



NHL HOCKEY

by Chris McCarron

A lot of the NHL sports writers consistently make the wrong choices when voting for individual awards. In the spring of 1990 the Hart Trophy was awarded to Messier instead of Bourque. Messier is great but in this case Bourque deserved it more. It is easy to see why then Bruin coach, Terry O'Reilly was so upset about Bourque not winning the Hart trophy. Mark Howe was a top defenseman in his prime and yet he was overlooked for Coffey, Robinson, and Langway.

Other players are discriminated against because of the way they play. Both Clark in 86 and Hextall in 87 were fan favorites to win the Calder trophy as rookie of the year. Because Clark and Hextall enjoy a tough naverick style of play, some sportswriters chose not to vote for them. Gary Suter a better rookie than Clark, get a life. This season the Toronto media have named Clark as their choice for the Masterton trophy, awarded to the player who best exhibits dedication while playing with injury or other problems. I think Mario won the Masterton last season; both Mario and Clark suffer from serious back problems. I know that nobody deserves the Masterton more than Wendel who does this season. Yet I am sure that the American sports writers will vote for another candidate.

Saturday nite March 28 featured the second consecutive week that CBC featured the Habs on the tube. Islanders don't live in Quebec. It is unfair for the CBC to play either Montreal or Toronto for consecutive weeks. The only fair way to do it is to feature Toronto one week and Montreal the next. Speaking of the Habs, they played like a bunch of stiffs on the ice against the Penguins. The more I see Mario the more I feel that the NHL would not be as good if Mario were not in the game. Mario scores tout le temps. He leads by example and he's tough.

Offsider

Problems in the NHL began in mid-September of 1991 when the NHL's contract with the Players' Association expired. Since then, the two sides have been working towards settling several important issues on the new Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). Management (the League--headed by League President John Ziegler) and union (the player--headed by NHLPA president Bob Goodenow) could agree on nothing; even figures issued to the public by each side varied greatly when compared. On April Fool's Day, NHL players voted 560-4 in favour of striking.

Who received the dull end of the NHL's April Fool's joke? Wouldn't it have been wonderful had the players all reported for work last Wednesday night and shouted a resounding "April Fool!" to Ziegler? Sure, and the Nordiques will be playing the Sharks in the '92 Stanley Cup Final, right?

Each side has been pointing fingers at the other. On April 4th, instead of Hockey Night in Canada, Ron MacLean hosted "Strike '92;" the show illuminated a number of issues for us confused fans. MacLean interviewed Ziegler, Goodenow, Canucks' player representative Ryan Walter, Winnipeg Jets' president Barry Shenkarow, and a number of other people. Ziegler is a better actor than Devils' forward Claude Lemieux; he kept trying to play the Canadian angle to make all Canadians support management. Goodenow looked very sincere when he said that nobody likes the strike. Walter made a good point in saying that the strike was necessary; the players could not have been expected to play forever without a CBA. Who knows how long resolution would take? Shenkarow said the time constraint issue has been forced by the players.

Whose fault is the strike? It would be easier to take a list of the 504 men who voted and try to select who voted "NAY" than to answer the question of fault or blame.

I miss hockey very much. Sometimes I feel as if I am the only fan who is not mad at the NHLPA and players for striking. I do not think people have the right to be mad at the players for having taken their hockey away from them. I know that the players deserve some thanks for an exciting season which lasted much longer than it could have. I do not like the strike, but I do understand that it was necessary in order to keep hockey alive. The strike is making some people