

The Front Row

by Bruce Denis
Sports Editor

Pressure. I feel it every Wednesday at 10:00 pm when I realize that I have half the sports section to lay out and only 2 hours until the deadline. You feel it the night before an exam which you have spent the better part of a minute studying for. Athletes feel it on the courts, rinks and fields when they realize they have to beat out 40 other athletes to make the team.

I confront pressure by throwing tantrums and lying to my editor-in-chief about why I have to have my deadline extended. You confront academic pressures by believing that 'nobody else studied this stuff so I won't be the only one to fail' and then heading off to the Social Club. Athletes confront pressure by performing at their highest level; at least most do. One Canadian athlete did not.

John Pevec, a fourth year education student at McGill University tested positive earlier this month for stanozolol, an anabolic steroid. Pevec has been a reserve linebacker for most of his career with the Redmen but thought he might get more playing time on the defensive line. That meant gaining 35 pounds during the off-season. Not a problem, thanks to the juice.

When Pevec weighed in at the start of training camp, Redmen coach Charlie Baillie suspected something was up and was ready to have him tested by the university but the CIAU beat him to it. In compliance with the CIAU random testing policy, five Redmen were chosen for urine tests. Pevec was one of them. He was the first athlete in the three year history of the policy to test positive.

Pevec doesn't look like Brian Bosworth. He doesn't fantasize about crushing people's heads between his bicep and forearm. He's a fourth year education student who values his education as much as he values playing on the Redmen football squad. It's lucky he does because he won't be playing football anymore. The CIAU has suspended him from league play for four years. Ultimately, John Pevec is a decent person in the same way that you or I am a decent person.

Pressure. Spending three years of your life as a reserve lineman and having to come back and fight for that position all over again means alot of pressure. John Pevec had had enough. Last May he headed to Europe for some exhibition games with the team at 227 pounds and decided he would return in the Fall as a regular or he would not return at all. In late August he was 262 pounds of muscle.

The following is part of an open letter to the public written by Pevec following his suspension and released by the McGill Athletic department:

"First off all, I'd like to apologize to my family, teammates, friends and the university for the anguish and disappointment I have caused as a consequence of my actions. I was made well aware of the consequences of using a banned substance through annual drug education given by the team and the department of athletics.

"In all competitive sports there is always pressure on the athlete to achieve certain performance standards. However, in no way did the McGill football program, or anyone associated with it, encourage or condone my use of this banned substance. In addition, I would like to state for the record that no one associated with the team was aware of my actions. To my knowledge, none of my teammates have used or are using banned substances."

In no way did the McGill football program encourage or condone his use of this banned substance. Maybe not directly, but certainly the prestige that comes with playing for one of the most respected football teams in the country (including the CFL) had a hand in it. He also mentions that he had been involved with a drug education program run by the team.

Being fully aware of the damage stanozolol can do to the body, Pevec must have decided early in the summer that starting for the McGill Redmen football team in the fall of 1993 was more important than his life.

I can't imagine the pressure he must have felt to make a decision like that. Surely, no athlete at UNB could feel enough pressure to perform that he or she would take illegal performance enhancing substances. The very thought is unfathomable. The only team that is remotely 'big time' is the hockey team and it seems unlikely that anyone would take drugs for hockey, a game which relies more on skill than brute.

Unlike American college football, money is not involved and for 99 percent of Canadian varsity football players, a future in professional football is a forgotten dream. The pressure must have come from somewhere. Pevec probably placed alot of pressure on himself to make the team and valued the prestige that comes with wearing the flashy white and red leather jackets with the embroidered McGill football logo.

Pevec's family might also have placed pressure on him to excel in both school and sports. Friends who give a slap on the back to the Redmen linebacker they can call their buddy doesn't help either. A culmination of social pressures probably finalized Pevec's decision to jeopardize his life by taking stanozolol.

So to all those people milling about at the press conference shaking their heads as if someone had died (you included Michael Farber), you are all equally responsible for this 22 year old. It is our responsibility to insure that all our athletes, here at UNB or anywhere in the world, understand that life is always more important than athletics.

SPORTS CLUB Council Meeting

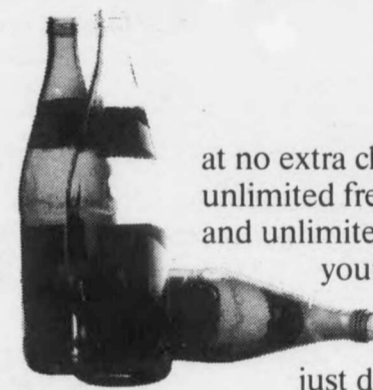
Date: Tuesday, October 5th, 6:30 pm

Location: Room 207, Lady Beaverbrooke Gym

- All clubs are asked to be represented by at least one executive member.

For more information contact Donna Hornibrooke at 453-4579

Does fabulous wealth mean taking the empties back?



Day-to-day banking charges on your account can add up. So if you're trying to stretch every dollar, drop in to Bank of Montreal where you can get a package of handy banking services, at one low fee of \$2.75 a month, only for students.*

You can use our Instabank[®] machines as often as you want, and other Interac[™] banking machines two times a month,

at no extra charge. Plus there's unlimited free cheque writing and unlimited withdrawals from your Bank of Montreal accounts.

To find out more, just drop by your nearest branch. And while you're there, ask us how else we can make your life easier - low-interest Student Loans, Bank of Montreal MasterCard[®] + cards, and more. You might not have to take the empties back so often.

Campus Branch
453-0260

Prospect St. Branch
453-0250

* Available to full-time students. See your local branch for complete details. Registered trade-mark of Bank of Montreal. Interac and design are registered trade marks of Interac Inc. Bank of Montreal is a registered user. MasterCard is a registered trade mark of MasterCard International Inc. Bank of Montreal is a registered user.



Bank of Montreal
We're Paying Attention