

sports time out

by John Neville

Although it is a week late, this writer is finally getting around to giving my readers an in-depth look at this year's men's basketball team. However, because of the timing of the intercollegiate seasons I will also be giving my analysis of this year's hockey team.

First things first. As many of you know, our basketball program has had a great deal of difficulty in keeping the same coach over a length of time. Gary Heald lasted three years and then left a team that had gone to the Nationals. George (I want to be Athletic Director) Birger left after just one season and with him the entire starting five. Enough history. The story begins here.

Enter Kevin Feighrey. A former captain of the Panthers the year they went to the Nationals. A former Athlete of the Year at UPEI. To many this meant that those in power had said that we would simply go through the motions and put any type of team just so long as we wouldn't default any games. AH AH AH, not so quick! Even this writer had his doubts about Feighrey's appointment but after witnessing his practices and talking to his players, I must concede that my initial observations could not have been further from the truth. He has the

respect and confidence of each one of his players and that in itself is something that the program has lacked for a number of years. However, even with a quality coach, and I believe Kevin will prove to be just that, a team must have the players. Do they???? I think the answer is a qualified yes.

Certainly they have two of the finest players (on paper) that UPEI has ever attracted in John Gilford and Larry McGee. They appear to be outstanding athletes but more importantly they are aware of the situation that they are in. They are fully aware that they must be leaders and that the players around them are not nearly as gifted as they are. Still they appear ready to take on the task of leading and if they do, it can mean only good things for the Panthers. Both John and Larry are fifth year players from East Texas State and are very, very exciting. In addition to these two, although I would suspect that most of the club's scoring will come from them, are some very capable and hard working ball players who will actually determine how successful this year's edition will do. Former Panther Bill Fanning and Freshman Jude Kelly appear certain of starting berths while the remaining position is up for grabs.

Ron Stuewe, a former, a former X-Men, Marty Hilton, a former U.N.B. Red Raider and Victor Shea. Others filling out the roster include Kevin Hankinson, John Carson, Brian MacAdam, Jamie MacSwain and Michael Roche.

I think that I am safe in saying that the present attitude on campus towards this team is one of pessimism but I think that a grave injustice is being done to these guys. In my four years at this institution I have never seen any team work as hard as this one has. I fully realize that this is not a national contender but I also realize that they will not lose one single game because of lack of effort. In short, I wish them the very best of luck in the upcoming season and I solicit the support of all UPEI students in showing our backing to these guys throughout the season. And to Coach Feighrey, a special welcome from one of the many people who enjoyed watching you play and who admired your class. We are all behind you....

On the hockey side of things, the Panthers have completed their preseason and now head into the regular schedule - this weekend against Acadia and SMU. Like the basketball team, the hockey Panthers are fortunate to have a great coach. Jack Hynes, selected the coach of the year last year in the AUAA, returns for his third year behind the bench. However, many of the big names that led last season's edition are no longer there. Ron McInnis, Larry Arsenault, Louie Lortie and Val Mitchell are all gone and with them a good deal of the team's nucleus. However Hynes still has perennial all-star Wilfred MacDonald and the exciting David Cameron. More important, is that the Panthers have retained the real meat of their team. Ken Burton, Mike Selleck, Shane Turner, Brian Cameron, Danny Kinnear and Terry Devine are all back and provide Hynes with a solid array of forwards.

Newcomers Brian Ostroski, Trevor Crawford, Rory Beck, Harold Hay, Neil MacKenzie, Howie Murney,

Shane Carr and Gary Trainor. On defence, newcomers to the Panthers are David Pineau and Larry Mayhew while Bob Mitchell returns after missing most of last year with an injury. All in all, the club is a very different one from last year. This time last season I said that the Panthers were going to be exciting and free-wheeling. That they were, but I feel that to be effective they must be more conservative this time around.

For those of you who missed last weekend's exhibitions against nationally ranked St. F.X., the Panthers I believe showed a pattern that will become quite familiar to their supporters as the season goes on. When the team works they are very pesky and will score their share of goals and when they stop working they will be in a great deal of trouble. Because of my personal association with the club, I find it very difficult to predict where they will finish, however I will keep with the trend and look at the Panthers as a season rather than individual games. If the club remains healthy, with Cameron and MacDonald leading and the Maritimes very best coach in Jack Hynes, the club will find a spot in the playoffs. If unhealthy, then only Hynes could pull a miracle two years in a row and lead the team into post season action.

A reminder that this weekend's games against Acadia and St. Mary's will be played on campus at the rink. Saturday at 2:00 and Sunday at 2:00. Saturday's game will be followed by a victory?? pub.

NEXT WEEK....A LOOK AT THE WOMEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM AND NEW COACH DAVE MACNEILL
Note: I would like to apologize to Carl Adams for excluding him from the football Seniors. The program I received listed him as a Junior but he has given 4 fine years to the football program and was a captain this year. So a week late - thanks Carl.



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