

Television, Fat Schedules Given Blame For Drop In Western Hockey Attendance

By JIM PEACOCK
Canadian Press Staff Writer

EDMONTON — The "back western" hockey isn't broken, merely bending from television and its own obesity. Therein lies a tale of woe common to all western Canada hockey — say men most closely connected with Edmonton's major hockey teams, both professional and so-called amateur.

"There are a lot of factors involved in declining attendance at hockey games in western Canada," Fred Miller, manager of Edmonton Flyers of the Western Hockey League and assistant manager of the Edmonton Exhibition Association which sponsors the professional Flyers and amateur Oil Kings, said in an interview.

"TOO MUCH HOCKEY"

"One thing is television. I also feel we have too many games. There's just too much hockey and the people can't take it all."

Attendance losses have been noted in every league in western Canada in recent years, but they have perhaps been pointed out more forcefully during the current season than in those previous.

The WHL, for instance, has reported that for the first half of its schedule, attendance was 44,000 or nearly 14 per cent lower than last season. Regina Regals, a new WHL entry this year, drew so few fans during the first half of the season that they switched the franchise to Brandon.

Total attendance figures for the Western Junior Hockey League games are not available, but it is known that every one of the four cities involved — Edmonton, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat and Regina — have felt the pinch. In Edmonton, the junior Oil Kings of the WHL have

played to average crowds of 100 each year in the minor leagues; the overlapping of hockey and football seasons; the growing popularity of curling; the many forms of entertainment vying for the entertainment dollar.

IN OLD ARENA

In the Manitoba Junior League, the clubs were removed from the new \$1,500,000 Winnipeg Arena to ancient Olympic because they weren't drawing enough fans to cover cost of opening the doors for the games.

Television is a major factor in these happenings. Miller said. Statistics show that a "fantastic number" of persons in the West have purchased TV sets on time payments.

"These sets represent a tremendous investment and while the people are paying for them, they have to stay home and get the value out of their investment. They can't afford to do anything else."

Perhaps, Miller said, when the novelty of TV — more than a year old in most western centres and brand new in some — wears off, the people will start filling hockey rinks again. "Television, being new, is one big factor now," said Louis Rasmussen, manager of Oil Kings. "Maybe in a year or two people will get over the TV craze and start going to hockey games again."

OPINION GENERAL

Miller and Rasmussen said it is the general feeling among managers in both the WHL and WHL that TV is cutting heavily into hockey gates.

Both gave other reasons partially responsible — the National League call-up of top-flight players, eliminating the "hockey idols" who create interest and making it necessary to start almost from scratch

in Calgary, the city dropped from the WHL two years ago and went without junior hockey a year. This season, a house of city league was organized. It isn't drawing big crowds, but its sponsors aren't going broke paying travelling, salary and other expense.

"We must get back to where we have more teams in house league," Miller said. "There has to be a change."

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CURTAINMENT LIKELY

Perhaps the competition from television won't drive the pro leagues to shortened schedules but, said Miller, the junior and other amateur leagues will be forced to curtail large-scale, expensive operations.

He pointed to Calgary's junior hockey situation as an example of "what must come" in amateur hockey. Cities the size of Edmonton and a number that are much bigger have found it impossible to support two teams, he said.

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BLACKWOOD on BRIDGE

By EASLEY BLACKWOOD

Impossible Hand Needs Sensational Playing

Most people would define an impossible contract as a contract which cannot be made. Not Mrs. Fusty. Her definition appears to be: "a contract which can be made only by a sensational play."

She and Miss Brash bid briskly today to reach the fearless contract of six spades. Mr. Abel led the king of hearts and dummy's ace won.

North dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

NORTH (Miss Brash)			
♠	A K J		
♥	A J 7 6 5		
♦	A		
♣	J 6 5 4		
WEST (Mr. Abel)			
♠	10 3 2		
♥	K Q 10 9 5		
♦	9 7 2		
♣	9 3		
EAST (Mrs. Heinsite)			
♠	Q 7		
♥	8 2		
♦	J 10 8 5 3		
♣	K 10 8 7		
SOUTH (Mrs. Fusty)			
♠	9 8 6 5 4		
♥	A Q 7		
♦	K Q 6 5		
♣	A Q 2		

The bidding:

North	East	South	West
1 ♠	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	5 ♠	Pass
6 ♠	All Pass		

Now Mrs. Fusty saw it was no laydown. She would have to be very lucky to avoid a club loser. And what about her fourth diamond? If she tried ruffing it in dummy, that would probably set up a trump winner for somebody.

A BAD SIGN
She set out to see if she could establish a long heart in dummy. She led a heart from the board and ruffed it. She followed this with a spade lead to dummy's king. Back came another heart and, with a cry of triumph Mr. Heinsite ruffed in with the queen of spades.

This unseemly development caused even Mrs. Fusty to stop for a moment. What should she discard from her hand? A diamond would be all right if she could get by without a club loser. But she could do that only if Mr. Heinsite held not more than two clubs, including the king. That seemed quite unlikely as he appeared to have started with only four cards in the major suits and therefore as many as nine in the minors.

What about discarding a club? That was no good because then a diamond would have to be ruffed in dummy, setting up Mr. Abel's 10 of spades as a winner. But actually this was not much of a problem for Mrs. Fusty. She discarded a trump.

She won the diamond return with dummy's ace, led another heart from the board and ruffed it. Then she led her last spade to the ace in dummy. Next came the jack of spades — and Mr. Heinsite was no longer grinning.

Gil Mayer Subs For Lumley In Leaf Victory
By The Canadian Press
Gil Mayer waited seven years to declare squatter's rights in the National Hockey League. Now he has his chance. Mayer stepped into the nets for Toronto Maple Leafs Wednesday night.

He was good but not sensational, stopped 19 drives as Leafs battled to a 3-1 victory over Chicago Black Hawks. It was the only game of the night and was the start of Mayer's big chance to show Leafs he should stay in NHL company and not with Pittsburgh Hornets in the American Hockey League. Gil, a five-foot-six, 162-pounder, is subbing for Eby & Sons 1; Cantiseo 2, Jersey Farms 2.

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City Transfer in First Place After Moose, CPA Lose Ground

By BOB RUDDERHAM
City Transfer moved into first place in the Men's Ten Pin Bowling League when they swept their series with the Moose while the Canadian Pacific Airlines were given a bad beating by the Albert & McCaffery crew. It was a long haul for the Transfermen, last year's league champions, as the Airlines team had retained first place since November 2nd of the current season. However, Mozzie's bowlers are a scant point in the lead over the CPA while Albert & McCaffery and Miller's Cigar Store, tied for third place, are just two points away from the leaders.

In the remaining fixture, Miller's Cigar Store took three out of four from the RCMP whose lone point pushed them into fifth place over the Moose who were tied with the Police prior to the night's play.

Norm Kinslor of the Canadian Pacific Airlines, rolled steadily to take the high three games with 564 with games of 184, 190 and 190. High single game was scored by Jim Perry of the Moose, 211, while other 200 games were rolled by Bob Rudderham of City Transfer with 210, Gerry Lord of Albert & McCaffery with 204 and Bert Edgar of Miller's Cigar Store with 202.

High single and high three games was scored by Albert & McCaffery with 927 and 2016 respectively. The league standings are now as follows: City Transfer 39, Canadian Pacific Airlines 38, Albert & McCaffery and Miller's Cigar Store 37, RCMP 31 and the Moose 20.

P. Thompson, V. Munizaba Split Top Honors
Peggy Thompson of Fashion Footwear and Vernie Munizaba of Esquire Men's Wear shared top women's individual high score in "A" league of the Mixed Bowling League last Thursday as each rolled a 264 game.

Bill Donald of Wrathall's took both men's high single and high three scores for the division with a 336 game and a 794 three-game total while Kay Wood of Paramounts won women's high three with a 649 score.

Team high single and three was taken by Fashion Footwear with scores of 1226 and 3506. In "B" league, Eve Yates of CPA took both women's high single and three honors with scores of 254 and 606 while Jim Leniuk of Jersey Farms won both men's high single and three with scores of 369 and 619.

Esso Extras with scores of 1124 and 3039 won team high single and three.

Results: A League — Hurricanes 3, Smith & Elkins 1; La Gondola 3, Pushovers 1; Fashion Footwear 3, Esquire Men's Wear 1; Wrathall's 3, Shenton's 1; Paramounts 2, Headplumers 2; Cook's Jewellers 2, Frosty Lockers 2.

B League — RCMP 4, Yukon Jewellers 0; Booth School 4, Super Valu 0; CPA 3, Hill's Shoe Store 1; Esso Extras 3, Overwaiter 1; Borden Street School 3, Eby & Sons 1; Cantiseo 2, Jersey Farms 2.

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