

HOCKEY YEOMEN:

Hard work agrees with them

By John Madden

After four months of hockey, there are times when the Yeomen grow tired of looking at shin guards, helmets, tape and medicine kits and come to hate a whistle ordering more skating drills like stops and starts. They have been on the ice at least four times a week since early October.

The Yeomen started the season slowly, losing three of their first four games. These games, however, were invaluable in helping the eight rookies get to know their new mates on and off the ice. This is one reason Larry Nancekeville scheduled trips to Queens, Windsor and Guelph before mid November. By the middle of November, they began winning regularly. With victories against clubs in the O.Q.A.A. (McMaster, Windsor and U of T) the team's self-confidence grew. The U of T game helped immeasurably. Coach Bill Purcell recalls "It wasn't until the second period that they realized they were skating better than the guy opposite them and that they could dump them." This win has brought more prestige to this university than most people realize. For instance, Oswego's newspapers and programme announced that their boys were playing York University who had defeated the University of Toronto, Canada's best collegiate hockey team.

This successful year has surprised many. At the beginning, this writer looked forward to a dismal season. York had lost eight players from last year's second place club, including Kent Pollard, who was third in the O.I.A.A. scoring, and Doug McBryde who was fifth. Many of the new players looked too small to take on Laurentian and Ryerson. Even now, the club's most serious weakness is lack of depth.

Coach Purcell, however, has developed a team that can skate with anybody. Yet the Yeomen have to work for every goal they get; they probably will never clobber anybody. Although they have a record of twelve victories, five defeats and two ties at the end of January, they have won only three games by more than two goals. They have scored only nine more goals than they

have given up (69-60).

The first line of Rick Bowering, Don Fraser and Mike Beliveau or Bruce Easson has supplied most of the scoring punch. Left winger Fraser leads the club in scoring with eighteen points on eight goals and ten assists. Centre Bowering has the most goals, eleven. Easson and Beliveau have ten and nine points respectively.

Andy Schweda, Jim Dickinson and Bob Modray form the second line. Schweda is third in team scoring with five goals and six assists.

Jim Pocisk, Bud Patrick and Andy Raven, whom Purcell rates as the most improved player, make up a good checking third line. Centres Pocisk and Schweda, who are built like Dave Keon,

which has counted for four goals, the highest among the defencemen. He was an all-star with St. Mike's Jr. 'B's last year. West has been steady all year and is carrying the puck more as the season progresses.

Goalie Frank Childe was the second team all-star in the O.I.A.A. last year and is bidding for a berth on the first team in 1969. Two of his best games were against Ryerson and Oswego in which York won 3-2 and 6-1 respectively. Childe's goals against average for the first four league games is 3:25 and for the total nineteen matches is 2:98. Bill Stajanovic is the back-up goalie.

Behind what you see on the ice is well over fifty years of hockey experience. In the 1940's Mert Prophet was the goalie for nu-

ers Association in 1966. Nobby Wirkowski brought him to York this year. Not to be outdone by the young upstarts, Mert often plays goal in the practices.

Mike Penny looks after the equipment and other miscellaneous chores that would fill a page. He packs the sweaters, sticks, tape, socks, gum . . . and regularly comes through with a volley of jokes. He played with the Aurora Jr. 'B' club last year and coached the West Hill team which won the Metro Toronto Junior title last year. Bill Purcell, who knew him through hockey, invited him to come out for a skate during the practices and Mike wound up as trainer. He is currently taking a law course at Seneca College.

In Coach Purcell, the Yeomen have a man with years of professional knowledge. In Junior Hockey, he played at Ottawa and Quebec with Leafs' Floyd Smith. He went to Charlestown and Johnstown and worked for three years under Eddie Shore with the Springfield Indians of the A.H.L.

Although the Yeomen have accumulated an impressive record, their performance in February will spell the difference between a successful and a mediocre season. A month from now, they could be at the National Championship in Alberta or they could be buried in the second division of the O.I.A.A.

At this point, fifteen of the twenty games have been exhibition. The five remaining encounters are crucial league games. They play Waterloo-Lutheran twice, Ryerson, Laurentian and Osgoode. Their last four games are at home. Not one of these teams is a push over. They play tonight (February 6) in the Kitchener Arena against Waterloo-Lutheran. Although Lutheran's record is a modest three wins and three losses, all of their defeats have been by one goal. This includes two losses to Laurentian.

The Yeomen have their first official home game in two months on Tuesday, February 11th against Ryerson and then Friday, February 14th against Laurentian. Strong student support will prove to the players that four months of effort have been worthwhile.



photo by Mike Snook

HOCKEY YEOMEN

have not run anyone through the boards (yet) but they don't back down from anyone, and enjoy draping bigger guys along the boards. Mike "The Greek" Grace is one of the club's strongest skaters and thus a good man to kill a penalty or protect a lead.

Veterans Ron Porter and Paul Erickson form one defensive combination. Erickson is rushing more this season and also blocking many shots. Porter is majoring in Physical Education but, if he flunks out, he can always sell bath tubs in Sudbury.

Ed Zuccato and Don West are the two other defencemen. Big "Zuc" has a super slap shot

merous teams, including Hamilton Jr. 'A's, the R.C.F. Blue Bombers in Winnipeg, Washington, Providence, Fort Worth, and Quebec. In 1950 he went to Indianapolis in the Detroit organization to replace Lefty Wilson who was headed for Detroit where he is now. Since it was customary for the spare goalie to be trainer too, Mert became trainer. He filled the same position for the Indianapolis baseball team.

Starting in 1956, he took anatomy and physiology at Butler University while acting as a coach and trainer for the football teams. He came to Argos in 1964 and formed the Canadian Train-

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