

# THE PROS

by JOHN CAIRNS

Each year professional sport sees a number of outstanding individual and team achievements. These often become league records. How significant are these records? Do they truly identify the outstanding performers? Many observers feel such things are given far too much attention. Is that true?

Hockey's leading record setters are currently the Montreal Canadiens. Along with recently establishing marks for most points, most wins, and fewest losses in a season, they have also had an unprecedented twenty-eight game unbeaten streak. In the playoffs further more, they have lost only three times in two years. Does this evidence make Montreal the best hockey team ever? Those who refuse to argue with the facts say yes, but others disagree. This latter group contends that the success of the Canadiens is merely a product of the times. They feel such achievements were impossible two decades ago when there were only six professional teams and each was competitive. Thus, the argument goes, the Habs are good, but they aren't necessarily the best.

The same applies to Gordie Howe and to Bobby Hull who both recently reached the one thousand goal plateau. Was Maurice Richard, who had barely half as many, not as good a scorer? Here too, comparisons through time are difficult because the game has changed. Goals come much more easily these days. More teams are playing more games than ever before, and defenses aren't as tight as in the past. While fifty goal scorers

were once rare, they are now common. Howe and Hull being the only thousand goal men doesn't mean their skills have never been equalled. In fact, they probably have been.

Records also cause confusion elsewhere. In baseball for instance, the identity of the home run king is clearly in debate. Babe Ruth was once the ultimate, but then his single season record succumbed to Roger Maris. Was there a new champion? Many denied it because Ruth had belted his total in fewer games. Technically though, Maris had broken the record.

Recent seasons have further complicated

things. Ruth's career mark of 714 homers fell to Henry Aaron who was subsequently overtaken by Sadaharu Oh in Japan. What does it all mean? Who is tops now? Many observers stuck stubbornly with Ruth, their contention being that he had played fewer games and used a heavier ball than his rivals. Others declared that a home run was a home run, and that Aaron had clearly outdone the Babe. North Americans tended to downplay Oh's feat as having been achieved in small Japanese ball parks against weak pitchers. The Japanese though, would certainly disagree. Only one thing is obvious. Several men can

argue a claim to the same title. The facts settle little.

Similar debates occur in football. In 1977 for instance, Edmonton star Dave Cutler won the Canadian Football League scoring title. His points total was so high, in fact, that it had never been matched either in Canada or in the United States. It was thus heralded as an all-pro record, but because Canadian football is very different from the American game, such status gave the feat more recognition than it deserved. With four downs the N.F.L. allows fewer field goal opportunities. Teams can usually go for the touchdown, making the league's kickers unlikely to match Cutler's scoring. Once again we fans must be wary of being deceived by the facts.

Luckily, a few sports officials recognize the flaws of pure statistics. The case of Jacques Demers, coach of the Cincinnati Stingers, is one example of this. With the team severely slumping he once offered to resign. Team-management, however, said that the problems weren't his fault and refused to accept his withdrawal. Though unusual, such an instance is definitely refreshing.

What we can conclude is simply this. Good records help coaches to keep their jobs, players to win trophies, and owners to sell tickets. Poor ones have the opposite effect. Both types can be deceiving because their surface implications aren't always valid. Every feat is eventually surpassed, but the new record holder isn't always better than the old one.



### LADIES BLOUSES

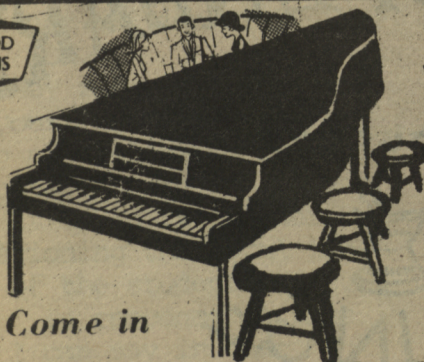
Ladies blouses styled by Spin and Hi Georgie. Made of 100% cotton and 65% cotton and 35% polyester in blouson, peasant, and Big Big.....17.00 to 25.00

### LADIES T-SHIRTS

Ladies T-shirts styled from 100% cotton. This comfortable T-shirt is completely washable, and is available in round neck, cap short and long sleeves. Sizes S, M, and L. Colors yellow, light blue, navy and beige..... 8.00



RODD INNS



Come in after the game and relax, enjoy yourself Gather around & sing your old favorites

## Page 1 Lounge

Island's Only Piano Bar

The Rodd Motor Inn

Call 894-8566



189 KENT STREET CHARLOTTETOWN, P.E.I.

Phone 894-4291

### STEAK ROOM

11:30 A.M. - 7:00 P.M.

MONDAY TO FRIDAY

FEATURING 8 oz. SIRLOIN STEAK 2.95 AND

OUR SMOKED MEAT ON RYE PLATTER 1.65 (A Dinner in itself)

### DISCOTHEQUE NIGHTLY

9 P.M. - 1 A.M.

QUADRAPHONIC SOUND

Tues, U.P.E.I. nite 'Specials'

THE "INN OUT OF THE SUN" GAMING ROOM

11-7 MONDAY to SATURDAY

POOL BILLIARDS