

# Editorial

*The Opinions expressed in this column do not necessarily reflect those of the staff of this production, or of the Student Union.*

Ladies and gentlemen... Eric Lindros has left the building. Actually, as I write this he's been gone for a few days, and by the time you read this it will have been a week since he and his fellow Philadelphia Flyers left the Island after attending their annual training camp here this year. The publicity surrounding their visit from beginning to end was the closest thing P.E.I.'s seen to a full-blown media circus in some time, and one can't help but wonder precisely what all the fuss was about. Why "Flyermania"?

The most obvious answer to that question is the aforementioned Eric Lindros, widely regarded as the most promising new player in the NHL, with the potential to become the league's next superstar. For over a year there had been heated debate and speculation as to what team Lindros would join after he refused to work for the Quebec Nordiques team that drafted him. That debate climaxed only recently when the Flyers signed Lindros by trading a substantial chunk of their team's players and resources to do it, a huge leap of faith considering that the fledgling superstar has yet to even play in an NHL game! There are zamboni drivers with more ice time than this kid, but the fans are already lining up by the hundreds to see him... not only to see him play but just to see him, crowding him for autographs and swarming onto the golf course like mosquitos so they could watch a hockey player play golf; and when he and the Flyers were actually playing hockey, the faithful poured into the pews of the arena to watch the players practice, to say nothing of the throngs who turned up for the team's inter-squad game (a game, incidentally, which Eric's side lost). Kids gleefully told reporters of how they were skipping school for these spectacles, not surprising since more than a few adults set an example by skipping work for the occasion. You could slap "Chiquita" stickers on these people and sell them at fruitstands judging by these displays, putting their lives on hold to watch one would-be superstar and his teammates practice for a few days. There must be more at work here than curiosity about a bunch of hot shot athletes "from away"; and as near as one can figure this is just a symptom of a larger Canadian obsession: Canadians will do anything for hockey.

It's strange but true. Hockey is inexplicably entrenched in the Canadian psyche. We're often accused by ourselves of being apathetic and unenthusiastic people given out rather modest and confused expressions of patriotism, apparently unable to make up our minds on what our country is, let alone what we want; but one thing virtually all Canadians agree upon is that we love hockey. If you want to influence our American neighbours, you sway them with talk of patriotism and anything you can drape in the red, white and blue. If you want to mesmerize a Canadian all you have to do is drop a puck in front of him or her and their eyes glass over

like a landed fish. Their mouths water at the sight of the Stanley Cup. They stay up late to watch the play-offs. They actually listen to commentaries by Don Cherry (a sure sign of mental distortion).

Is there anything wrong with this? of course not (well, the jury's still out on Don Cherry). Hockey's just a game, and Canadians have a lot of good, clean fun watching and playing it. Still, one can't help but marvel at the near religious zeal with which Canadians view hockey, and you wonder if all that raw enthusiasm could be channelled into constructive pursuits. If Joe Clark and the premiers laced up some skates and traded slapshots instead of slaps in the face, we may have worked out our constitutional differences a long time ago.

Sean McQuaid  
Editor, eh?

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