

OFFSIDER

would like to rectify the misconception concerning Bruin winger Cam Neely's injury. As Neely himself said in the "Inside Hockey" segment during January 25th's Hockey Night in Canada broadcast, "The hit in game three is something that I have really no respect for-- you know, that particular type of hit and the way, you know, he placed it. But it happened in game six, I actually went to hit him this time in the corner; he ducked, and as you duck, you bend your knees, and your thigh-- I skated right into his knee." Besides, Samuelsson's illegal check hit Neely's right leg, and it was his injured left leg which removed him from play.

On the 28th of January, St. Louis Blues' winger Brett Hull became only the second player in NHL history to record two consecutive 50/50 (Fifty goals in 50 games) seasons. Hockey's only other two-year 50/50 is the Los Angeles Kings' Wayne Gretzky; ironically, Hull's fiftieth came during a game against the Kings. A must-read for Brett Hull fans is the article "Shooting Star" in the February 1992 issue of Saturday Night.

The St. Louis/Boston trade on the seventh of February was perhaps the dumbest trade ever by Harry Sinden. The rumour of a Janney/Oates deal first appeared in the Guardian on January 9th. Blues' G.M. Ron Caron and Bruins' Sinden are both well-respected for their trading ability; Caron has definitely out-dealt Sinden player-wise as Oates is nearing thirty, but Janney is twenty-four and Quintal twenty-three. However, Caron might find that he has drastically reduced player morale on his team; Oates and Brett Hull were not only a serious scoring combination, but they were also close friends. The Blues gain a good defenseman prospect in Quintal and a great playmaker in Janney; the Bruins gain in Oates a point-scorer and the potential for a potent line with Cam Neely or Steve Leach. The long-term edge goes to the blues, but the immediate impact is debatable. Both teams lost their first games after the trade. Janney had one assist; Oates, two.

The new O-Pee-Chee Premier cards are out and are selling quickly. The cards are heavier than last year's, cost more, and are just as nice. The card backs are different than last year's; they are more colourful and look better.

Wayne Gretzky's announcement of his probable retirement at the end of this year's "Mediocre" season made me mad. I was furious. Many athletes admit that pleasing fans is an important aspect of being an athlete, but Gretzky's selfish behaviour takes too much away from the fun of the game. Obviously Gretzky cannot play hockey for fun; there is more to hockey than point production (like defense, but we know that Gretzky lacks that.) One small consolation in Gretzky's retirement is that he will probably never coach because of his lack of defense.

The hockey Panthers salvaged one point from their Fredericton road-trip this past weekend. Saturday the Panther lost 5-4 to the division-leading team from U.N.B.; Sunday, they managed a 7-7 tie with St. Thomas. This weekend they play two home games against St. Thomas -- check the paper for game times. If you Canadiens' fans are disappointed with Shayne Corson's play lately (as if you pick out one player playing poorly), bear in mind that his father is in the hospital with throat cancer. Mr. Corson is only forty-four and Shayne is extremely close to him. Shayne Corson's spirit is truly admirable.

Speaking of playing poorly, wasn't Ric Nattress' goal beautiful Saturday night against the Canadiens?

