

SPORTS

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Sports Editor



Canadian Women Facing Kazakhstan in Round One

The first round of the World Women's Hockey Championship, held in Sweden, will see Canada face Kazakhstan, in what is widely touted to be an incredible mismatch. In eight World Championship appearances, Canada has never failed to attain gold, whereas Kazakhstan was outscored 32-2 in their only appearance in the tournament.

The game will be played on Sunday, at 2pm Eastern.

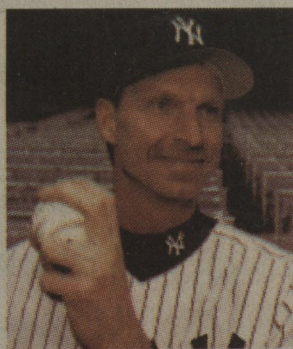
The Canadians are expecting competition to arrive primarily from their annual rivals the Americans, but are also anticipating a strong Swedish team. Hockey mad Sweden devoted five sports pages in the capital's newspaper to cover the tournament.

Sweden is known on the international stage for its stars in the NHL, which include Petr Forsberg, Markus Naslund, Daniel Alfredsson, and Mats Sundin. The women's team is looking to gain recognition at the WWHC for the first time.

A Rivalry Renewed

The New York Yankees has something to prove when they face the Boston Red Sox on opening day. For those who are unable to recall, the Red Sox became the first team in baseball history to return from a 3-0 series deficit to take a seven game series and the pennant last fall, and in doing so, broke the 86-year curse of the Bambino. It was the Red Sox first World Series win since 1919.

Opening day will see the newly acquired Yankee Randy Johnson, a six foot ten pitching powerhouse, face off against former Yankee David Wells. It is only the second time in MLB history that two pitchers who are forty years or older have faced each other.



Baseball fans can expect a very different game than was seen in the playoffs last fall. The Red Sox have surrendered Orlando Cabrera, Pedro Martinez, and Derek Lowe, whereas the Yankees have rid themselves of Javier Vazquez, Jon Lieber and Orlando Hernandez. The two opening day pitchers are both welcome off-season additions to the teams.

Curt Schilling, a hero of last years playoffs for the Red Sox, will not start due to an ankle injury he sustained in autumn. Schilling expects to make his return April 13th against – you guessed it – the Yankees.

Awards Given to UPEI Athletes

The UPEI outstanding male and female athlete awards were given out on Friday, and it seems no one was surprised except for the recipients themselves. Male co-winners were Sherone Edwards and Joel Ward, for basketball and hockey, respectively; and the sole female recipient was Jessica MacDonald, a star rugby centre.

MacDonald received awards at both the national and regional levels, with an All-Canadian selection in addition to an AUS all-star calling. The Stratford native led UPEI to its first appearance in the CIS rugby finals at McGill after a 5-3 regular season record.

Edwards was the only player in the AUS to top 400 points and was named all Canadian, AUS player of the year, and also garnered a first team all star selection.

Ward, who led the AUS in scoring and was second nationally with 44 pts, also received two sportsmanship awards as well as All-star and All-Canadian nods in addition to the award he shared on Friday.

Bizarre Changes Could Be Ahead for NHL

An increase in scoring seems to be on the agenda no matter the outcome of the NHL lockout. This past week, discussion seemed to focus on the increase in size of the nets. A peculiar idea for the increase included bending the posts out to create an almost circular shape, although the most embraced idea involved extending the lengths of the posts. Most, including this reporter, argue that scoring should be improved through several other drastic measures, before increasing the size of the nets, which has not changed since 37 AD, when a Viking named Bjorn Forkbeard carved them from bone. This model can still be seen in use in an arena in upper Latvia.

Here are some other, better ideas to improve scoring:

- 1) Remove the red line. Is this so difficult? Not only would the league save on red paint, but it would also open up the rink to longer, leading passes which would allow players like Pavel Bure to score again. On second thought, don't count on it. But I think Ilya Kovalchuk could challenge sixty goals in season if the center line was removed.
- 2) Widen the size of the rinks. Now maybe this one is more costly, but just remove the first three rows of seats in the arenas and widen the ice surface. This would allow more skillful players to make use of their talents, and would give fans in Phoenix three less rows not to fill.
- 3) Cut down on the clutching and grabbing. It's time the league really cracked down on this, like last year, and the year before, and... nevermind.
- 4) Make goalie equipment smaller. Patrick Roy is the perfect example of the increase in the size of goalie equipment in the last few decades. Roy started his career a skinny kid who looked like he was drowning in his Habs jersey (he eventually did, but it was years later against the Red Wings) to ending his career looking like the Michelin Man in a Colorado sweater. Jean-Sebastien Giguere, Mikka Kiprusoff, Nikolai Khabibulin – how good would these guys be after restrictions were in place? I'd say pretty damn good, with the exception of Giguere. Bad examples.
- 5) Give Mark Recchi more playing time. Seriously, this guy had more points than Jarome Iginla last year (75 to 73). Sure, Iginla was hurt, but Recchi is almost 37. How come no one else agrees with me that this guy is great?

Those are my suggestions for now, but in three weeks I will be offering the league a proposal which involves the removal of goalie masks to increase puck fear, which I imagine will have a massive impact on scoring per game.