

York symposium nets hockey coaches from across North America

by NICK LAPICIRELLA

Recently, on a balmy weekend in June, York University once again was host to some of the most successful hockey coaches around, who came to participate in the Elite Hockey Symposium.

About 150 coaches attended the three day seminar, including such dignitaries as Dave King from the Canadian Olympic Team, Bob Johnson of the Calgary Flames, and Roger Nielson, assistant coach of the Chicago Black Hawks. Also attending were a range of people from the rest of the hockey world, from the national and professional ranks to those involved in minor hockey programmes.

The Symposium host Dave Chambers, who led the York Yeomen to the national championship last year, considers this year's symposium a success, although its timing conflicted with the National Hockey League draft.

As well as facing off in seminar groups to wrangle with some of the finer points of the business, the guests came to hear speakers like King and Johnson, who Chambers says help to give the symposium credibility. "It's always been our philosophy to get the best possible people to speak," Chambers said.

Chambers said there will be another symposium again next year, and that the organizers will try to feature some international hockey dignitaries.

"This is the only year we haven't had European coaches," Chambers said. "We did try to get Tikhonov, the Soviet coach, and they had

agreed in principle for him to come but he had prior commitments. We might try again." □

Seminar notes: York Yeomen goalie coach Steve Knish spoke on Sunday morning on the psychological theory behind the coaching of goaltenders. Knish drew from his experience with York netminder Mark Applewhite to illustrate his coaching technique...Seminar Coordinator Dave Chambers was not present on the final day of the seminar, he was in Calgary coaching the national under 18 hockey team, preparing the squad for their upcoming international matches... There were a number of on ice lectures on practice drills conducted at Chesswood Arena. York's own Ice Palace was unavailable for the seminar because of a lack of ice. The arena is reserved over the summer months for a local ball hockey league.



THE ICEMAN TEACHETH: York goalie coach Steve Knish (above) demonstrates some of the finer points of psychological theory. Olympic hockey coach Dave King (inset) ponders his next coaching move.

ROBERTA DI MAIO
NICK LAPICIRELLA

Coach King on Canucks and colleges

Any good Canadian college team can go down to the United States and compete well enough to win.

Excal—I want to first ask you about the Vancouver Canucks offer and why you eventually decided against what has been said to be a substantial offer in your direction from the Canucks.

DK—Initially I did accept. It

looked pretty good and so I thought about it. I decided I wanted to be released from my contract with Hockey Canada, but then after much thought I felt that I had an obligation to fulfill not only to Hockey Canada but to the athletes as well.

Excal—Did it matter to what team you were going to? Did Vancouver's position in the standings make you shy away from them?

DK—It was actually a pretty good situation in Vancouver because the team had the potential to move up in the standings. They have good ownership and they will spend the money to make the team competitive and I'm from Western Canada too which would have given me a job right in my backyard. It was really attractive to consider.

Excal—I want to ask you about the University program in general. You were formally involved with the University of Saskatchewan. Do you feel that compared to the United States where they offer Hockey scholarships, we could make improvements to our program?

DK—Well the calibre of our hockey is very good. Any good Canadian College team can go down to the United States and compete well enough to win, but there is no question that the United States colleges invest their

money in sports scholarships. It's a little tough for our players to play here. It's not as much of a profile thing and you invest a lot of time with little financial incentive. Many players have to give up study time to play, but in the long run it's a good investment and I think college hockey is excellent. I think it's very good hockey. The coaching is outstanding right across the country.

Excal—Do the athletes get the best teachers?

DK—You look back at the national University hockey championships and you saw Michel Bouchut of Ottawa, Tom Watt from University of Toronto, Dave Chambers from here and Claire Drake from the University of Alberta. Those are pretty outstanding coaches. There's just no question that the quality of people really do an excellent job with the players and Canadian college hockey, I think, has always had excellent coaching.

Excal—Do you feel we should fade out our junior system and concentrate on a strong University program?

DK—I wish the financing was there that would offer scholarships and would interest each player to stay in Canada and play, but junior hockey has been around a long time. It seems the levels available to young players at all levels, from Canadian Colleges, American College to Major Junior A are so good that there are better options available for a player today.

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