

SPORTS

Detroit's Tiger tells story

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leads to one of the books anomalies. One of the driving forces behind Williams goal of playing pro hockey was to avenge all the people of Weyburn who laughed at him when he would boast of one day playing in the NHL. But why shouldn't the townfolk laugh when the town bully brashly predicts a life for himself in the big leagues? Williams also motivated himself to play harder against the kids who had better hockey equipment than he. Tiger Williams the player feeds on revenge and resentment. If there's no resentment around, he creates it.

It is evident that Williams still fueled himself on jealousy as his pro career flourished. He does not care for players who are blessed with more talent than him but do not exploit it to its maximum potential. He detests "floaters" and, with the exception of Borje Salming, he verbally berates all Euro-

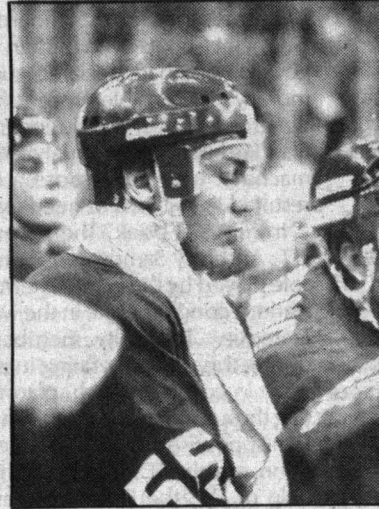
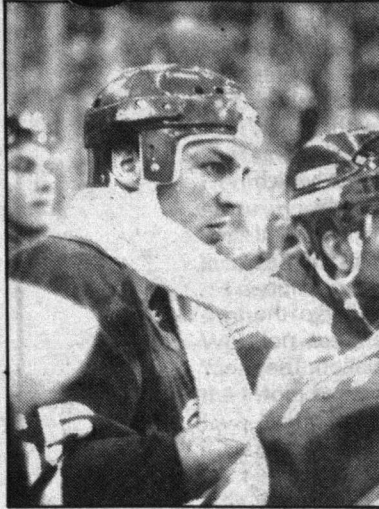
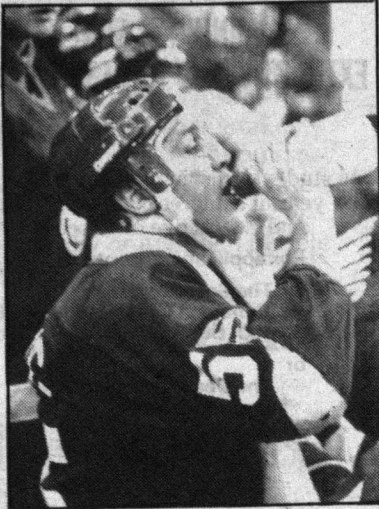


Photo Bill St. John

pean players for what he feels is lack of aggressiveness.

Throughout the book, Williams puts down his natural athletic ability, but by doing so he builds up his own hard-nosed attitude and insatiable will power. Williams believes his career is grounded on one part

ability and three parts hard work. One cannot argue with end results, though. After ten-and-a-half seasons and 3000 plus penalty minutes (tops in league history) he has accomplished what he set out to do.

It's interesting to note that unlike

many other hockey books *Tiger* does not treat the Stanley Cup as the be all and end all of a player's career. Despite just falling short of deifying the silver mug, he still treats it as just an added incentive to his overall goal. His ultimate aim has always been to survive in the league and to support his family. He achieved this dream and the book reflects such contentment.

Tiger glorifies the underdog. Williams seems to have taken it upon himself to try and dispell the goon image that harasses players like himself, Dave Semenko, and Paul Holmgren. He justifies his job by saying it is a natural extension of the game. Williams approaches fighting from a psychological viewpoint. He describes how a team's performance in a game or a play-off series can hinge on the emo-

tional ramifications of one fight.

Williams's reminiscences of his days in Junior hockey is a slice of pure Canadiana and is described with harsh imagery. One quote is particularly exemplary of the book's tone:

"And there was one thing you couldn't soften or disguise: the game at the Junior level could be brutally hard, and for a kid who thought the game was only about wrist shots and deking and great skating, reality could arrive like a fist in the throat."

One of Williams's biggest pet peeves is hypocrisy. In his book he focuses on the hypocrisy in organized hockey. His book describes his encounters with lecherous Eastern agents who treat junior players like slabs of meat with goal totals. He condemns the NHL's double standard that has superstars like Denis Potvin and Wayne Gretzky getting away with infractions that nail journeymen players like Williams to the wall.

Tiger is basically one man's impression of the state of hockey in Canada at all levels. The tale exemplifies the combination of hard work and lucky breaks that are necessary for the average player to succeed in the big leagues. *Tiger* is occasionally flippant and self-serving, but earthy humor pervades every chapter and the book mirrors its author in one important respect — its never boring.

THE SPORTS QUIZ

1. THE BULLPEN IS:

- the stable of relief pitchers on a baseball team
- a bunch of guys comparing fishing stories
- a good place to stay out of at a rodeo

2. A COMMENTATOR IS:

- the person providing detailed analysis on a sports broadcast
- the jerk behind you at a movie who won't shut up
- an ordinary potato

3. THE BOBSLED IS:

- a winter Olympic event
- Robert Sled, to his friends
- Fred Sled's brother

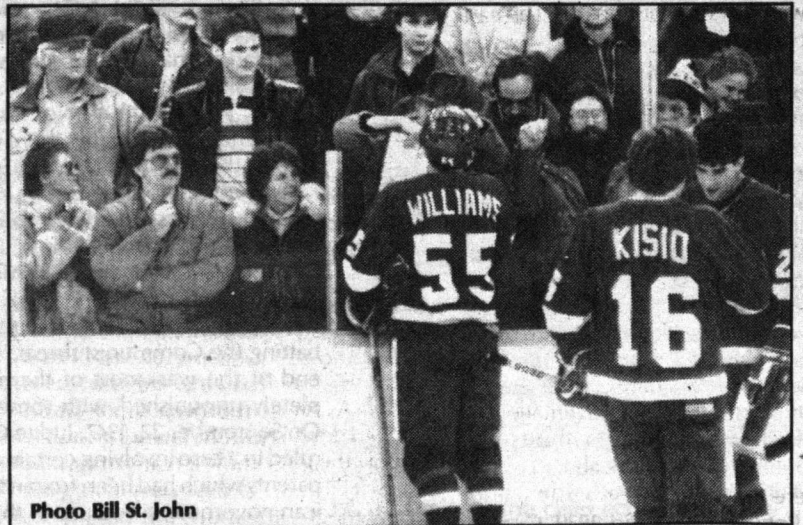


Photo Bill St. John

Williams halts his pre-game warm up to sign copies of his book

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