

Another low cost area for potential improvement is in venues and playing fields. It was interesting to learn that the field hockey field was in such atrocious condition that other schools refused to play on it for fear of injury. As a veteran of the team stated: *"For 3 years we asked for new bleachers, they were a hazard, no one could sit on them, then we got new bleachers and our field was in such horrible condition we couldn't play there... other teams wouldn't play on our field because the snow plow had driven over it and there was huge tire marks down the middle of it"*

What a nice perception those off island teams must have of UPEI. Frankly, it is embarrassing and sends a message to players that 'you represent us but don't expect us to provide you with the most basic element, a proper field.' (Oh yeah, and don't get hurt because you have no trainer.) Remediating it is a matter of showing care. Stop plowing it, start cutting the grass, and maybe roll it once in awhile. Not much to ask of maintenance and not much additional cost. It is about respecting the space that we see as our athletic domains, if we as a school, and the AD in general do not, well then you will have no team afraid or even slightly intimidated to play here, which, sadly, is the current state of affairs.

It was also interesting to learn that the two basketball teams rarely get to practice on their own

home court. The AD has determined that it is more important to get a few more dollars out of a facility than have a team feel comfortable on their own home court. The home team now must get used to *their own* venue at the same time as the opponents. This would cost some money in terms of lost revenues the gym might produce but it returns to the basic change in philosophy that is cited by a member of the basketball program, *"They (the AD) care more about the perception in the community than they do about winning."*

It is certainly not a bad thing to be seen as pillars of the community and all the athletes gathered agreed that this is UPEI's strong point, what with the various ventures into schools for social programs, but this must be tempered (tempered, at the very least) by a desire to win.

Another request that came up was for the hockey team to play more games on campus. That ugly rink probably has the most character on campus. Fans are on top of the game and the boards, literally, make it a hazard to go into the corners. How much would other schools dread playing in there? And that is what you want - fear. The place itself is cold which means as a spectator, either get into it or get out with the flu. Temperature is quite conducive to cheering. The cost? Less rent paid to the Civic Centre and some saving by playing at home. Oh yeah, the school

probably doesn't own it anymore. We have neither the time, space, or inclination to begin describing how smart a move we think that was. (Such astute business decisions from a school that prides itself on its BBA). One way or another, it costs a lot less to rent ice at UPEI than at the Civic Centre.

#### 4) Update Uniforms/ Equipment:

The school takes care of its high profile athletes but those that are not in the larger programs are in an unfortunate position. Players are responsible for paying for their own equipment. To an athlete, all agreed that if you represent the school then the school should provide the basic equipment to



play the sport. The worst thing to discover was that the field hockey team were outfitted in men's XL uniforms. If you dress your players like clowns, expect other teams to treat them like clowns. Remediating this is as simple as caring about what your athletes wear. It is not reasonable to expect to wait for the opening day lineup to order uniforms but at least be aware who they are for. No real change in cost here except caring. It is, again, about

respect and concern for the social, and physical welfare of your athletes that is, apparently, not being shown. Once this respect is felt by the athletes they cannot help but feel a sense of pride in the jersey they are wearing. A member of the basketball team described the feeling of putting on the Panther jersey for the first time, and the chills that came with it. Those chills are gone now, and so, it would seem is the pride.

#### 5) Hire Full Time Coaches:

Coaching at UPEI is done either on a voluntary basis or paid in a part time manner. These people provide the most essential commodity of all - their

that came out was the utilizing of resources that presently exist. The existing structure in the AD has more than enough room to provide coaches with the necessary support. The coaches receive respect from their players in so much as the players know that these people are essentially working two full time jobs. As a basketball team member put it: *"The biggest problem is the lack of full time coaches, I know our hockey teams is probably the only one in the country that has a part-time coach. In basketball, UPEI and Memorial are the only schools without a full time coach. How can you expect to win, to compete when the coaches have full-time jobs, outside the university? Because they [the coaches] can't put the same kind of time into coaching, and recruiting, they will eventually get burned out."*

Coaching at the Varsity level is about much more than game control. It is about recruiting, being a prominent member of the high school athletic community and being available for players outside the allotted practice times. A four year starter on the St. Francis Xavier football team, and now a student at UPEI, was astounded at the lack of full time coaches:

*"The best part, at X, was going to see the coaches on off days,*

**Forum**  
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