

# THE PROS by John Cairns

## CANADIANS OUTCLASS RANGERS

Hats off to the New York Yankees! Any team that can fight internally while winning a world championship deserves full credit.

The year of bickering that came to a head during the past season. Before the American League playoffs manager Billy Martin expressed the hope for a renegotiated contract. Owner George Steinbrenner hit the ceiling. Billy, after all, was supposed to be concentrating on baseball.

The team remained split over Reggie Jackson's feuds with Martin and catcher Thurman Munson. The warfare continued. According to Jackson, Martin needed his head examined for pitching the ailing Catfish Hunter. Billy, Thurman and Lou Pinella then suggested that Reggie concentrate on his own game. Jackson replied that he wouldn't play for the team next year. Munson also decided to complain about his salary. Like several others, he wants to be the highest paid Yankee.

The Yankees were also

shorthanded. They had one fewer than the twenty-five player limit, and pitchers Ken Holtzman, Catfish Hunter and Ken Clay were unhealthy. Mickey Klutts, Fred Stanley, George Zeber and Fran Healy were strictly bench warmers. Although the Yankees had better individual talents, the Dodgers were more balanced.

In the final game, Reggie Jackson was the ironic hero. He belted three homers and was named the most valuable player. He then declared his loyalty to the Yankees while Thurman Munson refused.

Don't count on keeping the team together, Mr. Steinbrenner, Mike Torrez and Paul Blair are now free agents. Besides Jackson and Munson those who've asked to be traded include Mickey Rivers, Ed Figueroa and Roy White. The big egos, personality clashes and petty jealousies may be gone next season. If so, the team will be blessed with fewer headaches and more hamony.

A record 38,746,723 attended major league

baseball this year. That's up twenty-four percent. Much of the increase is a result of the almost three million drawn by the Dodgers, and of the two successful expansion teams. Even so, the figures indicate that baseball is in rosy health.

The season's first hockey telecast was a colossal bore. The Canadiens completely outclassed the hapless Rangers. If only there were parity, it would mean better games, more excitement and full rinks. Saturday night television would be more entertaining as well.

Why did the N.H.L. reject merger? The move would have provided a monopoly on both players and fans, and raised the league's quality. This year's interleague action had the W.H.A. winning thirteen, losing six and tying two. The younger league can hold its own. The N.H.L., however, never pits its top teams against its rivals. It is simply avoiding the embarrassment of Boston or Montreal losing such a game. Merger would have helped everyone. The older league may soon regret its decision.

The World Hockey Association has been trimmed to a more balanced and financially stable eight teams. Unlike in the N.H.L., no one team is overpowering.

Winnipeg will regain its championship. With Anders Hedberg, Ulf Nilsson, Bobby Hull and Danny Lawson, goals will come in flurries. Thommie Bergman, Lars-Erik Sjoberg and Kent Nilsson solidly defend goalie Joe Daley.

Quebec is number two. Richard Brodeur is an adequate netminder, and Jim Dorey and J.C. Tremblay are fine rushing defensemen. Serge Bernier, Real Cloutier and Marc Tardif can score.

Birmingham comes next. John Garrett is a proven goaltender while Dale Hoganson, Terry Bell and Brent Hughes anchor the defense. The offense is led by Paul Henderson, Frank Mahovlich, Mark Napier and Vaclav Nedomansky.

Cincinnati ranks fourth. Netminder Ernie Wakely and defensemen Ron Plumb and

Al Sims are well experienced. The forward lines feature Rick Dudley, Robbie Ftorek and Rick Leduc.

In New England the amazing saga of Gordie Howe continues. Hockey's forty-nine-year-old leading scorer is in his thirtieth active season. Can he really go on forever? Maybe so, but he can't raise the Whalers above mediocrity. Cap Raeder and Al Smith are good puck-stoppers, but the defense is shallow, and the scoring deficient.

Houston, Edmonton and Indianapolis are the lesser lights. John and Frank Hughes, Andre Iacroix and Larry Lund lead the Aeros. The Oilers are relying on Ron Chipperfield, and the big names for the Racers are Fortier, Burgess and St. Saveur.

Some people always have to be different. Phil Esposito wears 77, Ken Hodge 88, and John Davidson 00. As repulsive as that is, things have gone a step farther. The Cincinnati Stingers will have Robbie Ftorek and Claude Larose both wearing number 8. Who'll start wearing fractions or negative numbers?

The surprise in football is Denver leading the American Football Conference West. The Broncos handed Oakland its first loss in a year to take sole possession of first. The Raiders are second.

Muhammed Ali and Don King are applying for a North American Soccer League franchise for Montreal. Just as Wilt Chamberlain left basketball for volleyball, perhaps Ali will take up soccer. A player who floats like a butterfly should be pretty impressive.

Gary Carter was named the Montreal Expo of the Year, and for once the choice wasn't easy. Steve Rogers, Tony Perez, Dave Cash or Ellis Valentine would have been equally deserving winners. The talent on the team speaks well for the future. They have to be winners soon.

**JUNIOR CLASS PARTY**

FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4th

9:00 — 1:00

LABOR UNION HALL

ADM. 25¢

FARM CENTRE

GULF

UNIVERSITY AVE...