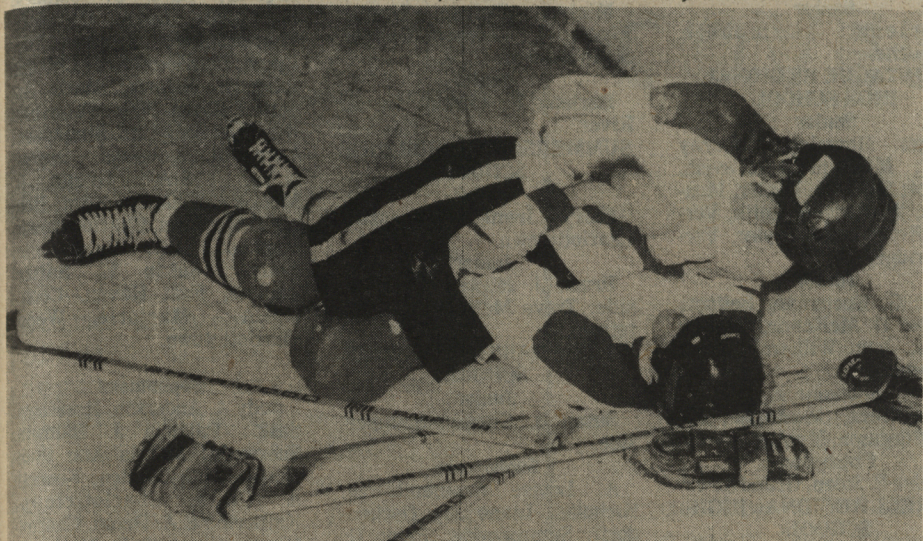


VIOLENCE PLAGUES UPEI INTRAMURALS

VIOLENCE IN THE INTRAMURAL HOCKEY LEAGUE
By the Concerned Students Committee

Sometimes I wonder if our world is increasingly becoming an inhumane place to live. You can pick up the newspaper any day of the week and be sure to read about someone killed in a shoot out, taken hostage, or injured in a guerrilla warfare incident. These are very extreme situations, but two recent examples (Iranian Crisis and Afghanistan invasion) can tell us there is more to come. Here on the campus we are experiencing unwanted trouble. The unwanted trouble is violence in the Men's Intramural Hockey League (IHL).

The word "violence" is defined in Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 15th Edition, to mean



an exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse. To get a full comprehension of the problem it is best to give a brief background on the IHL. Three years ago when I entered UPEI as a Freshman there were only four teams participating. The involvement on the part of the players was consistent, and therefore few games were cancelled. Our team saw playing as a great pastime, and we enjoyed ourselves very much.

The toughies at the time were the Bishara brothers who loved to play the sport and also delivered some good solid hits. I remember when Normie Bishara and I got into a difference of opinion and began fighting. Well, I tell ya, Normie, having the weight and strength advantage over me, wrestled me to the ice and began trying to rip my cheek off. His tactic was placing his thumb inside my mouth then applying pressure to the right side cheek. Luckily, the referee came in at the right moment, for I think Normie would have finished the job. Afterward, we had a few laughs and there were no repeated incidents. To sum up the year, there was lots of fun and

enjoyment experienced by the players.

The next year, matters began to get a little more serious. Team membership rose to six. More teams meant more players (most of whom were competitors). I am not saying this was bad, but the league started losing the fun which was so apparent the preceding year.

During the regular season rough play was minimal. When the playoffs arrived it seemed as though a complete transformation occurred among some players. This minority was out to beat up any player who would hinder his team's chances of winning. The referees on hand tried their best to do a good job.

This year the head hunters are working at maximum capacity during the regular season and putting in overtime in the playoffs. The Goon squad I speak of constitutes only a minority (about 10%) who love to break a man up and then play the puck. It appears as though they possess a killer instinct, and this is what hurts the IHL's image.

From the outset of hockey in the Fall, the league has received good coverage from the SUN. The concept of reporting weekly action was that of Commissioner Mulligan. He thought more membership could be stimulated and enthusiasm kept strong among players. Comparing this to other intramural activities, I feel we gained much recognition from students outside of the sport.

I bring the above to your attention because I and a senior official in the Athletic Department suspect the root of the problem stems from the weekly column. Our suspicion was aroused by the reactions of a few, who belong to the minority, on the issue. We get the feeling they love to see the problem becoming so serious that it must be publicized. They would then have something to talk or brag about. I consider their attitude very naive for students attending university.

As we progressed into second semester matters appeared to be getting worse. The concept of going after the man rather than the puck was very common. This eventually led to the strengthening of the "cheap shot syndrome" (the opponent returning a body check when your back is turned). This kind of retaliation is very prevalent among individuals who cannot keep the pace up the way everyone else can. He takes the man because his attack prevents his victim from moving the puck around him. Obviously all participants in the league are not slow skaters or awful in stick handling. Therefore, you can conceive that the Goons are a minority.

The other day I spoke to a fellow who plays for the Charlottetown Juvenile All-Stars. He has played a few games in the IHL and was quick to notice the abusive body checks. This did not bother him because the Juvenile League experiences the same difficulties. The Juvenile regulation requiring certain gear could be part of the problem. One piece of gear required is a wire screen face mask. Before it was introduced players used their shoulders for massive body checks. Since the mask's induction sore faces are common after games. Such occurs because the goons throw a fierce punch to the face while crunching an opponent into the boards.

I hope the Commissioner does not force students in the IHL to wear screen masks. We would see football games instead of hockey.

The Committee has come to the conclusion that the Commissioner should institute several new regulations. Since all of us play in the IHL we recommend:

1. two referees instead of one
2. players who wear prescription glasses being required to wear safety glasses
3. fighting resulting in suspensions
4. minimal fines for excessive abuse to Athletic Department equipment

Let's face it, the Freddie Shero days are gone, and I hope they never return. Here is the time to revitalize our strategies so we can enjoy the sport. Have a nice March break.

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