



COMMENT

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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A lesson to be learned from the Aussem case

A former Milton Merchant hockey player named David Aussem seems taken aback by the fact a judge took a dim view of his actions during a junior hockey game.

Aussem, 22 now, has been sentenced to 20 months probation, ordered to do 100 hours of community service, and fined \$500, which he must turn over to a hockey organization for an anti-violence initiative.

This is probably the young man's first brush with the law and appearance in a courtroom on a criminal charge, so the fact he is shaken is understandable. Hopefully it will give him pause.

Aussem must remember that in the eyes of the law, he is a criminal, a highly unfortunate state of affairs for somebody who was involved in hockey violence.

This has substantial repercussions. For example, travel to foreign countries, even the United States, could be difficult. And some jobs are out of the question.

All for what? Losing one's temper in a hockey game and giving opponents a couple of dangerous cheap shots.

Aussem, like others before him, can't seem to reconcile what has happened to him with the fact that the injuries to others took place during a hockey game. "I have no faith .. I've lost a lot of respect for hockey," he said last week after sentencing in Brampton, where the assault took place.

Those of us familiar with hockey can't help feeling for Aussem to some extent despite the fact his conduct — skating full tilt into somebody and cross-checking them on the back of the neck — was wholly inexcusable.

It's just that many of us have become so used to hockey violence we don't really question it, even when it begins to get out of hand.

For instance, a fistfight of the type one often sees in hockey would land combatants in jail for certain if it took place in a parking lot and police arrived in time to intervene.

There's nothing wrong with hard, physical hockey but in too many instances it has gone beyond that. Often escalation involves cheap shots of one kind or another by those not well-conditioned enough, or tough enough, or sporting enough, to play the game properly.

And this sort of escalation can spill over into the crowd.

Your agent has seen women go after other women's faces with their nails, men who have had heart attacks pushing and shoving in hallways, teenagers throwing themselves at opposing parents, fights of all sorts (mostly the tamest parts), to say nothing of all the bitter insults that have been hurled around.

Other reporters have their own tales to tell, often involving violence among minor hockey parents oriented toward one another, or even coaches.

What happened to Aussem is a good lesson for many of us. In his shock and even discouragement, it does not appear lost on him either.

Rob Kelly



OUR READERS WRITE

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

Farm boycott disappointing

Dear Editor:

I was really disappointed by the recent York teachers' decision to boycott Chudleigh's Apple Orchard.

Let me state first of all that I do not support the current Conservative government's education Bill 160 and perhaps it would be hard to find anyone more opposed to it than I.

That position is no doubt quite the opposite of our sitting member, Conservative MPP Ted Chudleigh.

But while we would have quite the opposite opinion on that issue, I hope we share the same opinion on Chudleigh Apple Orchard.

First off, this is not Ted's business. For the record, if this had been Ted's business I would still believe it is wrong to boycott it as it would have no bearing on his political actions.

Picket his political office on whatever issue you disagree with him on. Absolutely, I can understand that. Vote him out of office in the next election if you disagree with his actions as an MPP — that is everyone's right. But to picket or boycott his family's business, sorry I can't agree with that one.

Even though these are not Halton teachers and it is certainly out of my constituency area, I will be sending a copy of this letter to the York teacher reportedly speaking on behalf of the boycott.

While there are lots of other places such as Chudleigh's to take children on farm visits, the reasons this or any

teacher would have to consider Chudleigh's are just as valid as they were before Bill 160. To boycott the farm because of Ted's stance on this or any given bill just doesn't make sense to me.

Tim Kingsbury

Wards 1 and 3 public school trustee

'Best' comment insulting

Dear Editor:

I would like to comment on the remarks made by Peter K. Burian. I agree that The Champion's Report Card probably affected the outcome of the election and that Wally Hunter, who has a well-known name, has made a name for himself in Milton on his own.

But to say that Colin Best overestimated the present day value of the 'Best' name as if he ran for mayor because his father was once mayor is insulting. Colin was on council for 17 years, including three years on regional council.

He looked after the seniors' committee, the policing committee and the mayor's youth committee, and helped many residents of Milton with their problems. I never knew his father, but working with Colin for the last few years on the policing committee, I have seen the difference his hard work can make. Milton is the loser as Colin is no longer on councils or committees.

All the best to you and your family, Colin.

J. Leonard
Milton

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Pud

by Steve Nease

