

## Athletic Council Topic

# Ice vs. varsity sports a problem

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Sports Editor

Hilton Coliseum is a magnificent arena

More than 14,000 cushioned seats greet the visitor to this facility which houses Iowa State athletic teams, concerts, graduations and a seemingly endless stream of special events

Elvis Presley sang here Disney on Parade made an appearance

No longer do Iowa State and the City of Ames have to put up with the Armory, that dilapidated building which inadequately housed all the above mentioned activities before the Coliseum's opening in December of 1971

But there are problems, even with this \$8 million facility

A controversy is building over the scheduling of events in the Coliseum. ISU athletic department officials want more time for their teams to compete and practice here

If that's to take place, the various ice programs must go

Why?

"The situation as currently exists is completely incompatible," says Max Urlick, the Iowa State assistant athletic director responsible for submitting basketball, wrestling and gymnastics schedules to the Iowa State Center

"I don't know of anyone who is completely pleased with the current arrangement," Urlick adds. "The problems which come up deal primarily with ice programs during the winter quarter, specifically ice hockey"

The problem is this: ice programs and hockey games force the Cyclone basketball team to practice in old State Gym and the Cyclone wrestlers this year to hold some meets in the Armory

The gymnastics team is also affected, but no gym meets have yet been moved out of the Coliseum

Basketball coach Lynn Nance and wrestling coach Harold Nichols resent being moved out of Hilton. Yet hockey coach Al Murdoch believes he has as much right to use the Coliseum as do ISU varsity teams

Hockey is a club sport, meaning no scholarships are given to the players and no funds from the ISU athletic department aid the program

"Is Hilton Coliseum just a varsity facility?" asks Murdoch. "If you pull ice out of Hilton completely, does it mean the basketball team will get more time to practice?"

"No, it doesn't. Concerts, women's sports and things like Disney on Parade could be scheduled in the Coliseum"

Nichols, Nance and Murdoch do not wish to engage in a verbal war over the matter. Yet on Wednesday, Urlick will submit a report to the ISU Athletic Council outlining the scheduling problem varsity sports face

We feel the Athletic Council isn't fully aware of what's going on," Urlick said last Saturday while sitting in the Coliseum prior to the Cyclones basketball game with Tulsa. "We want to explain our problem to the Council

What the Council might do if anything is conjecture. There is sentiment to recommend changing the priority list which guides the Iowa State Center in scheduling events in Hilton

In February of 1975 ice programs were given priority over gymnastics and wrestling. That's the priority system used to schedule this season's events

The current priority system treats ice, gymnastics and wrestling equally

Basketball games are given a higher priority, but basketball practices are not

Three wrestling meets have been shifted from the Coliseum to the Armory this season. The ISU Invitational held Dec. 3-4, a Jan. 17 meet with Oregon and a Feb. 5 encounter with Colorado are to be held in the Armory

On Jan. 17 and Feb. 5, the ISU club hockey team will meet St. Xavier and Illinois State, respectively

While the recently held wrestling Invitational took place in the Armory, the hockey team played Mankato State in the Coliseum

In a "Letter to the Editor" printed in Monday's Tribune, Carl Hamilton, the ISU Vice President for Information and Development, attempted to answer criticism received by him concerning the wrestling schedule.

Hamilton wrote, "Because of scheduling conflicts and because the Iowa State Invitational, recently concluded, was a warm-up event for the participants, it was scheduled for the Armory"

This rankles Urlick. "I don't understand his classification of the Invitational as a warm-up," he said, adding that a club sport was given priority over a varsity sport

Wrestling Coach Nichols views the Armory as "not even a third rate facility." Bleachers on the floor have been removed, limiting seating in the old building

"I feel we're being shortchanged," Nichols continued. "On the basis of the program we have in wrestling, that's as subtle a way of saying it as any"

In the past wrestling schedules were drawn up nine months prior to the start of the season. Opponents never knew until that late when they would visit Ames

Now Nichols is preparing the 1978-79 schedule. He doesn't want the scheduling committee to tell him his submitted schedule is too late to be approved for the Coliseum

This is a problem which Nichols admits he did not foresee five years ago when the Coliseum opened

"I didn't foresee it because I never thought they would give hockey or ice even equality with two national championship teams (wrestling and gymnastics)," he stated

A visit to State Gym shows why Nance doesn't like to practice there. The floor is uneven, the lights dim and the heating system sometimes doesn't work

"Plus, all the basketball equipment is located in Hilton," Urlick adds. "That's a prime difficulty, too"

Another problem: joggers like to use the indoor track in State Gym. When the basketball team practices there

the gym is closed and joggers are shut out. Hard feelings have popped up

Murdock, the man caught in the middle, has mixed reactions. To a point he sympathizes with Nance and Nichols

"I'm a sports fan and a supporter of all sports," he declared. "If I thought it were possible, and I think it is, I would like to see more scheduling of gymnastics, wrestling and basketball in Hilton"

"Sure, that has to help them. If the basketball team gets out of State Gym, it's a plus for everybody"

But Murdoch has problems with his practice facilities, too. "Talk about practices in State Gym and the hardships the basketball team has with the baskets a little off and the place a little grungy," he says, "and I'll tell you about my team practicing out behind Beyer Hall with the damn wind whistling. But I don't complain"

Yet Murdoch believes the problem can be ironed out without going to officials of the ISU Center

The solution? An alternate ice facility, one which the hockey team and the various ice programs would use instead of the Coliseum

The planning for such a facility has been finished. Bart Johnston, the Ames Parks and Recreation Director, hopes to have an alternate ice facility in operation by Nov. 1 of next year

Included in the ice program are figure skating lessons, Ames minor hockey, physical education classes and Iowa State intramural hockey teams

Johnston, who acts as an advisor to the Greater Ames Ice Users, said a facility with a roof and only token seating is planned for west of the Towers Dormitories south of the ISU campus. Cost of the project: \$200,000

Funds are to be raised through donations. Johnston realizes the total

amount will not be reached by the time digging starts, but hopes pledges of this amount can be agreed upon

A year ago a feasibility study on this project was conducted. The original goal of an indoor facility where games and adequate seating would be available were too ambitious

"With this we would only need Hilton for hockey games and special events," Johnston pointed out. "The basketball team would be able to get more practices in the Coliseum and maybe the scheduling problem would be alleviated"

The alternate ice facility is still in the dream stage. If it turns into reality, Murdoch says up to 25 more days can be freed in the Coliseum for wrestling meets and basketball practices

If complications arise and the proposed facility is scratched, the future of ISU hockey is in doubt

Murdock would move out of the Coliseum if he can play his games in a facility with adequate seating

"I don't visualize us moving out of Hilton Coliseum lock, stock and barrel until we have a facility which seats from 4-6,000 fans," Murdoch said

"Anything less is unacceptable"

However the hockey club has needed additional funds from the ISU Government of the Student Body. Should GSB cut off funding ISU hockey as is may be finished

Keeping hockey in the public eye is essential, Murdoch believes, if the sport is to gain varsity status. "I think we will be varsity within five years"

Asked if it is possible to have hockey as a varsity sport, Urlick frowned and pondered his answer

"There are no immediate plans to my knowledge of making hockey a varsity sport," he revealed. "Who knows what will happen in five years? I may not even be here five years from now, but the athletic department has about all it can handle right now"

Urlick is conscious of the negative publicity which will hit the athletic department, if more time in the Coliseum is sought for varsity teams

"I'm in a can't win situation," he moaned. "If I say I want basketball in Hilton and ice out, the athletic department looks like the heavy

"If I say okay, leave it like it is, then our basketball and wrestling teams suffer"