

Weekend preview

by Ike Ogosi

The men and women's volleyball teams, as well as the men's hockey team, entertain AUS opposition this coming weekend in the last phase of matches before the Christmas break.

Volleyball (M): Dalhousie @ UNB (Saturday, Nov. 26, 8pm)

The top two teams in the league go head-to-head in what promises to be a cracker of a contest. The Varsity Reds lost by three sets to nothing in the away fixture two weeks ago, and will be looking to excise a measure of payback this weekend. The Dalhousie Tigers finished top of the league last season, easily doubling second-place UNB's total points tally.

History doesn't lie in the Reds' favor, though, as they were blanked 3-0 three times last season, including twice in the AUS Championship final. UNB's best result against them was a 3-1 away loss. The stakes are high on this game because it would give UNB a psychological boost heading into the break to be level on points with Dalhousie (although the Tigers have a game in hand), especially considering that the first place team will host the AUS finals.

Volleyball (W): Dalhousie @ UNB (Saturday, Nov. 26, 6pm); Acadia @ UNB (Sunday, Nov. 27, 1pm)

The Reds will be looking to bounce back from their mauling at the Interlock Tournament last weekend, but the second-place Tigers won't be looking to do them any favors. UNB won 3-2 in the corresponding fixture last season, though they were later beaten 3-0 on the trip to Dalhousie. Acadia is hovering two places from bottom, but is only two points shy of UNB. A win for the Reds would be imperative to maintain the distance from the chasing pack and keep up with runaway leaders Saint Mary's, who are yet to lose six matches into the season. Acadia dealt UNB 3-1 losses home and away last season.

Hockey (M): UPEI @ UNB (Friday, Nov. 25, 7pm)

This boils down to the first team in the division against the basement side. This game is, on paper, a no-brainer, as UPEI has won only once in 13 games. The Reds triumphed 4-2 in PEI at the start of the month, and should be oozing confidence following last weekend's pulsating triumphs over second-place Acadia and mid-table Saint Mary's. UPEI split their four games with UNB last season, winning 5-2 at home and 4-2 at UNB before losing 2-1 at the Aitken Center and 4-1 at UPEI. The win will be important for the Reds to keep up their momentum, especially as they visit defending champions Moncton the following day. Moncton is four points adrift the leaders in fourth place.

Sports Shorts

Women's Volleyball: Interlock Tourney @ Moncton (Nov. 18-20)
UNB 1 vs. UQTR 3
UNB 0 Laval 3
UNB 0, Montreal 3
UNB 1 McGill 3
UNB 0 Sherbrooke 3

Men's Volleyball: Interlock Tournament @ Montreal (Nov. 18-20)
UNB 0 Montreal 3
UNB 0 Sherbrooke 3
UNB 0 Laval 3
UNB 3 McGill 0

Women's Basketball
Friday, Nov. 18
UNB 51 @ SMU 57
Saturday, Nov. 19
UNB 78 @ St. FX 64

Men's Basketball
Friday, Nov. 18
UNB 61 @ SMU 76
Saturday, Nov. 19
UNB 62 @ St. FX 71

Women's Hockey
Saturday, Nov. 19
Mt. A 2 @ UNB 2
Sunday, Nov. 20
SMU 5 @ UNB 1

Men's Hockey
Friday, Nov. 18
Acadia 6 @ UNB 8
SMU 3 @ UNB 5

Schedules:

Women's Hockey
Sunday, Nov. 27
UNB @ Moncton - 2pm

Men's Hockey
Friday, Nov. 25
UPEI @ UNB - 7pm
Saturday, Nov. 26
UNB @ Moncton - 7pm

Women's Basketball
Saturday, Nov. 26
UNB @ CBU - 6pm
Sunday, Nov. 27
UNB @ CBU - 1pm

Men's Basketball
Saturday, Nov. 26
UNB @ CBU - 8pm
Sunday, Nov. 27
UNB @ CBU - 3pm

Women's Volleyball
Saturday, Nov. 26
DAL @ UNB - 6pm
Sunday, Nov. 27
Acadia @ UNB - 1pm

Swimming: Double Meet @ Mt. A
Saturday, Nov. 26, 1pm

And now for something different: Manchester United and captain Roy Keane parted ways this week. It marked the end of a fruitful 12-year partnership that produced seven Premier League titles, two domestic doubles and a treble. The midfielder was the lynchpin of the side, but at 34, he is easily past his prime. It is the end of an era when Man U was the dominant force in English football. They haven't won the league in three seasons and last year went trophyless.

Crosby brings a fresh face to a new game

by Brendan Doyle

I've never been a big hockey fan. I used to watch games with my dad and my brother when I was younger, but never really followed a particular team or player.

The last time I watched hockey, Chris Chelios, Jeremy Ronick and Ed Belfour were all playing for the Chicago Blackhawks. Yeah, it was that long ago.

So why did I come back to hockey's sweet, tender embrace? Like the real die-hard fans out there, I too had grown disillusioned with the game. Gretzky was gone, Lemieux was on his last legs and Steve Yzerman got titanium knees. And then there was the trap. Hockey sucked.

Then a glorious and magical thing happened. Greedy players and greedy owners decided that they couldn't agree and suspended play for a whole season. Now, I'm sure many diehards were writhing in agony for about 12 months, but just think about it for a second: with one year off, the players and the owners had plenty of time to work out all the nasty elements of the game and introduce kick-ass new ones. No red line? Genius. No clutching and grabbing? Awesome. Those weird zones down by the goalie? That's kind of cool.

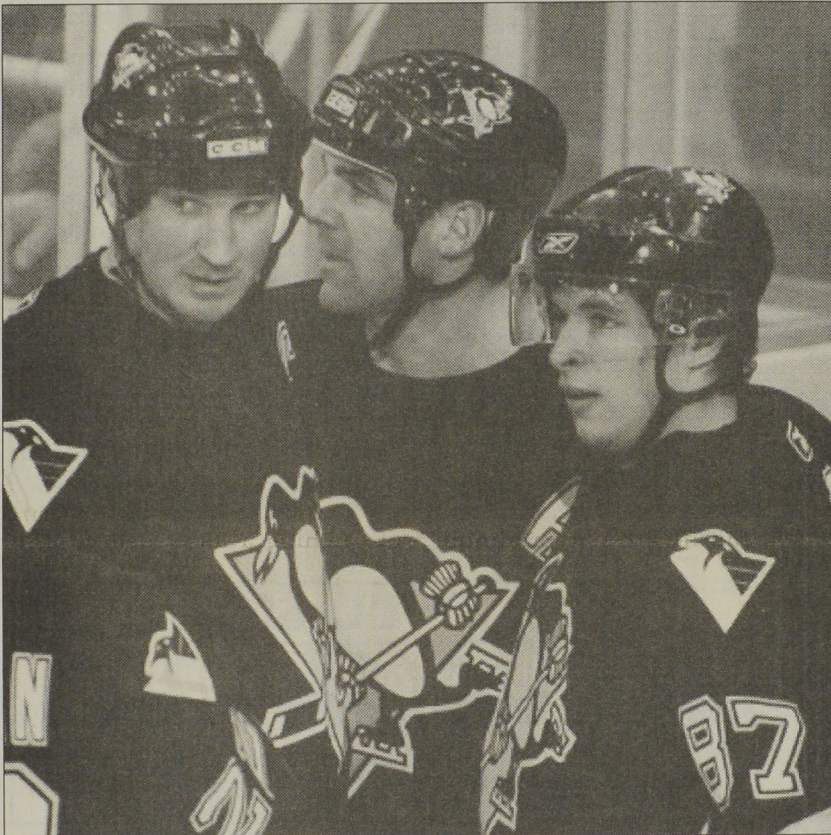
Shootouts? Fuck yeah. Salary cap? Hey, that's good for players, owners, and fans.

But the real thing that got me back into hockey was the plucky young Canadian playing in Pittsburgh. I'm sure many, many hockey pundits describe "Sid the Kid" in such glowing terms that readers could mistake him for the 9th wonder of the world or some manifestation of the divine. I don't think Sidney Crosby is the best thing since sliced bread, but I do think he's part of the reason that hockey is back on track. TSN's ratings are up 200 per cent. CBC is up by 30 per cent. Sid the Kid is a really amazing player.

Consider that his experience is measured in games, while his teammates' experience is measured in years. And he still shows them how it's done. Every game. Crosby currently sits with a comfortable 25 points in 21 games, well ahead of his teammates.

But Crosby is part of a larger trend that's starting to show: smaller, faster, more "finesse" players are taking the limelight off big hitters and more physical players. The game is faster and teams no longer rely on size to get the job done. Wicked goals are being scored every night; two years ago we'd be lucky to see a nice goal once a week.

If you want more proof, just check out the highlight reel on TSN, Sportscentre, or whatever channel you watch: Sid the Kid will be on it, making history.



The old guard (Lemieux, far left) and the new guard (Crosby, far right).

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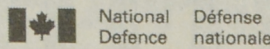
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