

# MULLIGAN ON THE UPS AND DOWNS

by John Cairns

Professional hockey has had its ups and downs in recent years. With expansion, rival leagues, inflated players' salaries, soaring ticket prices, and financially troubled teams, there have been almost as many low points as high ones. Fans have come to discuss these issues almost as much as they do goals, assists and saves.

Question: Would it have been good for hockey if the N.H.L. and W.H.A. had merged?

Coach Mulligan: Would it be good for hockey if the two leagues merged? No, what would be good for hockey would be if they went back to the best six teams, and then the teams that finished fifth and sixth in that league drop out and the teams in a B division that finished first and second move up. It would be the same as they have in soccer over in England and in Europe. That is the only thing that would be good for hockey. Right now it's not worth even watching it on television.

Question: Will the W.H.A. fold soon?

Coach Mulligan: I don't know where they're getting the money to go this long. You know, it's amazing how they can do it. I think there is only two teams in the league that are drawing. One is Quebec City and they only hold anywhere from ten to twelve thousand people in that rink unless they built it up in the last couple of years. I really don't know how they're doing it. They're running in the red every day. It's amazing.

Question: How close to parity is the W.H.A. with the N.H.L.?

Coach Mulligan: How close is buzzer hockey to the intramural hockey? You can fall asleep watching a W.H.A. game. I went to one in San Diego in the playoffs and I watched a period. That was after paying \$7.50 a ticket. One team just gets the puck while the other goes back in their own end to wait for them to come up. Then they just shift it around. There is no comparison whatever with the N.H.L.

Question: Would you pick

an all-star team from among the currently active players?

Coach Mulligan: The best six? Lafleur on right, Ratelle at center, and on left wing Shutt comes to mind because of his sixty goals last year. I would have to go with Shutt from last year. It may change this year. On defense I would have to go with Brad Park and Guy Lapointe. In nets I'd take Vachon.

Question: How about an all-time team?

Coach Mulligan: Jean Beliveau, Gordie Howe and Bobby Hull, Doug Harvey and Terry Sawchuk.

Question: Do you foresee a true world championship being introduced soon where the best team from the N.H.L. and the W.H.A. plays the champions of Europe?

Coach Mulligan: In a league or in a playoff? I could see it in a playoff because it wouldn't interfere with the N.H.L. schedule. There is no way the owners are going to cough up all that money and lose all that time, you know, on home gates plus concessions, for international league play. They just won't allow it. See, the owners right now are out to make money, and it wouldn't agree with their

policy because they stick together pretty closely.

Question: So the only true world championship would be in a playoff?

Coach Mulligan: Right, only in a playoff.

Every hockey fan has an opinion about these issues. Those who watch the game are as much concerned for its well-being as those who are involved in it. Everyone has a set of answers to the problems.

Coach Mulligan's suggestion of two divisions based on the standings sounds like a good one. Without interdivisional play more games would finally be competitive. The power houses would have no opportunity to prey on the weaker squads. Fans would be able to anticipate exciting matches and the rinks would be filled. The seats would also be packed for every game of an international series for the Stanley Cup. If all this ever happened, most of the game's financial problems might be solved.

Merger, however, is probably a necessary step. Only with both major leagues under one head office, would co-operation be possible. Because the N.H.L. refused to adopt the W.H.A. last summer, the leagues are still fighting each other rather than working together for the good of hockey.

Whether the W.H.A. will fold has been asked ever since it began. It has been struggling financially right from the start. Even so, it has survived and will probably continue to be permanent. The W.H.A.'s effects would be felt for some time.

Parity between the two leagues is probably closer than many people think. It is likely that most of the W.H.A. teams could beat half the teams in the N.H.L. Arguments anyone?

No matter what controversy surrounds hockey, it is always interesting to rank the stars. Coach Mulligan picked an all-star team, so here is mine: Guy Lafleur, Bobby Clark and Steve Shutt up front, Larry Robinson and Borje Salming at the blueline, and Ken Dryden in goal. I won't pick an all-time team. If I did, my choice for netminder might seem biased.



**Page 1  
Lounge**

**Island's Only Piano Bar**

**The  
Rodd Motor  
Inn**

**Call 894-8566**

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

## PIONEER®



**SX-550**  
AM/FM STEREO RECEIVER  
Continuous Power Output: 20W+20W (8Ω, 20-20,000Hz, both channels driven, T.H.D. 0.3%) FM Sensitivity (IHF): Mono: 11.2dBf (2.0μV) Dimensions: 17 1/8" (W) x 5 1/8" (H) x 12 3/32" (D) Weight: 20lb. 12oz.

**\$359.95**



**PL-115D**  
AUTO-RETURN BELT DRIVE  
TURNTABLE  
Motor: 4-pole synchronous motor  
Speeds: 33 1/3, 45 rpm Wow & Flutter: 0.07% (WRMS) S/N Ratio: 63dB (DIN B) Dimensions: 17 1/8" (W) x 6 1/4" (H) x 14 1/4" (D) Weight: 13lb. 4oz.

**\$174.95**

at  
**ISLAND RADIO CENTER**  
10 Queen St.



**HMP-60**  
4-WAY 4-SPEAKER SYSTEM  
Enclosure: Bass reflex type Speakers: 10" carbon fiber blended cone woofer, 3 1/8" cone midrange, 1 2/32" cone tweeter, High polymer molecular supertweeter Rated Input Power: 30W Recommended Power Range of Amplifiers: 10-120W Dimensions: 13 25/32" (W) x 24" (H) x 12 1/8" (D) Weight: 38lb. 8oz.

**\$299.95 each**

For You this  
**CHRISTMAS, ISLAND RADIO CENTER**  
Presents a PIONEER System:  
AM/FM STEREO RECEIVER  
TURNTABLE  
and 2 SPEAKERS  
REGULARLY \$ 1134.80  
FOR 999.95  
just say you're from U.P.E.I.  
and show this advertisement

Merry  
Christmas