

Sheridan hosts volleyball championship

Sheridan College will host the 1987 Ontario Colleges Athletic Association (O.C.A.A.) women's volleyball championships at the Oakville Campus March 13 and 14.

Six top women's college teams featuring more than 90 athletes are expected to attend the two-day event.

Divisional team play will begin on Friday, March 13 from 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.

Championship rounds will be held on Saturday, March 14, beginning with the bronze medal matches at 3 p.m. The women's gold medal match will be held at 5 p.m.

Sheridan's 1986-87 women's volleyball team is ranked second in current O.C.A.A. standings, with a 12-2 record.

Tickets for each day of play at the J.M. Porter Athletic Recreation Centre (Oakville Campus) are \$3 for adults and \$2 for students.

Tickets are available at the door. For more information call 845-9430, ext. 453.

Gymnasts strut their stuff



Eight schools competed in an all-day invitational gymnastics meet at Georgetown District High School Friday. Seen here is one of the Rebels on the beam. The meet was

more of a practice and gave the girls an opportunity to get feedback from those judging the bars, beam, vault and floor exercises. (Herald photo)



Gymnasts from the Halton Hills Jills Gymnastics Club recreation program got a chance to show their skills Sunday at a demonstration at Georgetown District High School.

Seen here giving a little competitor a hand is coach Elaine Enwen. The gymnasts performed on the bars, beam, vault and floor. (Herald photo)

Howe finds something missing in today's professional hockey

Is the NHL caught in the grips of an identity crisis?

Perhaps "crisis" isn't the correct terminology, but according to a player who spent 20 years making his living at professional hockey, there's something missing today.

It's something that perhaps departed when the "Super Six" NHL teams were caught up in the throes of expansion.

Gordie Howe was taking a few moments to relax in a motel room at the Georgetown Motor Inn, between engagements.

It was the morning after he had participated in the NHL Oldtimers game at the Alcott Arena, a few minutes before he was to meet with students at Georgetown District High School, and just hours before he and wife Colleen would be guest speakers at the 10th Annual Hockey Heritage Award Dinner.

Howe has his personal feelings about the loss of identity that has apparently grasped the professional hockey world.

The players of yesteryear who wore helmets were in the minority. After all, this was a time when few goaltenders even wore masks.

Today, of course things are completely different. Few players in the NHL are seen playing without helmets, and many have gone the way of the half face shield.

Fans simply aren't getting a clear picture.

"You don't know if a player had red hair or no hair at all - like Carl Brewer," Howe said, referring to his opponent of the previous day, who went "topless" on more than one occasion during the exhibition outing.

Insurance-wise Howe

acknowledges there is little chance of times reverting to the way it was during his heydays with the Detroit Red Wings. They, of the old school, preferred to do without the "brain-bucket" for the most part.

The only solution, according to Howe may be to come up with a clear helmet. Of course, it's highly unlikely anyone will.

But helmets aren't the only thing taking away the identity of hockey players.

Buildings are becoming bigger, and the seating for fans is becoming further and further removed from the players' areas.

Recessed seating arrangements and controlled entrances and exits for the players have meant the teams are farther away from the spectators. Without a set of binoculars, it's virtually impossible to make out the features of players from many seats.

Howe remembers his days at the Olympia in Detroit, walking to and from the ice amidst throngs of admiring fans, waving pens and paper at the players.

Often, players did not emerge unscathed.

"We would have ink marks on our sweaters, and paper cuts on our hands. We'd sign until we were too tired to sign anymore. As far as I was concerned, that was part of what we were getting paid for."

Even when Howe was with the Houston Aeros of the World Hockey Association, the players would visit restaurants on a rotating basis and sign autographed pictures for fans.

Not only did it boost the restaurant's profile, but it added to the identification fans could make with the players.

Expansion in the NHL has had perhaps the most to do with taking away some of the identity of the league and its players.

Once, hometown fans would see opposing players as many as seven times over the course of the season. Today, other-division teams will only make token visits in a particular season.

There is little chance for fans to familiarize themselves with players, the way they once did, given the few occasions they actually get to see them perform.

It's an unfortunate situation, and one that is not likely to change.

At any rate, Howe feels the time will come when hockey will be without its "recognizable oldtimers".

And one would get the impression Howe was only half kidding at the Hockey Heritage Dinner, last Monday evening, when he told the audience the NHL should perhaps "take the helmets off to see who the real hockey players are."

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