

JOCK TALK

By Mickey Place

With all Panther athletes now out of contention and concentrating on their books, making Jock Talk worth reading (or writing) becomes a problem. We'll start off by remarking that, inasmuch as we were far away for a week and Maritime news does not travel, we had to wait until our return to find out that Les Aigles Blue from Le U. de Moncton skated off with the hockey honours (remember how we demolished them?) and, we feel certain, will prove worthy representatives for our district in the C.I.A.U. finals this week in Regina. We are pleased to offer congrats to former Panther Basketball Coach Gary Heald as he leads his Saint Mary's Huskies into the finals in Calgary. Success by these teams would upgrade their almost-as-good rivals in the Atlantic area.

We haven't seen the papers to see how these results were achieved, as we travelled considerably over the March break and we're not really back to normal yet. We departed from Charlottetown on Friday February 29th and arrived in Boston that afternoon, staying there until Monday A.M. when we flew to Baltimore and proceeded to New York by train early Wednesday morning. There we spent the day seeing a show (Oklahoma!) in the afternoon and the opera at

night (Un Ballo in Masclera) and caught the midnight bus for Boston (We sleep on a bus as though it were the Ritz). We stayed in Beantown until Sunday, when we flew to Halifax. We enjoyed the day with two of our family and took the late plane for home and, believe it, we were sound asleep in our own bed by 11:00 P.M. Let us hasten to observe that, as usual, we saw no place we'd rather live than back home on P.E.I.!

In Boston, we saw the Bruins and Gerry Cheevers shut out Los Angeles 4-0 and marvelled that league leading scorer Marcel Dionne, with Bob Miller covering him, got but one shot on goal and that a long and unsuccessful one midway in the third period.

We got our usual impression of N.H.L. play. It is all very skillful and a good exhibition of how the game can be played, they can all skate, they are never out of position, they make very few mistakes, but the fire and verve of the intercollegiate play seems missing and, for real excitement, we'll take the Atlantic Intercollegiates any day.

We also saw the University of Vermont nose out Boston University 2-1 in a rousing game, but for real enthusiasm, we were impressed with a high school play-down game we saw at the Boston Garden. We went with co-worker of long ago whose grandson was playing for Wakefield (3) against St. John's (4). Believe it or not, about 6000 screaming fans cheered every play. The game was the semi-final of the 22 league

elimination Massachusetts championship series, so this may give an idea of where and how those Americans seem to be catching up in hockey. We were impressed with the U.S. Intercollegiate rule with only one line at centre ice as the off-side whistles were cut down very perceptibly. Play in both these games was rough, but very clean.

Coming home on the plane with no-one to talk to (the little old lady on the aisle was irritated because we had the window seat reserved before she arrived) we ruminated on present day hockey as compared to those supposedly halcyon days of our youth. You may, or may not, agree with our conclusions. We think that hockey is still the best game being played, but it has, in many ways, been spoiled for us because it has become polluted with dirty (not rough) play. It can still be a game of abundant skills, a sport which boasts the artistic elegance of a Guy Lafleur or a Jean Ratelle, a sport in which the observer can still marvel at a pretty pass, a clever shift or a daring save. However, it would seem that, in the recent past, nothing was easier to sell than bloody violence and for a long time it seemed that the N.H.L. and many minor league owners allowed or, indeed, encouraged the bullying that hampered the real artists and encouraged and rewarded the goons. Can you imagine any other sport in which players are acquired for no other reason but that they may hamper or, at times, injure the stars of opposing teams? And another thought... last

year in the junior series played here, we got sick and tired of the hugging, kissing and dancing that took place after every score. Sometimes the score resulted from the player slapping the puck, from an impossible angle, and having it ricochet off another player and into the opponent's net by sheer accident! Now we don't want to have a spoilsport attitude and we like real enthusiasm, but the bum patting and rejoicing with the bench being cleared after every score, gets boring and we would admire a referee who would decree that a five minute demonstration every time the puck goes into a net merits a "Delay of Game" penalty. Perhaps we are getting old and cranky!!

We also note that Panther Football is being dropped, at least for a time. From those, with whom we have talked around the campus, it seems to be recognized as an unfortunate, but necessary move. It is our own feeling that, after being in existence for over 10 years without any outstanding success in athletics, the greatest boost for UPEI morale would be a real Panther winner. When we came pretty close to this objective last year with our basketball team, the enthusiasm was marked. Because it takes more players and because most outstanding players are not native to P.E.I. we think that, quite probably, the game with the least potential for outstanding success was football, so if a cut in expenditure was essential, it seems reasonable that this was the game that had to go. Let's hope 1980-81 will be the year of the big breakthrough. UP THE PANTHERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



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