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B'ball career bleak

by Brendan Elliott

Let's dedicate a moment of silence to the university basketball players from the class of '91.

Shed a tear for these graduating superstars of university basketball because no matter how much talent they have, there is very little future for them in the athletic world.

The future for a talented 6'8" Canadian university basketball player is bleak. The only hope would be to travel to Europe and play in a semi-professional league. But even that possibility would be a long-shot.

The Canadian university men's basketball championships were held in Halifax last weekend and the talented men were playing the highest calibre of basketball they will likely ever experience.

Laurentian Voyageur's star guard Norm Hann was second in the nation in scoring with a 26.5 points per game average. Voted to the All-Canadian second team this year, Hann was also the country's top free throw shooter with an average 89.4 shooting percentage. With statistics like that, a basketball future would seem inevitable.

"I don't really like to think about life after I graduate," said the thirdyear physical education student. Hann knows as soon as he completes his program, he'll have to hang up his Reebok's.

"Suddenly, everything I've been shooting for all my life will be over... it just ends," Hann said after his award winning performance Saturday afternoon against the Concordia Stingers where he was named MVP of the game.

The 6'1" Sudbury native said the transition from the athletic world to the real world won't be easy. "I've been playing ball since grade 6 and the thought of pushing paper at a desk job for the next 20 years scares me beyond belief."

Halifax will be the home of a professional team in the new World Basketball League in May. But Hann suggested a league be set up to cater to people like himself have talent but not who do enough to crack the big team.

"There is tremendous talent in this country and I think an intermediate semi-professional league would be successful and would be helpful for players who don't have anything to turn to after they graduate," Hann said.

He believes the move to the real world is so severe for many athletes that an agency should be organized by the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (CIAU) to cushion

"Maybe the CIAU could hire former athletes who are successful in their new lives to tour the campuses giving tips on how they adjusted to society," Hann said.

Bob Corran, president of the CIAU said students should be able to make the adjustments without help. "Basketball players in Canada know there isn't an athletic future so they have a dual focus when they head into university." Corran said Canadian university basketball "offers growth rather than a career."

University of British Columbia Thunderbird's J.D. Jackson was selected as the outstanding player in Canadian university basketball for the 1991 season and he said the jump from basketball to the real world shouldn't be hard.

"Canadian university athletes know before they start playing basketball that there won't be a future for them professionally so they concentrate on making education a priority," he said.

The 6'5" guard pointed out there's a big difference between American and Canadian university basketball.

'In the States, athletes are offered lucrative scholarships to study basket weaving" but he said "in Canada, students who want to play university ball also have to worry about where their next rent cheque is coming from. So that builds a sense of responsibility that can be moved over into the real world."

Jackson said the doors may not be as tightly closed to Canadian athletes as many think.

"I've always heard people say there is no tuture in Canadian university sport but you just have to ignore those people and try your hardest to excel at everything you do... that's when the doors start opening and you get noticed."

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Revenue Canada doesn't just collect taxes, it also delivers federal and provincial credits you could benefit from, including the goods and services tax credit, the child tax credit, and this year, for the last time, the federal sales tax credit. But if you don't file a tax return because you don't owe any taxes, you could miss out.

Is tax filing easier this year?

Revenue Canada has introduced new measures to simplify the tax filing process. The guides use clearer, plainer language, the Special return has been trimmed down and there are two new "no calculation" returns. The one-page, gold 65 Plus return is for seniors with income from pensions or interest. The white Short return is for people, like students, with simpler tax situations. If you choose one of the "no calculation" returns, we'll do all the calculations, including any federal or provincial credits you may be eligible for.

Got some tips?

First, look in the Guide that comes in your tax package. It gives you step-by-step instructions and helpful tax tips. Read the explanations for the lines that apply to you, and ignore those that don't. If your income situation hasn't changed much from last year, you can use last year's return as a reference.

What if I have questions?

If you can't find the answers in the Guide, you can call the people at Revenue Canada. The best times to get through are before 10:00 a.m. and after 2:00 p.m. From February 25 through April 30, Revenue Canada's phone hours are extended to 8:00 p.m., Monday to Thursday. There's also an automated phone service called T.I.P.S., for answers to common questions. For a complete list of services and phone numbers in your region, see your Guide.

What other services are available?

You can visit Seasonal Tax Assistance Centres in convenient locations, like shopping malls, for information, guides and forms. See your local newspaper for times and locations. There's also a video called "Stepping Through Your Tax Return" that you can borrow from public libraries or your district taxation office.

Anything I should watch for?

Make sure all the personal information printed on your return is correct, especially your address. Before you start, make sure you have all your receipts and information slips. Check your calculations, and attach all the information that's asked for in the return. These steps will help avoid delays in getting your

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