

York's defence finest in OUAA

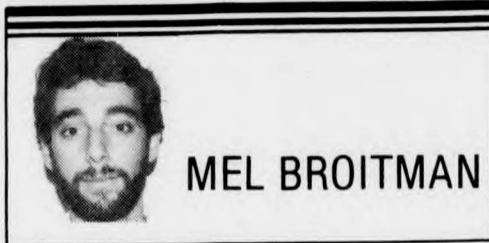
"Next year they'll be unbelievable. Nobody will touch'em." Those were the words of Edo Van Belkom, last year's *Excal* sports editor—intimated to me while we shivered in the press box at a Yeomen game last winter. And sure enough, Mr. Van Belkom's prediction is ringing true, as this year's hockey Yeomen have been awesome.

Heading into tonight's game against the Western Ontario Mustangs, the Yeomen are almost perfect. Only a tie against Windsor has deprived York a sparkling 10-0 record.

Certainly the Yeomen have been good the last two years. Good enough and fortunate (at times) to twice partake in the national championship final round. On those occasions, York teams caught a few people by surprise. This year, however, their superb play may catapult them onto a pedestal reserved for only truly great teams.

"We planned it as a three year deal," said head coach Dave Chambers of his rebuilding program upon his return to York in 1984. "We thought in our third year (1986) we would have enough experience to make a run as a serious contender." Yet while rebuilding, the Yeomen haven't exactly been mediocre. Two Ontario titles and a Canadian championship attest to that. But frightening as it may seem (for the competition), "we have to get better," Chambers claims.

Championship hockey is almost always a product of excellent defensive play. And in the third year of his rebuilding program, Chambers has



MEL BROITMAN

assembled an incredible backline. "This is the best defense for sure," Chambers says when comparing this team to both recent and earlier (mid 1970s) York clubs and his teams of the late 70s at Ohio State University.

Rob Crocock, Mike James, Darren Gani, Bill McGuire, Dirk Reuter and Bob Nicholson are among the finest collection of defensemen ever to play Canadian university hockey. All of them possess above-average offensive and defensive skills.

Their list of credentials is impressive. Crocock, injured all of last year, was a defensive stalwart on the 1984 championship team. Mike James also a member of the '84 champions, played on Brian Kilrea's 1983 Memorial Cup champion Ottawa 67s. Newcomer Darren Gani previously signed a contract with the Edmonton Oilers and Bill McGuire and Dirk Reuter both have plenty of minor professional experience in the American Hockey League. As well, Bob Nicholson, who at times struggled last year, has as Chambers says,

"been playing superb hockey this season and has a good chance to play on the OUAA all-star team.

If you think that's impressive, wait—it going to get even better. Lou Kiriakou, another veteran of the AHL, joins the already talent-laden defense in January. Chambers describes Kiriakou as an outstanding skater and offensive player.

Sometimes, strong defenses are forced to compensate for weaker netminding. But even York's goaltending is outstanding. There is likely not another team in the country with a tandem as solid as Scott Mosey and Mark Applewhaite. And so far in this unbeaten campaign, Applewhaite is yet to start as he is patiently waiting for a groin injury to heal. All things considered, from the blueline back, the Yeomen are nothing short of exceptional.

With so much talent is Chambers afraid of overconfidence creeping in and spoiling their chances? "I get concerned, especially about the weaker teams," Chambers says. "But there is enough pride and character that the players want to play well in every game."

As a rule, Dave Chambers plays it very low-key when talking about his club's chances of a national title. He is constantly reminding his players, the fans and the press of the old adage that "anything can happen in sport." Chambers is right of course. Anything will and usually does happen in sports. But with that defense, it's hard not to already make plans for a March weekend in Edmonton.

Sports Briefs

By NICK LAPICCIARELLA

VANIER CUP

University of British Columbia Thunderbirds defeated the Western Mustangs 25-23 in one of the most exciting Canadian College football finals in years. The game was the culmination of an exciting football season watched by more than 17,000 fans at Varsity Stadium.

The Thunderbirds scored a dramatic touchdown with less than 10 seconds remaining. It was a Hollywood finish in more ways than one.

Apparently the producers of Police Academy 4 needed a football game as a backdrop, but had to have the fans in short sleeves. It was quite impossible, however, with snow in the stands.

YEOWOMEN VOLLEYBALL

The Yeowomen battled through snowstorms just to get to their weekend games, but when they arrived they posted four straight wins.

On Friday York played a well disciplined Ottawa Gee Gees squad in what coach Merv Mosher described as a "real barn burner."

At stake was sole possession of first place and York defeated Ottawa 3-2 with the scores, 15-12, 10-15, 15-6, 11-15 and 16-14. Mosher described the win as a good team effort with York actually trailing Ottawa 14-12 in the final game, before rallying with four straight points.

On Saturday morning York travelled to Carlton and handily defeated the Ravens 3-0. The game scores were 15-2, 15-5, and 15-5.

Saturday evening York defeated the Queen's squad 3-1. The game scoring was 15-8, 14-16, 15-13, and 15-9. "The score probably indicated that the girls were a bit tired, not winning as handily," Mosher said.

On Sunday York played Royal Military College and easily handled them in three games straight: 15-1, 15-4 and 15-3. York is now in first place in the Eastern division with a perfect 6-0 record after playing each team in that division.

MEN'S BASKETBALL

Last weekend, the Yeomen basketball team took part in an exhibition tournament at Siena Hts. College in Michigan. The team dropped both their games, losing 83-71 versus Hillsdale College and 87-75 against Tiffin College.

The games afforded coach Bob Bain an opportunity to judge York's strengths and weaknesses. "The team's weaknesses were revealed to us," Bain said. "We got hurt badly on the boards." York's leading scorer against Hillsdale was Mike Sherwood with 24 points. Stu Levinsky led the team in scoring against Tiffin with 21 points.

York's next game in London against Western on Saturday (November 29) and is part of the regular season schedule.

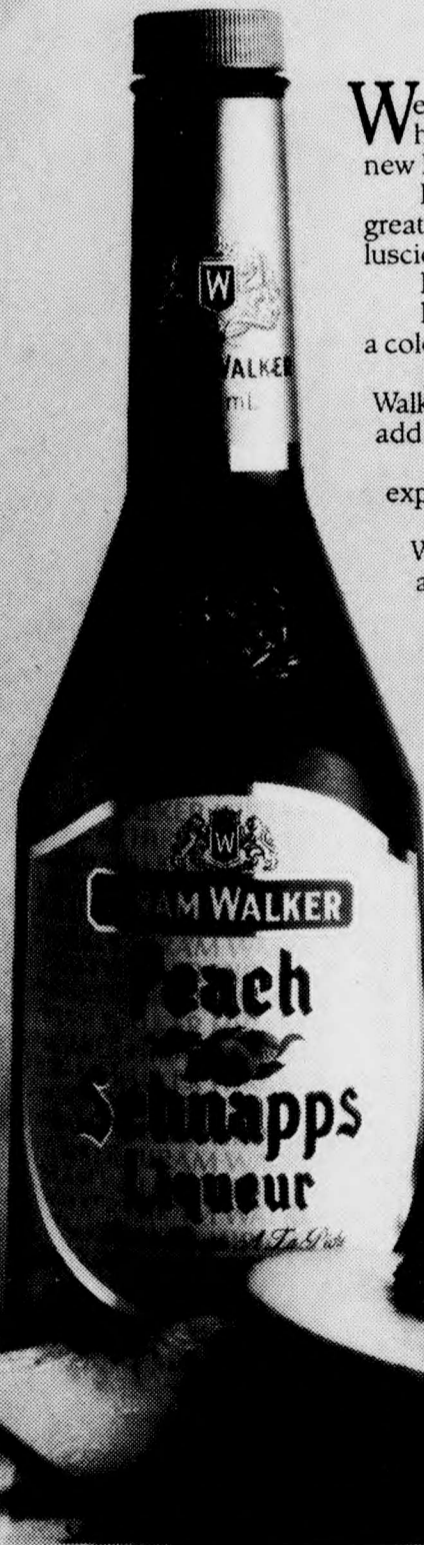
STREAKING YEOMEN

The men's hockey team are making believers out of those who had any doubts about their strength. Victories against Brock and Waterloo extended York's unbeaten streak to 10 games, giving them an unblemished 9-0-1 record.

On Friday, the Yeomen travelled to Brock and thoroughly outplayed the Brock team, badgering them by a score of 6-2. Four players had three points on the night. Greg Rolston and Ben Daniccia had two goals and an assist while Rick Moracco had one goal and two assists and Brian Gray had three assists.

On Sunday, York played a stronger Waterloo team but was still able to beat them handily 4-1. Brian Gray, Darren Gani, Duane Smith (with his first in OUAA competition) and Brian MacDonald each collected a goal for the Yeomen.

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