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SPORTS

Trois Rivieres victorious

by Robert Charles

reprinted from the Varsity

Les Patriotes of Trois Rivieres are the 1990-91 national men's hockey champions after an explosive offensive performance against the University of Alberta Golden Bears in a decisive 7-2 victory on Sunday afternoon at Varsity Arena in Toronto.

After a surprisingly close semifinals against UPEI, les Patriotes came out strong right from the start of the final.

"After the game against PEI, the guys really really relaxed," said Trois Rivieres coach Dany Dube. "The guys all remember losing the semis last year and were tight. At this point in the season you have to remember everything is mental."

In Sunday's final, les Patriotes were definitely relaxed. Their superior speed and explosive offence were no match for a tired Alberta team.

Les Patriotes opened the scoring just 46 seconds into the contest when Jean Bergeron picked up a loose puck at centre ice for a breakaway. Bergeron put a beautiful head fake on Bears netminder Gavin Armstrong and slid the puck between his pads.

Bergeron was to score his second goal of the period less than five minutes later in a scramble in front of the net. Bergeron slid a nice shot under the pads of the partially screened Bears goalie.

For Alberta, down 2-0 just over five minutes into the game, it was not how they wanted to start. However, the Bears fought all game long and a late power play goal in the first cut les Patriotes lead to 2-1. Unfortunately, it was as close as the Bears would come.

For both coaches, the first two minutes of the second period was the key to the game. Alberta started the period with three minutes of a five minute power play remaining. Down only one goal, this was their opportunity to even the contest.

an insurmountable 4-1 lead

But two undisciplined Alberta penalties in the first minute and a half of the second ended their chances. Two UQTR goals within a minute of the penalties gave them an insurmountable 4-1 lead.

"Scoring two quick goals after the five minute advantage was the turning point for me," said Dube.

Alberta coach Billy Moores also felt that this was the difference. "The turning point was the two undisciplined penalties early in the second," said Moores. "Their two quick goals changed the game."

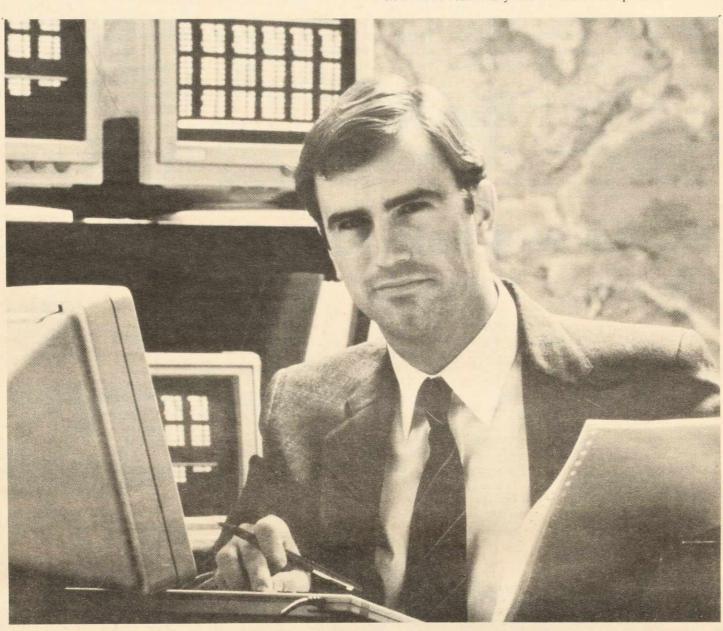
Alberta worked hard throughout the game but were not able to capitalize on their scoring chances. This was particularly evident on the power play. Scoring on only one of eleven power play opportunities is not going to win you a national championship.

UQTR goalie, and tournament MVP, Denis Desbiens, was a big difference throughout the game. Alberta blasted forty shots at the Patriotes goalie versus only nineteen on the two Alberta goalies.

"We worked so hard and so long this year," said Desbiens. "It's a great feeling to win it."

For Alberta, it was another disappointment at the final four. Two years ago, the Bears lost in double overtime in the tournament semifinal upset by the York Yeomen. This year, after barely surviving double overtime against Waterloo, the Bears ran into another great goalie.

But nobody on the Bears team was using yesterday's game as an excuse. "We knew we had to play two games when we got down here," said coach Moores. "It just seemed to be their day bounce wise. They scored on their chances, we didn't."



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