

# Solid recruits and steady net play make hockey future bright

by Josh Rubin

For a hockey coach losing almost a third of his offense, Graham Wise is in surprisingly good spirits.

This year, Wise will be returning for his sixth season as head coach of the Yeomen missing the services of graduates Mike Futa, Todd Dungey, Kevin Bonello and Guy Girouard.

Last year, Dungey and Bonello ranked second and third on the squad,



respectively, in goals scored, while Futa was fifth.

Yet on a relatively young squad, Futa (who was the team captain) and Girouard's off-ice contributions were at least as important as what they did in play.

Still, a bumper recruiting year has left Wise with a good feeling for the upcoming season.

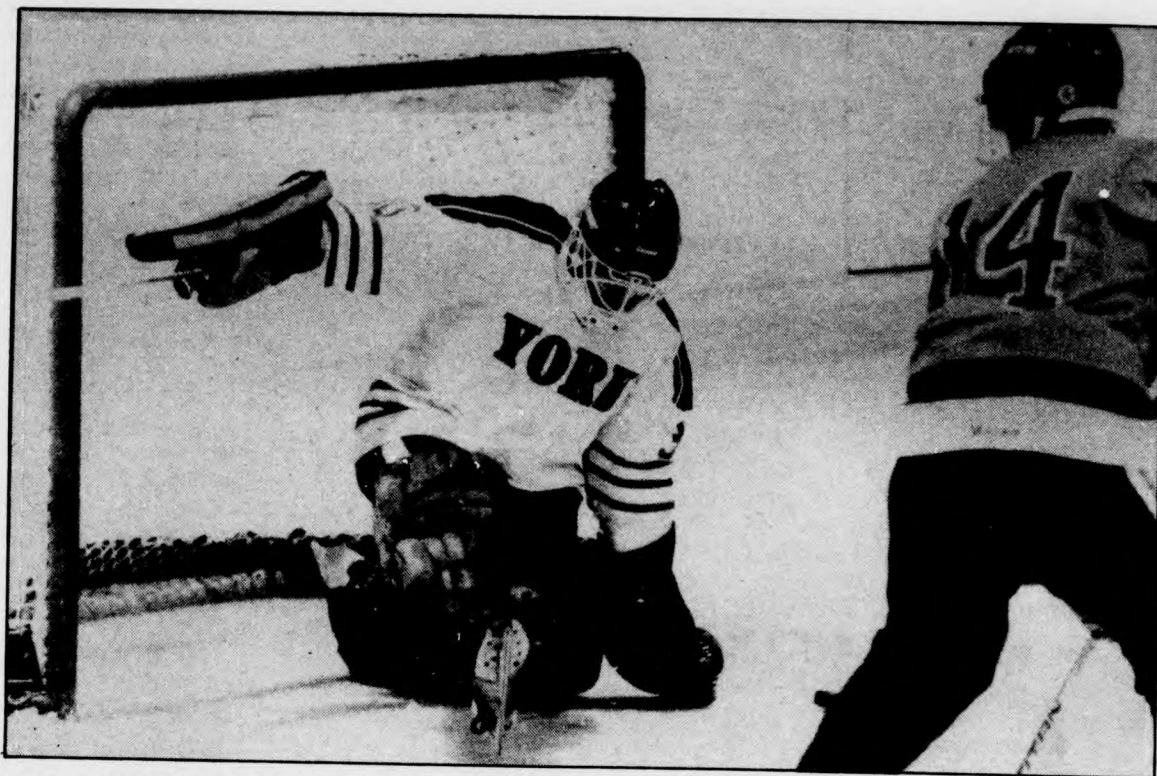
"In my six years here, I'd have to say this is about the tops in recruiting terms," said Wise, who added that if all goes well, the Yeomen forwards will likely be joined by three OHL veterans.

But even with the new arrivals, one player who will have to pick up much of the slack left by the graduating players is flashy third year forward Jimmy Dean, who has traditionally struggled during the early part of the season.

Last year, though, despite being nagged by an injury during the early going, Dean amassed 24 points, good for third spot in the York scoring race.

On the blue line, the Yeomen will be badly hurt by the graduation of Girouard, whose rock-solid demeanor both on and off the ice often had a steadying effect on a relatively young defensive corps.

One of this year's new recruits on the blue line is the brother of departing forward Todd Dungey, Shane, who Wise called one of the better



York's goaltending has always been nothing short of spectacular, this season should be no different with Willie Popp playing in his fifth and final year between the pipes for the Yeomen. York has also been blessed with a good recruiting class. Excalibur file photo

defenders in Junior B shinny last year, adding the younger Dungey will give the Yeomen some much needed size.

Along with players like Tom Purcell, who's entering his second year, Wise hopes Dungey will strengthen what has been one of the team's weaker points in the last two seasons.

One area where the Yeomen will be assured of some solid play is between the pipes, where veteran netminder Willie Popp will be playing his fifth and final year of OUAA hockey.

Though the backup spot is open, Popp's team-leading average and save percentage will likely guarantee him the number one slot.

For the Yeomen to challenge for the lead in the OUAA East, Popp will have to play well, as the ever-strong Trois Rivieres Patriotes will be looking to make up for their humiliating 9-2 loss to the Alberta Golden Bears in last year's national final.

The Patriotes, however, will be facing a number of obstacles, not the least of which is the departure of head coach Danny Dube, who last month was named co-head coach of Canada's Olympic squad.

Replacing Dube at the Patriotes'

helm will be Rheal Paiement, who coached last year in the Italian A division.

Paiement, who accepted the Trois Rivieres position just August 20, is looking forward to his return to university hockey.

"I'm really excited, because here, the players are open to learning. Most of them know it's over, as far as a pro career is concerned," said Paiement, who himself played for the McGill Redmen.

Paiement will have a lot of teach-

ing to do, as the Patriotes lineup will see a whole lot of new faces for the upcoming season; no fewer than eight players from last year's Trois Rivieres side have graduated, including speedy forward Jean Bergeron and stellar netminder Denis Desbiens.

This year, Paiement will be using a training system he developed specifically for university hockey during his career as coach and GM of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League's (QMJHL) Granby Bisons.

Despite his late arrival in Trois Rivieres, Paiement is still confident about his team's prospects for the '92-'93 season.

"One of the first things I discovered here is that this is an extremely strong program," said Paiement.

Part of the basis for Paiement's optimism is the recruiting done to replace players like Bergeron. The new arrival which Paiement is most enthusiastic about is left winger Richard Hamel, who last year played for the QMJHL's Shawinigan team.

Paiement foresees his squad being challenged by York, UofT and McGill for the division lead, an opinion shared by Toronto coach Paul Titanic.

"You have to predict Trois Rivieres will take first, but believe me, York and Toronto are going to put up a big fight," Titanic said.

Practice for all OUAA squads kicks off September 21.

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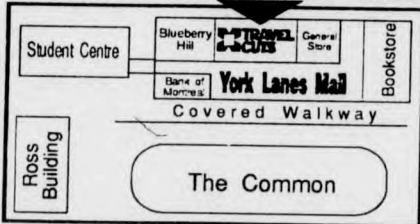
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