

THE SPORTS BEAT

By Glen May



The King is dead . . . long live the King . . . or to bring it up to date, the Toronto Maple Leafs will be playing golf while players from Montreal, New York, Los Angeles, etc. will be attempting to earn thousands of dollars in Stanley Cup playoff money.

As you may recall, Toronto won the Stanley Cup last season, but a fifth place collapse left them out of the picture this Spring. Since the trade with Detroit the Leafs have been a feared band of raiders and have resembled defending champions, but it is too late this year, and for certain players, tomorrow will never come.

For many of the Leafs the season finale against Boston was their final game in a blue and white uniform. This year they lost their prestige, however, money is more important than pride to most pros, and the Leafs are no exception. The Stanley Cup champion will pocket \$7,500 per man, and in all likelihood, this fact bothers the Toronto players more than the verbal jibes they've received from National Hockey League fans.

Not many Leafs would comment about next year. Not one said he'll quit. A couple of them mentioned the possibility of being traded or left unprotected in the draft. Not many are talking, but most of them are doing some serious thinking.

Coach and general-manager, Punch Imlach, isn't dropping many hints other than he's going to attempt to make "a couple of deals" and watch his minor league clubs in the playoffs. He doesn't have to say much more.

Imlach did say of his veteran goalkeeper Johnny Bower following his two shutouts at the end of the campaign: "Forget about his age; just think of youthful reflexes. He'll be back."

Forty-two-year-old defenseman Allan Stanley insists he has no plans of retiring, although he would take a "good" coaching job. He says he'll

show up at training camp unless drafted or traded. It's almost a certainty he won't be invited to camp.

Two other defensemen, Duane Rupp and Larry Hillman remained quiet about next year. They, too, would be more than surprised if they wore Maple Leafs colors next term.

Jim Pappin and Bob Pulford have been listed as expendables. What this means is that they'll either be traded or left unprotected in the draft.

Imlach says nothing is definite yet, but look for a deal with the Montreal Canadiens to break.

Captain George Armstrong has been a forgotten man the past three weeks after injuring a knee. This silence undoubtedly spells an end to "The Chief's" career as a Maple Leaf. A late season injury to defenseman Marcel Pronovost has kept him out of the lineup and probably next year's plans.

Last year players like goalie Terry Sawchuk, Pappin, Pulford, Hillman, Pronovost, Frank Mahovlich and Peter Stemkowski were commanding figures in the road to the Stanley Cup. Mahovlich, Sawchuk and Stemkowski are gone, and don't forget Red Kelly who has done a remarkable job coaching Los Angeles. Each man was a key part in the Maple Leaf machine last year.

Perhaps the Leafs' abdication of the NHL throne took place at the draft last summer when the first player claimed by an expansion team was Terry Sawchuk. Here was the goalie which had left last year's opponents muttering to themselves as he brazenly committed grand larceny time and again.

Sawchuk went to the L.A. Kings and they're in the playoffs and the Leafs are out.

If you happen to be a Mississippi gambler you could take this as an omen as to where the Stanley Cup will wind up this year.

If not, bet on Montreal.

SUGAR AND SPICE

by Bill Smiley



Had a taste of utter domestic freedom and peace during the recent holidays. Daughter Kim went off to spend a few days with her Mum in the city. And there I was, all alone in the big house.

For the first time in years, nobody to bug me. Not a soul to tell me it was time to get up or go to bed. Nobody to tell me to stop doing this, or start doing that. Nobody to natter away while I was trying to read the paper.

It was a wild, delirious feeling. Only a man who is beleaguered by women most of his waking hours can appreciate how I felt. I just decided to let 'er rip, go the whole hog and let the chips fall where they might.

First morning I slept right through. Until 8.30. I even lay there, grinning defiantly and said, right out loud, "I won't get up until I feel like it." And there was no argument.

Seven minutes later, instead of the usual juice, toast and coffee, I ripped the cap off a bottle of beer and drank it, right there in the living-room, not the kitchen, with my bare feet up on the best chair. It gave me a glorious sense of sheer freedom. And a headache.

But I didn't care. I read the morning paper for 20 minutes straight without being interrupted. Unheard of luxury!

For the rest of the day, I not only threw convention to the wind, but flouted every domestic rule that has been pounded into me in 20 years.

I read a novel instead of marking exam papers. I deliberately let my whiskers grow, right through until noon. I maliciously dirtied every ash-tray in the house. I refused to take out the garbage. I got crumbs all over the kitchen floor and just left them there, crunching happily around in them. I didn't even go down to the basement and do the washing.

I read Mad magazine. I threw a stack of exam papers on the floor and kicked them all over the room. I ripped up a couple of bills that came in the mail.

And ate whatever and whenever I darned well pleased. Peanut-butter and jam

sandwich and frozen oyster soup for lunch. With a wine sauce that I never got around to cooking. Didn't eat until some crazy hour. About 12.30.

At dinner-time, I did the same. Just sneered at the big roast of beef cooked for me before the girls left. Had exactly what I wanted, pork and beans. And exactly when I felt like it. About 6 p.m.

I just let the old dishes pile up anywhere. Didn't even put them in the sink. In fact, I sneered at them a couple of times as I walked through the kitchen looking for somebody to talk to.

That night I carried right on with my orgy of freedom. Had a brandy and a cigar somebody gave me six months ago when his wife had a baby. Searched out relentlessly and watched three westerns on TV, including the late-late.

Did I go to bed then? Not on your life. Went down and without so much as a by-your-leave, made myself a big, fat roast beef and horseradish sandwich. Washed it down with four cups of my special coffee, the real thing that you can stand a spoon in.

And when I went to bed, it was exactly when I felt like it, with no nagging. It was about 1.30, as I recall. And it was about 4.30 when that snack wore off and I went to sleep.

Next day wasn't so wild or hilarious, quite. Oh, the freedom was still there. But so were the dishes and crumbs and ash-trays and exam papers. And nobody else. I must admit a small surge of pure rage went through me because nobody had cleaned the place up.

I didn't just give up, though. I went right on dirtying dishes and paddling around in my pyjamas and smoking like a diesel truck.

On the third morning, the cleaning lady arrived. She was a little taken back when I embraced her heartily. And she was even more surprised when I followed her about all morning, babbling away about nothing.

There's nothing like freedom. Wives should go away and leave their husbands alone for a few days, once a year. It would save a lot of marriages.