

Herb's NHL Puck-Ups

By HERB BARTON

After the All-Star game the NHL got back to its regular schedule. Of course, attention of the avid hockey fan is drifting away to the Olympics where Canada has a chance for gold.

The NHL scoring race is attracting a lot of interest. Mario Lemieux has a nice bulge over Gretzky, but that could disappear before season's end. After the break Gretzky had 2 big games while Lemieux went scoreless. Then Mario came up with a 6 point game reminiscent of the All-Star game. By the way, the quote of the All-Star game occurred when Mats Nasland came back to the bench and said to a teammate "I sure got my center-iceman playing hot tonight." Sounds like Mats wouldn't be playing with Mario some more.



The Leafs put together a modest 2 game winning streak which for them is reason to celebrate. They beat the Islanders and Flyers, two decent hockey clubs. The main reason for their success is the hot goaltending of Kenny Wreggett. He stopped 49 shots against the Flyers. Shows the quality of the Leaf defence. Al Iafrate may have made the All-Star game but during the Leaf losing streak, his plus-minus went from +16 to a -15. Iafrate has been having it rough since Salming was injured. Another success story for the Leafs is the line of Vincent Damphorse, Mirko Frycer and Tom Fergus. Since Frycer returned from injury this line has dominated the play whenever they are out on the ice.

The Canadians have struggled lately. Larry Robinson's complaint about not getting enough ice time appears to have had detrimental effect on the club. Also it's interesting to note that this slump has come after Chris Nilan was traded.

With the Canadians' slump, the Boston Bruins and the Calgary Flames are battling for 1st place overall. The Bruins have the best defensive club in the league with the goaltending of Lemelin and Keans. This is a team which had no idea who would be their goaltenders at the first of the season. The Flames have the top offensive club due to rookie sniper Joe Nieuwendyk. He could break the rookie goal-scoring record.

Most of the season there has been four top teams in the league. Included are the Flames, Bruins, Canadiens, and Oilers. Now, the Detroit Red Wings are starting to catch up to that group. The Wings are winning with a questionable defence and lack of depth up front. They could call their team Steve Yzerman and the No-Names but they still win hockey games. Remember the Red Wings play in the weakest division. The Bruins and Canadiens don't have such a luxury.

That's all this week. Have a nice pucking break. Remember it's only one week.

From the Letterbox



It was definitely Stephen Marks — carrying the bloody Jamaican Flag at the Calgary games opening ceremonies! What was he doing *there*? He's supposed to be with the swim team doing a story on the AUAA's. I staggered to the bar and valiantly tried to submerge my onrushing headache into tomorrow's hangover.

Press Release Calgary Olympic Games Press Office. There has been a death threat against the entire Belezian Olympic team. This matter is being investigated by the Olympic Trademark Police, the RCMP and the Belezian embassy. Rumours have it that Belezian death squads are responsible. The Belezian embassy spokescat, Captain Kitty has placed responsibility for the threats upon insurgent agitators sponsored by Communist sympathizers.

It took some doing but I managed to get a person on the Jamaican Team to switch places with me in the opening show. Jamaicans are great to deal with — no bullshit just 'how much is your balance left on your Belezian Express?' Good old BE. I never bribe without it. I even have a receipt for the expense account.

On to the good stuff — my experiences as a participant-observer at Calgary. The parties are great; they don't know how to make a good chilly chilly barbarian but one can't have everything. Besides, my trainer is an exceptional bartender. The luge event was wild. I went down twice on Sunday and twice on Monday. Had a great time and waved the team banner all along the track. The only major problem was the lack of brakes but that small difficulty was solved simply by running into the hay bales at the bottom. This got some strange looks from the other teams but it worked. I even got the Eddie Edwards Aluminum medal — a proud moment for Belize.

Short story this time — heard gunshots next door in what was supposed to be my suite before I traded with the team from the Netherlands-Antilles. Nice people; must remember to send flowers.

Editors Log Brunsdate 122.20. There I was in the Social Club berating our AD manager/Managing Editor for not getting the Olympic press passes he promised last summer when I saw him. He shrugged and went to the bar for a very, very, long, refreshing pause. As I stumbled back, I started on him about lack of pages for the Sports section. He promptly returned to the bar for another long, refreshing pause.

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