

Concentration the key to Applewhaite's success

At this time two years ago, the Yeomen hockey program was rebounding from a series of poor seasons. Although Dave Chambers had virtually cleaned house and assembled a new team, the club appeared to be missing a key ingredient that might lead to a championship. Late in that 1984/85 campaign, in a tight regular season contest against the arch-rival Varsity Blues, the Yeomen came up short. In the waning moments, a Toronto winger floated a long and weak shot past an erratic young goaltender.

Something happened to that young man who donned the pads that night for the Yeomen. After an entire schedule of inconsistency and seemingly nervous performances, York goaltender Mark Applewhaite was dramatically transformed into the most outstanding 'money' goalie in Canadian university hockey.

In that spring of 1985, Mark Applewhaite thrived on the pressure. Applewhaite's spectacular goaltending led the Yeomen to their first ever OUAA and CIAU hockey crowns. And to prove he was no flash in the pan, Applewhaite's play has never looked back. In fact, he seems to be getting better.

What happened? How did this young netminder's meteoric rise come about so swiftly? According to York goalie coach Steve Knish, Applewhaite had the talent all along. "He always had the tools to do well. Physically he had very quick legs, a good glove hand, strength, quickness and real athletic ability." But as is often the case, the mental aspect of Applewhaite's game was lacking.

"To a certain degree, all goalies find themselves fighting that inner battle," says Knish. "Mark was struggling with himself as to whether or not he could play in the league (OUAA)."

Knish claims that the key to Applewhaite's sudden success in that 84/85 playoff season was confidence. "After Christmas, the decision was made to go with one goalie and we



MEL BROITMAN

decided to go with Mark. That allowed him to develop his confidence."

Knish also credits head coach Dave Chambers with providing Applewhaite with the needed assurance. "Dave played a crucial role in realizing that he had to express as best he could his confidence in Mark by playing him," Knish says.

Aside from his goaltending duties, Applewhaite is an extremely serious student. His dedication to the academic curriculum (Economics and Business) is such that his hockey sometimes suffers. "He's a very serious student, and in his first year he might have had difficulty concentrating on hockey with the long hours he puts into his studies," claims Chambers.

Fortunately for the Yeomen, Applewhaite has been able to make the adjustment to succeed both on and off the ice. However, it has not been easy for this fiercely intense young man. Often the drive to excel has been enormous. With the pressures mounting, Applewhaite admits that he did not expect to rejoin the Yeomen again this year. "I guess I've been in school for four years, and I'm sort of getting tired of it. There was also that pressure to do well academically, and I get down if my marks aren't up," says the goalie. But in the fall when Applewhaite contemplated packing away his pads for good, he had a change of heart. "I missed it. That time of year

came around and I got the itch to play," he says.

He seems committed now to the dual life of the student/athlete. Applewhaite credits Knish with assisting him in handling his heavy workload. "I helped him to gain some perspective during some difficult times for him," says Knish. "It's especially difficult for goalies because they have such a great responsibility on their shoulders."

From all appearances, Applewhaite copes well with the pressures upon him. He makes no excuses for himself. "I've never asked for a break. You just have to be disciplined to keep up," he says. Last spring when the Yeomen were playing nine playoff games in 18 days, Coach Chambers prepared letters for his players to take to their courses. The intention was to ask for a time allowance with assignments and examinations. Applewhaite didn't even bother to hand his letter to any of his professors. He just bore down and worked even harder.

Applewhaite's greatest asset is his incredible powers of concentration. When playing goal, that concentration is manifest in his stalwart appearance. "His teammates call him the 'rock,' and that has to do with the level of intensity he exudes. And when it's going well for him, he is a rock," Knish claims.

It has been said many times that goaltending wins playoff hockey. Mark Applewhaite's performance the last two springs have served to deepen this age-old hockey tradition. His sparkling play of 1985 against Western was surpassed only by his scintillating effort in 1986 versus Toronto. The Yeomen would not have escaped victorious in either series without him.

With final examinations just around the corner, assignment deadlines creeping up, and the Yeomen in the hunt for another national championship, it's the most demanding time of year for Applewhaite. It's also when he is at his best.

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Bethune
Calumet
Stong

MENS VOLLEYBALL (TORCH)

TOP FOUR: Founders
Mac
Stong
Vanier

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Founders
Calumet
Glendon

TORCH TENNIS

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TORCH TENNIS

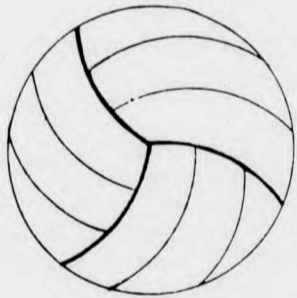
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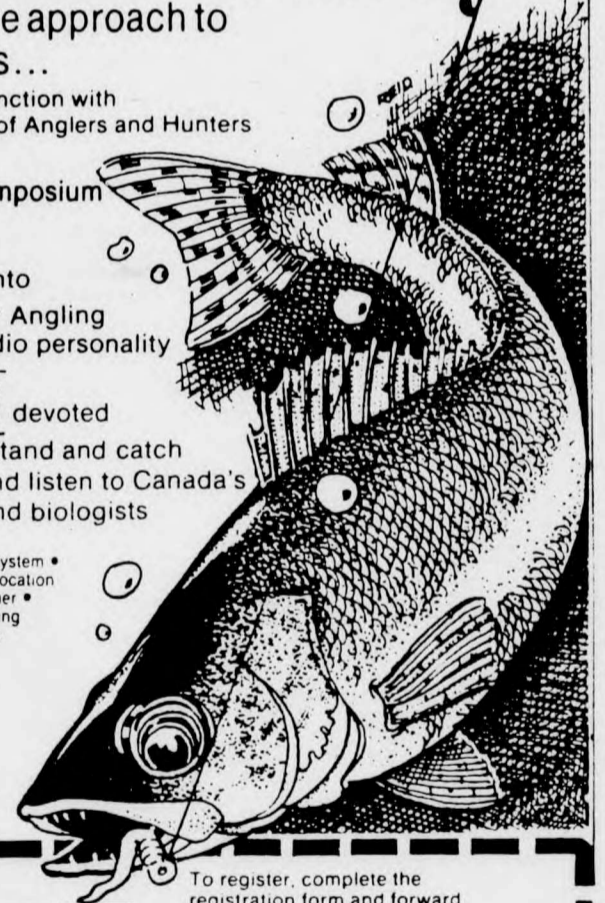
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