

# sports time out

by John Neville

## THE HABS AND THE HAB NOTS

Believe it or not the National Hockey League is into its new season. It seems like only yesterday that the Montreal Canadiens won their third Stanley Cup in a row.

Looking ahead to this year's action, I think there will be a number of pleasant surprises in store for the interested hockey fan.

The joining of the Cleveland Barons with the Minnesota North Stars should provide Minnesota with a very capable hockey team. Rogie Vachon's move to Detroit will certainly improve the chances of the Motor City team. Here is a breakdown as to how this writer sees the upcoming season.

### ADAMS DIVISION

There will be no change here as the Boston Bruins should win it handily. The loss of Gregg Sheppard will hurt but the Bruins may have the top coach in the league in Don Cherry and all kinds of talent to win. Look for Toronto to finish second. Roger Neilson just briefly showed his coaching ability last year. The addition of Dave Burrows should secure the defence and the Leafs have the game's top center in Daryll Sittler. Minnesota will be much improved and will edge out Buffalo for third. The Sabres are hurting and Perrault can do only so much.

### PATRICK DIVISION

Without a doubt this division will be the tightest of them all. The Islanders should bounce back from their loss to Toronto in last year's playoffs. With good strong goaltending and solid coaching, the Islanders will be the team at the top. The Atlanta Flames will be the surprise in the Patrick. They are explosive and with Dan Bouchard holding the hot hand in the nets, look for Omni fans to have lots to cheer about. The Rangers and the Flyers will fight it out for the last two spots. Sherp and the Swedes should

help the Rangers but God knows they need help. The Flyers have lost a lot and Bobby Clarke can't lead what's left.

### SMYTHE DIVISION

Traditionally the weakest division and everything points to more of the same. Chicago will win this division easily and attendance will be back to 16,666 for the Black Hawk home games. Although the Hawks did not sparkle last year, they still have one of the game's top goalies and have added some quality forwards through the draft. However, their biggest addition and one that all hockey fans are happy to see is the return of the KING - BOBBY ORR. Assuming all things remain constant, the return of Orr, even on one leg, is worth ten

games to the Black Hawks. St. Louis, Colorado and Vancouver follow well behind and when you are as bad as they are there is no way of telling who will beat who.

### NORRIS DIVISION

This one anybody could pick. The Montreal Canadiens by about 40 points. The loss of Bill Nyrop will hurt, but Brian Engblom, Lupien and young Langway should easily fill the gap. Up front look out. Guy Lafleur returns better than ever along with Shutt, Lemaire, Gainey, et al. Pierre Larouche will be in his first full season along with a more confident Pierre Mondou. Mark Napier joins the Habs from the WHA and look for 30 or more goals from this slick winger. All in all, the rest of the league plays for second.

Detroit should be easily the second spot winners. Rogie Vachon gives them perhaps the top goalie in the league along with an experienced Reed Larson, Greg Joly and Terry Harper on defence. Willie Huber, their top draft pick will fill out the most promising defence in the League. Up front, McCourt leads the way and the Motor City will have its best year since 1966. Pittsburg should finish third with L.A. and Washington bringing up the rear.

Overall the Canadians will repeat as league champions and Stanley Cup winners barring any unexpected plane crashes. Boston should be close as will the Islanders, Leafs, Flames, Red Wings and Black Hawks. Buffalo and Philadelphia will be the big disappointments while Detroit, Atlanta and Chicago will improve the most. Individually, look for Lafleur to lose the scoring title and for Robinson to win the Norris. Dryden will repeat with the Vezina while Sittler, if healthy, will win the Hart.

### PANTHER DROPPINGS

Our footballers are home to stay and will play host to U.N.B. Saturday at MacAdam Field. Their record is 2-3 but at 4:00 Saturday it will be 3-3. Take the locals by more than two converted touchdowns.

Saturday night at CDP the finals of the harness racing championships for UPEI will be held. Hopefully they will perform better than this writer did last Saturday when he pulled up the rear.

Congratulations to our field hockey players on their win last weekend.

The hockey Panthers are in training as are the

basketball Panthers. Coaches Hynes and Feighery are looking forward to good seasons.

The basketballers will head to Maine shortly for their first tough competition while the pucksters will host St. F.X. on Nov. 4 & 5.

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