

SPORTS

OFFSIDER

There was lots of hockey excitement while we were all relaxing on our Christmas break. I have to miss some things and decide what is important. Here goes.

Believe it or not, but the New Jersey Devils made hockey history this past month by hiring a young lady named Sherry Ross as their colour commentator for radio broadcasts. I have been able to listen to two games with her; she knows her hockey, but makes the games confusing by referring to the players by their first names or nicknames. It is great to finally have a female as a colour person; Ms. Ross will probably improve with time.

January 2nd was a great day for Bruins' fans as winger Cam Neely played his first game since being injured in last May's playoff series against the Pittsburgh Penguins. As of January 12th, Neely had scored six goals in five games; the Whalers' colour person called Neely "the most proficient scorer except for Brett Hull."

This big Calgary/Toronto trade has been talked to death. A recap: Calgary sent Doug Gilmour, Jamie Macoun, Ric Nattress, Rick Wamsley, and Kent Manderville to Toronto for Gary Leeman. Craig Berube, Michel Petit, Alexander Godynnyuk, and Jeff Reese. Whose advantage? Toronto gains role models, but Calgary obtains youth. What about the Bruins' Garry Galley and Wes Walz for the Flyers' Gord Murphy, Brian Dobbin, and a draft pick? Murphy made immediate impact by assisting on Neely's first goal.

As of mid-season, trade rumours were abundant. Before the Calgary/Toronto trade, the ideas of Daniel Marois (Tor.) for Bernie Nicholls (Edm.); Ranger goaltender John Vanbiesbrouck ending up on Long Island through Minnesota; and Grant Fuhr (Tor.) to Los Angeles for the injured Tomas Sandstrom are among the rumours floating around. Everybody knows that Adam Oates wants out of St. Louis. Now that Quebec has placed Eric Lindros' rights on the market, things are becoming more interesting.

The hockey Panthers played two home games this past weekend. Saturday night they were defeated by the Univerite de Moncton Blue Eagles 5-2. The Blue Eagles played a close-checked game; one problem for the Panthers was not taking the body. They were not physically aggressive enough when they should have been. The other problem was Blue Eagles' goaltender Frantz Bergevin, who played an excellent game. Bergevin's style of goaltending requires close-in play for a goal; the panthers could not score because either he would pounce on the puck to stop close-in play, or the Blue Eagles would have the Panthers covered too well for the tip-in.

On Sunday the Panthers came roaring back from the loss to defeat the St. Mary's University Huskies 8-4. The Panthers fixed their mistakes from the night before and were aggressive in all aspects except for defence. Panther forward K.J. White scored four goals to be named the player of the game. It was a great, physical game.

Next hockey Panther home action is January 26th against the Mt. Allison Mounties.

