

Ben Johnson should remain on the outside looking in

Erstwhile sprinter, Ben Johnson (made in Canada you say ... pity) is once again in the news so you know it must be spring.

Ah yes, spring. That time of year when the creaking of trees being buffeted by April winds is matched by the creaking in the joints of track and field athletes limbering-up after a long winter of repose.

Big Ben (the sprinter, not the world class jumper of the equestrian variety) will once again be welcomed by the international track and field fraternity in September after completion of a two-year suspension imposed by the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF) when a drug test revealed Johnson as a steroid user at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

He won't, however, be welcomed in England.

But to recap. Big Ben (the sprinter, not the horse) was going to carry the Maple Leaf standard to lofty heights never before attained by a Canadian sprinter, at the Seoul Olympics.

At the same time, he was going to put a soothing salve on Canada's innate sense of inferiority by vanquishing American Carl Lewis, the embodiment of all the ills that plague the 'United States of America.'

I mean, it was a given. Johnson had just set a new world record in the 100 metres in August, leading up to the Seoul Olympics and Canadians clustered around television sets wanting to be a part of the grand moment.

When Johnson did indeed defeat Lewis to win the Olympic gold medal in the 100 metre event, all Canada celebrated.

Our esteemed Prime Minister, 'Baffle Baloney' jumped on the Johnson bandwagon so fast, it almost toppled over.

In stentorian tones our leader hailed Johnson as a role model for Canadians and practically offered him the keys to the kingdom. (It was rumored he even offered Johnson the keys to Mila's shoe closet, although this could not be confirmed.)

When Big Ben (the sprinter, not the horse) failed the drug test that revealed steroid use, our esteemed leader almost tripped over his jaw in his haste to vacate the Johnson bandwagon.

Canada's then federal sports minister vowed to impose a lifetime ban on Johnson ever competing again for Canada. (It was even rumored that the locks to Mila's shoe closet were changed, although this could not be confirmed.)

In accordance with the association's policy, the IAAF imposed the two-year ban on Johnson, forbidding him from representing Canada and Canadian sports bureaucrats reluctantly followed suit. Apparently there was nothing to the rumor of firing squads rehearsing on Parliament Hill.

Colin Gibson
Sports Editor



"ASI SEE IT"

As he was beating a hasty retreat from Seoul, Johnson was heard mumbling something that sounded like "I never knowingly took no steroids" and a hue and cry was raised the length and breadth of our great land to find out where the steroids came from.

The Dubin inquiry, headed by Justice Charles Dubin, was established and our esteemed leader, 'Waffle Maloney' was heard mumbling in stentorian tones something like "We will find out who didn't knowingly take no steroids."

Looking sometimes as confused as one of J.R.R. Tolkien's hobbits, Justice Dubin headed the inquiry that dragged on for months, cost the Canadian taxpayers millions of dollars and for all intents and purposes, was a waste of time and money.

Johnson finally did admit taking steroids; over a long period of time. His coach, Charlie Francis, revealed that the drug culture in track and field was international in scope. The physician who supplied Johnson with the majority of steroids Jamie (John, Paul, George, Ringo - he went by a number of first names) Astaphan blinked his way through testimony that, if anything, provided comic relief rather than substance.

When prodded about the stockpile of steroids he kept in his Toronto office, Astaphan at first maintained they were for a friend of his who owned a farm and needed the steroids for sick animals, especially his horses.

Meanwhile, back to the ranch - er, inquiry.

The Dubin inquiry did reveal the insidious world-wide use of drugs in the international track and field community but other than that, was viewed by many as a charade instituted for political convenience to cover-up for embarrassed politicians in Ottawa who were leaving tire tracks on their wall-to-wall broadloomed floors in attempting to distance themselves from athletes, in general, and track and field athletes, in particular.

The three main conspirators in the Canadian steroid scandal got away with little more than slaps on the wrist.

Astaphan laughed all the way to the bank and is probably still chuckling in his island hideaway.

Francis, the reported mastermind behind the drug scheme, was being hailed as something of a hero for telling all at the Dubin Inquiry.

Leading up to Seoul, Johnson was able, through steroid-tainted performances, to squirrel away a substantial amount of money while at the same time receiving grants, at the Canadian taxpayer's expense, because he was regarded as an amateur athlete.

Pleading poverty, Johnson was able to get enough money out of a fund set-up for money he earned as a supposed amateur athlete to start construction of a mansion for his family and buy an expensive sports car for himself.

He has never paid back any government funds he received through deception.

Johnson wants to compete again and this reporter seriously doubts whether his reasoning is purely altruistic to help ease both bruised personal and national pride.

There reportedly is already a \$5 million offer on the table for a match race between Johnson and Lewis.

Track and field promoters in Japan and Europe (long a hot-bed for undercover payments to amateur athletes) are reportedly slaving over the chance to promote Johnson's return from exile.

Not so, in England, however, and good on the Brits.

Despite the fact that Johnson's IAAF ban will be lifted in September, the English Amateur Athletic Association, which governs sport in England, has announced that Johnson will still be barred from competing in lucrative meets in England because of his suspension for drug use.

He would be allowed, however, to compete in meets as a member of the Canadian national team for events such as the Commonwealth Games, the Olympics, or the World Cup.

Canadian Track and Field Association chairman Jean Guy Ouellette, is flabbergasted by the English stance. "I don't think it's fair," Ouellette was quoted as saying.

Right, Mr. Ouellette. It wasn't too long ago that suggestions for drawing and quartering Johnson might have been well-received by the CTFA because of the black eye this same individual had caused the association internationally.

What hypocrisy. Similarly, August Kirsch, a top West German athletics official, is questioning the English stance. Kirsch has been quoted as calling the English decision "scandalous".

Give me a break - please. Drug abuse, of various varieties, is a socio-economic plague that threatens to undermine the very pillars of our society.

Johnson is not to be pitied. Sorry is not enough.

He knowingly deceived Canadians and the worldwide track and field brotherhood for years. Similarly, he profited by his deception and his lies.

Johnson cannot be viewed as a first-time offender because his drug-use lasted years.

Would you want a bank manager, convicted of defrauding your bank over a period of years, and who had served a two-year sentence, to return to your branch and handle your financial affairs? Not likely.

The CTFA should follow the English lead and have no more to do with Johnson.

To do otherwise would be a disservice not only to young Canadian athletes but to Canadian youngsters in general.

By reinstating Johnson the CTFA would, in effect, be issuing a negative message.

Instead of providing a strong anti-drug example for Canadian athletes, the reverse would be true.

'Don't get caught' would be the credo.

As I see it, anyway.

Equestrian event has military roots

By LESLEY HALSTON
Herald Special

Myrddin Stables of Georgetown will be hosting two amateur equestrian events.

The first, to be held this Sunday, will be a combined Two Phase featuring Dressage and Stadium Jumping only.

The second, scheduled for May 27th, will be a one-day event with the three phases of Dressage, Stadium Jumping and Cross-Country.

Interested spectators are invited to attend. Myrddin Stables are located one mile west of Trafalgar Road on the south side of 17th Sideroad.

Eventing is an exciting and challenging equestrian sport which is a complete test of the all-round abilities of horse and rider.

Developed originally as a competition for military horses, it was at one point called "The Military".

It was necessary for wartime messengers to be able to carry dispatches quickly over long distances and varied terrain.

The horse had to be extremely fit and able to negotiate strange hazards boldly. He would only do this if he had complete trust in his rider's ability.

Modern Eventing consists of three phases: Dressage, Cross-Country and Stadium Jumping, each judged separately and the marks combined for a final score.

The horse and rider team with the least amount of penalties at the end of the competition wins.

The first phase of a one-day event or Horse Trials is Dressage.

The Dressage test consists of a series of compulsory movements performed in a certain order. Dressage is similar to "compulsory figures" in figure skating as it is here that the groundwork is laid for all other disciplines.

Each horse and rider combination is judged on accuracy, balance, fluency of movement, rhythm and the effectiveness of communication between them.

After Dressage, the participants have a short break before they start warming up for Cross-Country.

The Cross-Country course is laid out through varied terrain and over natural obstacles with distances at the amateur levels from 1.5 to 3 km.

This phase tests the horse's courage, speed, jumping ability and stamina. Most importantly, it tests his faith in his rider as there are jumping obstacles the horse has not previously seen.

For the rider it is a test of skill, training and judgement.

The final phases of the one-day event is Stadium Jumping. This stage requires the horse and rider to negotiate a course of brightly coloured fences in an enclosed area.

The purpose of the Stadium Jumping is to test the fitness and obedience of the horse after the demanding, fast-paced, and exciting Cross-Country section.

The combination of these three disciplines makes Event the toughest equestrian sport because, in order to do well, you must be successful in all three phases.

Soccer Rebels take to the field

The Georgetown District High School Rebels varsity girls soccer team opens regular season East Halton league play Friday, with a 3:30 p.m. home encounter against Queen Elizabeth Park High School.

While the Rebels soccer team has been in training leading up to East Halton league regular season play, the squad did participate in a recently-held indoor tournament involving 48 teams at York Univer-

sity in Toronto.

The Rebels finished second in their pool to M.M. Robinson High School of Burlington, and under the tournament format, were eliminated from further tournament play.

However, as a bouquet to help ease the elimination disappointment, the Rebels were selected from their pool's Sportsmanship award.

Recreation Report

Variety of programs are being offered

The Halton Hills Recreation and Parks Department has an interesting variety of programs for you to choose from this spring including:

INTERIOR DECORATING
- Pick up some valuable hints and suggestions on sprucing up the house this spring.

TAI CHI
- Enhance your health by learning this historic Chinese art of gen-

tle exercise and stretching.

TENNIS LESSONS

- Beginner and intermediate classes for children and adults.

Also being offered are programs in Lawn Bowling, Golf, Gardening, Fitness and Seniors T.V. and Games. Be sure to check your brochure for more details on these and other exciting programs or call 873-2600, ext. 268.

Spring swimming

APRIL 9 TO JUNE 17

Acton Indoor Pool			Georgetown Indoor Pool		
Mon	Public	7:00-8:00 p.m.	Family	7:30-8:30 p.m.	
Tues	Adult	9:00-10:00 p.m.	Adult	9:00-10:00 p.m.	
Wed	Family	7:30-8:30 p.m.	Public	7:30-8:30 p.m.	
Thurs	Public	8:00-9:00 p.m.	Adult	9:00-10:00 p.m.	
	Adult	9:00-10:00 p.m.	Public	2:00-4:00 p.m.	
Sat	Public	2:00-4:00 p.m.	Family	4:00-5:00 p.m.	
	Family	4:00-5:00 p.m.	Adult	5:00-6:00 p.m.	
	Adult	5:00-6:00 p.m.	Public	2:00-4:00 p.m.	
Sun	Disabled	11:00-12:30 p.m.	Family	4:00-5:00 p.m.	
	Public	2:00-4:00 p.m.	Adult	5:00-6:00 p.m.	
	Family	4:00-5:00 p.m.			
	Adult	5:00-6:00 p.m.			

♣ Saunas Open
For more information call 873-2600 ext. 276.

Cold Buffet Blacklock

ACTON LIONS

2nd ANNUAL

Casino Night & Dance

APRIL 21, 1990

7:30 p.m.

Royal Canadian Legion Hall

Wright Ave., Acton

Tickets \$15.00

For Tickets Call Richard Pole 853-2089

(LIMITED TICKETS AT THE DOOR)

"PRIZES" Crown & Anchor