

PEPP-TALK

with
Harry
Pepper

On Tuesday night I witnessed a scene that is becoming all too prevalent in hockey rinks across the country, an attack on an official after a hockey game. When is something concrete going to be done to prevent this sort of thing which must be rapidly becoming a real cause for worry to league officials in whatever category, whether it be professional or Junior 'B'.

The game, between the Junior Smokies and the Kimberley Knights, was a real cliff-hanger with the lead changing hands on a couple of occasions. The Trail team twice had two-goal leads, but the Knights bounced back to tie the score.

In the rather hectic overtime that didn't last long, we saw the Knights awarded a penalty shot which Myron Luker, a three-goal scorer on the night, failed to convert. A two-minute sentence then had to be served by Trail captain, James Beamish, for unsportsmanlike conduct during which Kimberley scored the winning goal from a goal-mouth scramble. It was a sad thing for the Smokies' goalie, Steve Handley, because he had played an outstanding game when his defence had the occasional lapse. In fact, most of the Kimberley goals came from the kind of situation where they forced the Trail defence into making mistakes.

As the game progressed the play became pretty rough with checks being handed out quite liberally. Some of them, to my mind, could have been called but nothing really bad came of it until that memorable couple of minutes which followed the regular time. Trail had withstood a Knight barrage with two men short for two full minutes earlier in the game, but with the score tied and sudden-death in force, the pressure on Trail with a manpower disadvantage had a devastating effect.

Failure to clear the puck resulted in the winning score and the teams go back to the East Kootenay tied at 2-2.

The frustration of losing in front of what must have been their best home crowd of the season definitely had a demoralizing effect on the

young Smokies who have been riding quite a crest of success lately. They crowded around the referee after it was all over and argued, but to no avail, I suppose it will be argued that it was a bad time to call that kind of a penalty, when so much free-wheeling stuff had been allowed earlier, but come what may the man with the red arm-bands has the final say and he made his decision, and like arbiters in all sports, he stood by his guns.

The aftermath, with the fan venting his frustration by punching the referee should have no place in the sports arena, but since time immemorial isolated events of this nature have happened. If sufficient protection is not provided for then, the officials will always be subject to the possible attack by hotheads inflamed by the heat of the contest. It was a shame that such an exciting game should have to end in that sort of fashion.

These two teams are really well-matched — fast-breaking forwards, good solid defence and superb goaltending. This contest could very well go right down to the wire before it is decided. I have said it before and I'll repeat — the style of hockey played in the KIJHL is the kind which should be drawing away more fans than it is at present. One can't help but get carried away by the slam-bang style, while not as finished as that played in the upper echelons of the game, the vigor and effort with which it is played is top-notch entertainment, really not the place for anyone with a heart problem.

After watching the final games of the Junior World Curling matches, which for my money were a cut above the previous week's effort in the Brier, you have to wonder at the marvellous consistency of these young men in the way in which they perform. The pressure on them must really pile up at times, but you rarely see any outward display of emotion. For youngsters of this age it's really remarkable.

How the tides of fortune can change in so short a time! In that tenth end of the Canada

vs. Scotland game with time running out and the host rink lying three, that remarkable triple-kill by Scotland's third, Norm Brown, will almost certainly go down as one of the timeliest shots in curling history. If ever a shot deflated the opposition that one had to be it; Canada's third and skip missed more shots after that than they did in the whole previous nine ends and Andrew McQuisten went on to realize his ambition, a gold medal to add to his already-held silver and bronze from previous years.

Coming closer to home, our Retirees' club has just about played out its string. An impromptu 'spiel, engineered by George Dyson and Angus Popplewell, was begun on Tuesday and will be finished off at our windup affair. It consisted of four-end games, rotation style. Eight games were completed Tuesday, with Arnold Vanness and George Kent going undefeated and they will meet in the 'A' final.

Pending confirmation, six five-man rinks from the Trail Retirees will visit us today, Friday, for a day of curling and socializing. We visited them earlier and this will be a return engagement. Always lots of fun, this is what our brand of curling is all about. Then it's on to the windup and we will stash our brooms, shoes and knee-pads away 'til near October and get down to the pursuit of summer pastimes like golf, etc.

While it has never been confirmed, there is a rumor going the rounds that one of our retirees has got himself the habit of jogging out to the ski lodge while most of us are still in bed recovering from the night before. So you are hereby warned that if you are travelling the Nancy Greene road and see a slender grey haired gent, who somewhat resembles Paul Gowsell minus all the fur on his face, try not to run him down, because, despite his sometimes irreverent attitude to everything in general, again like Gowsell, our curling club and, in fact our town in general, is better for having a George Dyson around.