbell is one of only 50 recipients of the Hockey Canada scholarship—a \$2,500 grant for a select group of Canadian varsity players chosen by a Hockey Canada committee based in Calgary.

To be considered for the grant requires a fairly high profile and list of achievements. The York Athletic department, however, did not catch wind of Campbell receiving any "bonus" until he came out and told them himself.

"There was some kind of committee set up," Campbell said. "Last year it was made up of coaches in the leagues, but they didn't even publish a list of the players who received it. York didn't know they had to find out through me. I'd say it was political, but that's because I don't know how they can pick guys without a scouting system. How can they say that guys playing in Ontario are better than guys out East or West?"

Hockey Canada is without question "for the benefit of amateur hockey in this country", but the fact that hockey, like any other sport, is both a game and a business, cannot be overlooked by any administrative committee. It's understood.

In fact, the word "hockey" mixed together with the word "politics" is nothing new to John Campbell. His six-foot, one-inch, 200-pound frame hasn't always been cloaked in a red and white uniform, and unlike many of his Yeomen teammates, he carries three years of major junior "A" experience under his belt. A product of the all-Canadian midget champion, Don Mills Flyers, Campbell was drafted by the Oshawa Generals in 1978. Taking his regular shift behind the blue line, he played alongside the likes of Al Secord and Bobby Smith in those days when the NHL wasn't allowed to clutch under-age players.

"There is a big difference playing at that level as opposed to playing at the college level," Campbell explained. "Lots of competition, everyone up there has one thing on their minds—making it to the NHL."

In 1979, the NHL reverted its policy towards the eligibility of underage players, generating a mad signing spree that enabled 18-year-olds like Dale Haverchuck and Pierre LaRouche to become teenaged Porche owners. Campbell waited for the rash of signings to pass and in 1980, with the aid of his brother Rob (a graduate of Osgoode Law School), landed a try-out with the Buffalo Sabres.

Coach Roger Nielson and G.M. Scotty Bowman were relatively pleased with Campbell's efforts, but in a three-week pressure cooker of atmosphere, the odds against making any kind of line-up-cracking impression on the brass in at best, especially with a top five contending team (back in '80) like the Sabres.

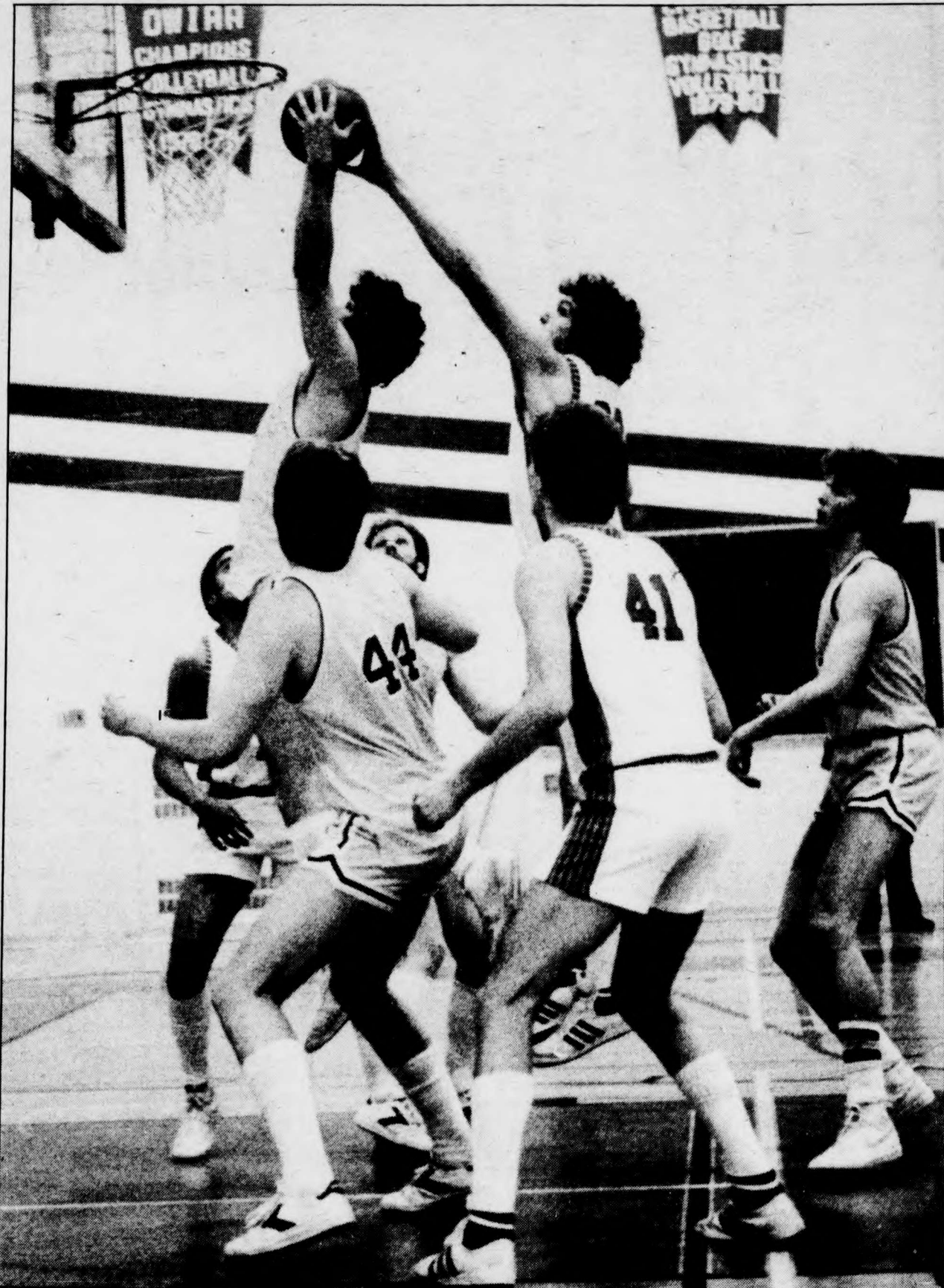
Bowman offered a minor league contract which Campbell turned down to pursue his law studies at York. The following summer, the same thing happened all over again, this time in Edmonton with the Oilers. And, as before, Campbell decided to come back to York.

"They told me I had the potential to play," Campbell said. "But after coming off a fifth overall finish, they weren't looking to make too many changes. It's pretty much the standard line and it's not that they didn't treat me fairly, it's just that if I'd have been with a lower-placed team like Detroit, I might have lasted longer. In Edmonton, Sather (coach Glen) told me you can't be as good as one of our guys up there, you have to be better. I might have gone out and picked a fight with their tough man Dave Semenko—that might have caught their attention. But really, it was like a game of numbers."

Sometimes John Campbell reflects back on those two three-week stints with the big-leaguers. He was humbled. But like York's play-off dreams this season, those thoughts are past. The game he loves though, still manages to take its shot at him. During York's play-off stretch drive, he re-injured an old rotator cuff ailment in his shoulder that kept him sidelined for three games. It just so happened that during those three games, former 26-year Detroit Red Wing scout Jack Evans, now serving with the Canada Olympic hockey committee, had planned to watch Campbell in action. The rotator cuff closed the books on Evan's report, however. Campbell thought, as a recipient of the Hockey Canada scholarship, that his chances of playing for Canada's five-ringed team were still good.

"Last Christmas two teams were put together, one played in Europe, the other here at home. I didn't even get an invitation to tryout and I still don't know why. But Evans told me he'll be in touch—I can only wait."

Campbell sat around, a little dejected, after last Thursday's Yeomen sudden death overtime loss to Laurier in the first round of the play-offs. He didn't see much action. By the time the game was 30 seconds old, he'd broken his right wrist—the result of a freak twist after he crunched his check into the boards. "It kinda happened like everything else I did," he said. "Real quick."



Tim Rider rejects one in York's 94-74 win over Laurentian

## Six wins in a row for Yeomen

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Being touted the team to beat in the OUAA's is something the York Yeomen Basketball team have endured since early November.

Shop talk had it, at the outset of the season, that the Yeomen, minus their all-Canadian, all-everything guard, Dave Coulthard, would have to reach down and do a lot of sock-pulling to exchange their one-man team image for the more respected number-one ranked vaneer.

But things changed. They went out and captured the championship crown at an early bird tournament at Laurier. That raised some eyebrows. Next stop was the Excalibur Classic (which York hosted) where the Yeomen capped off the four-day event with a decisive victory over their opponents in next week's OUAA championship match, the Waterloo Warriors.

And now, with the speculation that centered on opening day tip-off long forgotten, York returns to fight for a title they seem to already own—the OUAA East Division championship.

Before a crowd of 600, the Yeomen put on a textbook display of court control, both on offense and defense, as they ousted third place Laurentian Voyageurs from a trip to Waterloo with a 94-74 victory last

Saturday afternoon.

That makes it six in a row for York, who, after finishing up the regular campaign at 13-1, have increased their overall record to 29-5.

### Score to settle

The Yeomen starting five, arguably the most balanced unit in the OUAA league, all went into double figures in scoring with Tim Rider's 23 points leading the way. Sparkplug guard, Enzo Spagnuolo, was right behind with 21 points, while his backcourt mate, Mark Jones, added 11. Rounding out the red and white attack was forward, Grant Parobec, with 18 points, and center, John Christensen, collecting 16 more.

Phil Rowe led the Voyageurs with 16 points, most of those coming in the first half. Brian Skeock finished up with another 15 points, and added 12 rebounds to his fine two-way performance.

Play was edgy through the first 15 minutes as the Voyageurs, not unlike many of York's opponents this year, used their height advantage to comeback on Yeomen leads of seven and ten points. However, with their blizzing fast break, the Yeomen pulled away,

converting a pair of Voyageur turnovers in the last 90 seconds into six points to take a 41-33 lead at the half. Before three minutes had ticked off in the opening of the second half, York added another four unanswered buckets which cushioned a lead they were never to relinquish.

For coach Gerry Barker, York's sixth consecutive East Division crown (he had been a part of the other five as an assistant to Bob Bain) was an especially sweet one.

"It was just a great win for the team. Everyone was saying that we couldn't do it without Dave (Coulthard). But we proved that as a team, we play well together."

### Sixth in a row

Heading into next Saturday's OUAA league final in Waterloo, the Yeomen have a little score to settle as far as their national ranking is concerned. York carries the number seven placing, while the Western division champion Warriors are sitting in at number three.

Waterloo, on the strength of a 32-point performance from forward Peter Savich, won their first ever Western championship with a 62-57