

File Photo

Officials want to stop these scenes.

CIAU pulls punches, punchers

TORONTO (CUP) — The Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union is trying to take the fight out of its hockey players.

Beginning this season, any player involved in a fight will receive a major penalty, a game misconduct and a one-game suspension. The instigator, if determined, must serve an extra minor penalty and an extra one-game suspension.

The new, harsher rules, which were approved at the CIAU annual meeting held this summer in Guelph, represent what CIAU President Gib Chapman called "a clear attempt to change the image of university hockey."

"We are trying to give a clear message that we are not prepared to put up with the type of play that has been happening the last few years," said Robert Steadward, chair of the University of Alberta athletics department and member of the CIAU administrative committee.

Other changes include disciplinary action above and beyond game penalties for players who accumulate misconduct penalties over the course of the season. This may include indefinite suspensions.

Enforcement may be difficult, however, since each regional conference must still elect to adopt the formula for its own schedule. It is

possible that the new rules will only apply at the national championships.

The CIAU also tightened up age restrictions for students playing varsity hockey. While players have traditionally enjoyed five years of CIAU eligibility regardless of age, players over 26 years of age are now no longer eligible. In other words, a 21-year old starting college or university will have the full five years to compete, but a 27-year old just beginning post-secondary studies will be completely ineligible.

"The goal is to change university hockey to be developmental hockey," said Chapman.

Many coaches, however disagree with the new restrictions.

"Is the notion of developmental hockey really practical?" asked Paul Titanic, University of Toronto men's hockey coach. "The best younger players either go to Junior 'A' or accept scholarships (to American schools). We're dreaming a little if we think we're going to get the top 18-year-olds to come to a Canadian university."

Others, like Ontario University Athletics Association President Ray Johnson, fear that the age restriction will be open to challenges in court on the basis of age discrimination.

The summer meeting also announced a decision, also in effect this season, to drop gymnastics and diving as national sports. The decision followed the termination of gymnastics and/or diving programs at a number of Canadian universities.

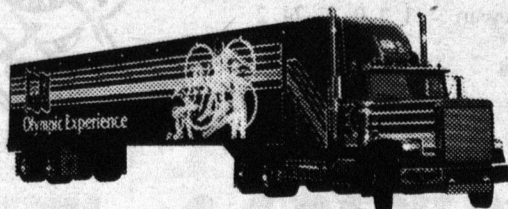
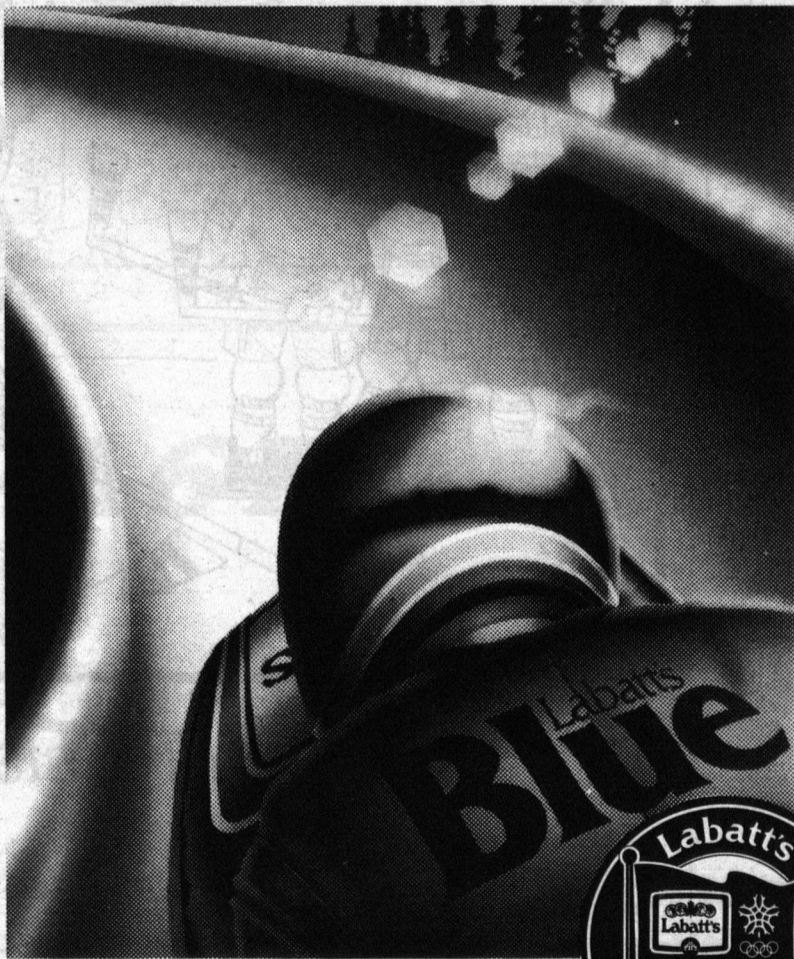
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