

# Winter Sports Lacking at UPEI

By John Sutton

The combined performances of our winter sports teams here at UPEI can be politely described as being far less than impressive. In total, these four teams (Mens and Women's Basketball, Women's Volleyball, Men's Hockey) compiled an astounding record of 18 wins and 63 losses: hardly cause for celebration.

Three of the four teams (hockey and both basketball teams) ended their respective seasons in last place in their divisions. The volleyball team barely managed to avoid being mired in the basement. It must be noted that the Men's Basketball team narrowly missed the Atlantic University Sport (AUS) play-offs after suffering a heartbreaking loss to UNB in the team's second last game of the season. Apart from their minuscule degree of success the winter sports season amounted to nothing short of disastrous.

Before I get too far into the various possible causes of this debacle let me take a moment to acknowledge the efforts of a small

group of student/athletes who managed to enjoy successful individual seasons.

Chad Spurr, in his first season with the men's hockey team, absolutely tore the AUS apart, leading the conference in scoring (41 points) and basically making a fool of every defenceman in the league. Spurr oozes talent. His innate passing ability, coupled with a sniper's eye for the net and overall feel for the game, make him a devastating offensive threat.

Immediately following his season with the Panthers, Spurr was chosen to represent Canada at the World University Games where he narrowly missed leading his squad to a gold medal. As reward for his fine season he was selected to the AUS all-star team and was also named conference rookie of the year. Upon returning to UPEI following his stint with Team Canada Spurr, along with teammate Dan Passero, signed with the Indianapolis Ice of the semi-pro Central Hockey League.

Other athletic stand-outs

included Kate Ellis of the women's basketball team.

Ellis represents the epitome of hard work and consistency and was rewarded for her fine season, probably her last in a Panther uniform, by being named to the AUS conference all-star team. Perhaps even more impressive is the fact that Ellis is also one of the finest student/athletes in the entire country.

As well, Jim Morris of the men's hoops squad was named a conference all-star after finishing second in conference scoring. Combined, these three athletes constitute the sum total of our school's success during the winter sports season.

Perhaps most puzzling with regards to this lack of athletic success is the fact that nobody seems too concerned with what's going on. UPEI's overall athletic performance has been in steady decline over the past five to seven years, yet nothing is ever said about it. This embarrassing fact is swept under the rug and our university, as

a whole, instead concentrates on celebrating the accolades of individuals. Let me clarify one simple fact: individual success doesn't constitute a successful athletic program. Unlike the formidable UPEI teams of the late 80's and early 90's, our athletic program has collectively become the doormat of the AUS. How did this happen?

Let's start at the top. The main focus of our athletic program has been geared towards developing closer ties with, and assuming a more active role within the community. Fine, that's a very noble aim.

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