

## The Cadre Forum

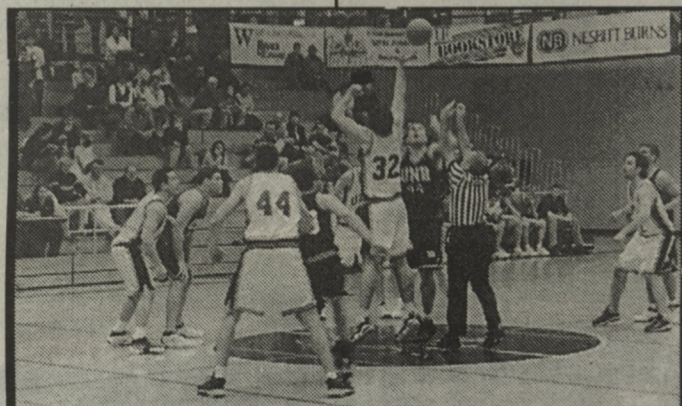
### What Is Wrong With The Athletic Department. . .And How To Fix It

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Before the storm of the decade and before the lunar eclipse, there was the Cadre Forum on the state of affairs inside the Athletic Department (AD) at UPEI. The initial idea arose out of the frightful nature of athletics at UPEI at present and the way the Athletic Department is being run. Athletes, students, and the community at large have expressed concern about the sorry state of affairs. We took it upon ourselves to look into the muddy abyss, see what was wrong, and provide suggestions on how to improve things. We hoped to bring a cross section of athletes together to talk, in anonymity, about the state of affairs. By the time the athletes walked into the Cadre office that component of anonymity was lost. Subsequently, we found ourselves facing an understandably guarded audience firing mostly clichés at the problem. Some spoke more frankly than others. This usually reflected the sport they represented and was, of course, relative to funding received. Though wary, the athletes let slip several thoughts that demonstrated their commitment to UPEI, their frustration with the losing, and an

overwhelming desire for change to be made.

The purpose of this forum was to propose the modest changes that arose, mostly by consensus, from athletes representing hockey, rugby, basketball, and field hockey (unfortunately scheduling prevented members from soccer and volleyball from joining us). All were entrusted with speaking for themselves; most took it upon themselves to attempt to represent the concerns of their fellow athletes. What we have gathered is list a of



mostly modest recommendations that go beyond just throwing money at the problems. They are listed, in no particular order, and explained along with quotes from the athletes themselves.

#### 1) Hire a Full-Time Qualified Athletic Therapist/Trainer:

The trainers presently do the best they can and this is not to slight them, but

when your team goes on the road and must rely on the *other team's* trainer, this is not a good or safe thing. The reality of it is that these people are not as qualified as they should be. This sends an interesting message to athletes. 'Put on our jersey, represent our school, and the Island but whatever you do, don't get hurt.' And that is for the sports lucky enough to get a trainer. Some teams get sent out without them. This problem could be remedied by hiring a certified trainer. After all, it should be considered, in this day and age, part of

the cost of a sport. It also shows the athletes that the Department, and indeed the University, cares about their Varsity teams. It may not seem like much that a basketball player has to tape his own ankles before games, but we are the only school that operates this way. As a veteran of the hockey program put it, "It is not so much embarrassing as it is dangerous."

#### 2) Market the Team in and

#### Around Campus Aggressively using simple solutions like promotions at the Barn on the day of games

Athletes seem to agree that the way teams are marketed (both on campus and in the community) is poor. Most advertising can be found in the Field House. Targeting people who probably already know that an event is happening seems to be a waste of time and effort. Postering in the halls of the many buildings on campus also seems ineffectual. As a member of the basketball program put it, "There is no internal promotion on campus, except maybe fliers on the wall, that nobody sees, and they get old, and they are not taken down."

Perhaps a solution would be to make a space on the walls at UPEI, even a glass enclosed case, that is used only for promotional material for sports. By creating a greater awareness of activities, the athletes hoped to get better crowds out (which would subsequently inspire their performance). How to do this raised some interesting suggestions. The most attractive would be to see the Barn holding some events before games. This is NOT advocating that fans go to the game completely drunk. What we are advocating is making it a social event attractive to students. Drinking and sports have been together almost as long as ham and cheese. We are not asking for a

liquor concession (although that would be great) at the game but just a realization that it (drinking) is a part of Varsity sports on campuses throughout the country. If one is worried about it getting too ugly, just corner the fans into one rabid section and surround them with security. (As was done with the much missed "Cage Crew"). Improving awareness could be done at a relatively low cost: Something as simple as looking for students to help promote. These students could be compensated with free tickets to events at the Field House or Barn. Maybe even something as simple as a few free drinks at the Barn. One way or another, it is essential to get the students involved in the promotion on campus. Off campus is a different story. It is one of the fundamental jobs of the AD to promote sports. Avenues exist (newspaper, radio, TV) but links have to be reestablished here as they seem to have become frayed. Improvements in this area will go a long way to improving game performance. The Cadre receives little or no promotional material from the AD and that which we do get we ask for ourselves. This office, the student newspaper office, should be flooded with upcoming game notes, player profiles, and other assorted Panther propaganda which, frankly, we are not seeing. And they are 200 feet from us.

#### 3) Take Better Care of Venues/Playing Fields: