

PEPP-TALK

with
Harry
Pepper

Except for the NHL finals, hockey is pretty well wound up for the '79-'80 season and it ended on a sour note in Regina the other night for the participants in the Memorial Cup finals.

I guess if you want to interpret it this way, the Junior "A" Tier I is the most tempestuous circuit in the business today. We have seen what happened to McLean's Bruins in New Westminster after they had almost started a dynasty as far as Western Canada was concerned, but it all came crashing down after one game in which the team pulled out all the stops and resorted to something other than hockey in a game with Portland Winter Hawks. The participants in the rough stuff got what they had coming to them from the powers that be and the demise of the Bruins was bound to take only a matter of time. It came home to them this past season.

The performance by the fans in Regina towards the end of the playoff series was something which was almost bound to happen in time. With their team on the ropes after a dismal 0-3 start, the fans were looking for something to vent their unhappy feelings on and the Ontario champs were the ideal whipping boys.

It was certainly in the cards that there was some hanky-panky going on, but then these days, anyone, particularly a losing team's fans, suspect the worst has happened to their favorites. Had the Peterborough team finally emerged the winners, things would have seemed more consistent, but when Cornwall tagged them twice to take it all, that should have proved something, mainly that the Regina fans were barking up the wrong tree.

At least it started a move to change the format of the playoffs for the junior championship of Canada, something which is long overdue. The series as it stands right now is strictly done for the purpose of extracting all the money from the fans that the traffic will

bear.

The young fellows are sure learning fast from their big brothers of the NHL, where every season's end we see more and more teams taking part in the season-ending hoopla.

While on the subject of hockey, I think quite a number of people got quite a kick out of McQuiggan's farcical report on Trail aspiring to an NHL team status. I know I thoroughly enjoyed it. There's more than enough crisis in the world press today, so that something like this was a pretty satisfying interlude, ranked right up there with Jim Taylor's story about the sale of beer at Nat Bailey Stadium, in the weekend Vancouver paper.

In baseball the Blue Jays continue on their merry way, currently right up there with the Yankees at the top of the AL East, astounding everyone, possibly even themselves. While the Toronto players are having the time of their lives, their Montreal brothers are not having that good a start. Maybe they will pull themselves together and the two Canadian teams will go on to big things in 1980. Could it possibly be that 1980 is not going to be too good a year for Montreal teams? We've seen what happened to one notable example.

Locally, the Rossland entry into the Trail Commercial Fastball League was on the verge of their first away win of the young season as they had Funky John's on the ropes last Thursday night. But the rains came and the game, was called before a decision was reached. I think someone said the score was 20-2 in the Uplander's favor as they were at bat in the fifth inning. I heard the opposition only had to come to bat and it would have been a win for the Rossland nine.

I don't want to criticize the plate umpire, he was a member of the Trail team and

was doing a good job; but he was under some pressure when he had to make a decision that could have sent his team down to a loss. Would it be possible to stay away from team members as umpires? It would certainly be a better arrangement all round.

There's a lot of enthusiasm among the members of the Rossland team and some pretty fair ball players. I think they will let everyone in the league know they're around as the season rolls along.

In soccer, the big cup games over in the Old Country are over and for only the third time in a lot of years, a second division team has triumphed over a first division team in the English version of the FA Cup. Arsenal of Div. I were beaten by West Ham of the second division 1-0. It was an all-London final and Arsenal's third straight Cup final appearance; last year they won, but the year before Ipswich beat them by the same 1-0 score.

Up in Scotland it was Glasgow's two premier teams Rangers and Celtic, meeting for the umpteenth time. This one resulted in a Celtic victory and I know someone in Rossland who will feel that is a cause for celebration, John Hughes Sr. being a staunch Celtic admirer.

In local soccer at Rossland on Saturday, one Rossland team won and the other lost in twin games against Fruitvale teams. In game one, Blaise Szekely's Royals fell behind 1-0 in their game with the Spurs on Mike Marshall's goal but bounced back as Terry Ferguson completed a hat-trick and Dallas Drake netted twice for a 5-1 win. Marshall had a chance to score from the penalty spot in the second half, but missed to the left.

In the second game the Celtic coached by Joe Hughes were the victims of a jittery start and never really recovered. Mark Pavan

scored in the first minute for the Fruitvale Flyers and they never looked back; they led 4-0 at the half and for a while the Celtic more than held their own and when Jamie Postnikoff finished off a nice play by the right winger, it looked as though they were on their way. But three quick goals by the Flyers late in the game put it on ice. Also scoring for Fruitvale were David Pavan, David Michalik, Fred Fowles and Stephen Milne with a hat-trick.

The referee for both games was Mike Bapty and he did a good job. People like Mike should know that their help is much appreciated by all of us.

During the games, Lowry May returned from Tadanac and reported that the Rossland Eagles had downed Rivervale 2-1 in a game in the Pee-Wee I division there. Lowry's young son plays for the Eagles and it was he who got the winning goal on a penalty shot. Lowry tells me he has been quite impressed with the work of the referees in the two games he has seen in Trail; he feels that this contributes quite a lot to the betterment of the games, especially with the kids who are just breaking in.

In women's softball over the weekend the Trail Terra Nova team came in second in the Fiesta Tourney, losing in the final to a team from Surrey. On the T-N team were Rossland girls Lori Gibson, Jan Faurot and Flo MacArthur.

Jan and Flo both pitched in the final, according to my informant, Don Gibson.

Talked to Shirley Williams the other day in the Ore Car. Shirley says some of the girls who were on Rossland's championship team a few years back, will be making a comeback in the Fruitvale tourney which is being revived this year. Maybe the girls will have mislaid some of their skills of the past but I'll bet they'll give it a good try. More power to you, ladies!