

Sports

Panthers' Effort Tarnished by CIAU

by Jason Martell

Was Sunday evening when the UPEI Panthers men's basketball team headed back to the Island after dropping a 98-95 double OT decision to the Dalhousie Tigers in the final game of the AUAA championship.

Although the loss was a tough one to take, the players and coaching staff were able to take pride in their effort on the weekend. However, it made the loss hurt a little bit more when it was announced that the Acadia Axemen would go to Halifax as one of the two CIAU wild card teams.

The Panthers downed Acadia 73-71 in a thrilling semi-final which should have sent the Axemen packing until the 1996-97 season but once again, the CIAU selection committee snubbed the Panthers, the university, and the entire province.

It is the second time in three years that the UPEI program has been blindsided by the wildcard selection committee. In the 1993-94 season, the Panthers destroyed the Saint Mary's Huskies by 22 points in the AUAA semi-final only to see a wildcard go to the Halifax-based school. The reason then was economics as the committee stated that having SMU in the national tournament would put more fans in the seats. When Acadia was announced as a wildcard last week, the committee said their entry would generate another 40,000 dollars in ticket sales. The decision to allow any other AUAA team (especially when Halifax is already represented by Dalhousie) into the tournament over the Panthers is simply unjustifiable.

It seems very clear to me that if economics are going to give the teams from Nova Scotia more pull in the wildcard race than UPEI, UNB, or

Memorial, then it is time to change one of two things. The CIAU can move to eliminate the wildcard spots and run the tournament with a total of six teams like the AUAA does, or they can move the tournament to a location where money isn't going to be a factor. I'm sure that it wouldn't be too tough to sell the CIAUs to Hamilton, Toronto, Ottawa, or Vancouver.

If you made the trip to Halifax for the AUAA's you witnessed some of the best basketball played in years, and you probably also realize that Acadia doesn't deserve to be there for the nationals. You probably also realize that until we get a 10,000 seat arena and host the event, we'll never see a non-Nova Scotia team get a wildcard berth.

Mark your calanders and set aside April 1 to join the UPEI recreation department in Recreation Appreciation Night at the Tradewinds. Intramural teams get their bonds back and there will be drink tickets and specials galore. Join us there to catch the final game of the NCAA basketball Final Four.

Justice Served: Penalties Issued in Hockey Scandal

by Amy Gallan

On February 24, 1996, certain members of the University of Moncton Blue Eagles hockey team were involved in a violent incident against referee Brian Carragher. On March 12, 1996 the Atlantic Universities Athletic Association (AUAA) released information concerning the punishment of those players involved.

After the incident a Referee's Report was completed which advised penalties. Under the rules of the Canadian Hockey Association and the Canadian Inter-University Athletic Union (CIAU), Don Wells -- the Hockey Chairperson for the AUAA -- is designated as the person to make the initial decisions concerning sanctions which flow from the Referee's Report.

Peter Belliveau, coach of the Blue Eagles, received a gross misconduct penalty; he was given a five game suspension. Pierre Gagnon, goalie, was given a match penalty and given a two year suspension commencing February 24, 1996. Mathieu Bibeau and Franz Bergevin-Jean were also given match penalties, and both were given a five year suspension commencing February 24, 1996.

The conduct by Peter Belliveau which gave rise to the gross misconduct penalty arose from his verbal statements to the referee at the end of the game. This behaviour is inappropriate and inconsistent with the duties of a coach. The suspension of five games is consistent with the sanctions which have been imposed previously for equivalent behaviour.

The penalty against Pierre Gagnon arose from his physical contact with the

referee at the conclusion of the game. The designation of a match penalty indicates that it was a severe offence. However, there are various categories of match penalties and the match penalty assessed to Pierre Gagnon was not of the most serious kind. The sanction imposed must serve as a deterrent for the future and should be in line with sanctions which have been assessed to other individuals in the past. The AUAA says that, "Based on the circumstances, a suspension of two years from amateur hockey play from the date of the incident is appropriate."

Mathieu Bibeau and Franz Bergevin-Jean were assessed match penalties of the most serious nature. Suspension for five years from the date of the incident have been imposed. Five years is generally considered to be the jurisdictional boundary of the AUAA. Amateur athletes are generally eligible for participation in university sports for five years and this is considered to be a guideline for the length of the suspension. In addition, a five year suspension was imposed previously in another sport for violence against the referee. The AUAA said that "Taking into account these jurisdictional issues and the previous precedents, it was considered that a five year suspension was appropriate."

In addition to the Referee's Report, a formal complaint from UPEI was issued against certain members of the Moncton Blue Eagles on March 1, 1996. This complaint is being processed by the AUAA and any sanctions which flow from that process will be announced in the future when they are imposed.



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