

Tom Ogden . . Basketball Sparkplug

by Mark Israel

Every sport team needs a field general—someone who can take charge and run the team while it is in action. Such a position is generally given to the player who, in his thinking and attitudes toward the game, most typifies the coach.

Tom Ogden, guard for Penn State's Capitol Campus basketball team, is just such a player. Tom is a 23 year old junior from Philadelphia who, like his coach, possesses a tremendous knowledge of the game. But even more importantly, he has an enthusiasm about the sport, his coach, and his team that he conveys to anyone he talks to. Just mention the team to him, and you can see a spark come to his eyes. Although Tom would probably never admit it, he is the prime mover of this year's vastly improved Capitol Campus team.

Although Tom is normally quiet, he was very quick to remark that, "We'll beat every team we lost to. We're better than they are." He also added, "We'll beat Delaware (who defeated Capitol 82-80 in the season opener) by 20." Such statements are just samples of Tom's feelings.

Describing his feelings between the loss to Spring Garden and the tremendous win over Schuylkill Campus, one can clearly understand the importance of such enthusiasm. "I take all the games personally because I'm supposed to run the team. If Al (Coach Al Williams) does his job and we lose, I feel it's my fault. After the Spring Garden game, I couldn't sleep that night. I couldn't wait for the next game. I didn't go to school till Wednesday—was really psyched. I wanted to win really big on Monday, I knew we would win. I had a feeling in my body that I never had before. Monday night, I dreamed about balls going in the basket."

Tom speaks fondly of his whole basketball experience at Capitol thus far. He especially admires Williams as a man who knows when to be tough and when to be gentle. Tom said that it was Williams who was the first coach to really build his confidence. He explained that Williams knows the capabilities of each of his players and is not satisfied unless such a level is reached.

Tom also had praise for his teammates and the fans

supporting the team. In speaking about his mates, Tom remarked, "I never thought the kind of talent we have, would be here. I was really surprised. And now we're starting to get it together. That first win made the team feel closer together."

Tom has, like most of the players on the team, been developing his skills all his life. He only gets to show them off twelve times a year and was pleasantly surprised by the support the fans have given the team this season. "We all appreciate it. There's nothing like having people yell for you."

Tom's basketball background is steeped in experience. Among his more notable moments, the 5'7", 140 pound guard played alongside former Villanova Wildcat Fran O'Hanlon in his junior year at St. Thomas More High School in Philadelphia. This was back in 1966. More recently, he was named Most Valuable Player for Peirce Junior College's basketball team last year. That was, incidentally, the first winning team in that school's history.

Tom has no intentions of making his his first year with a losing club. He feels confident the team will perform to its capabilities throughout the rest of the season. And you can bet that, by his performance and enthusiasm, both on and off the court, number 3, Tom Ogden, will be instrumental in this effort.

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Area Group Nudges PennDOT on environment

A Harrisburg area citizens group has called for a more positive approach in the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation's (PENNDOT) recently proposed Environmental Action Plan for transportation planning.

Citizens For a Balanced Transportation Plan, representing citizens and community organization in the Harrisburg Metropolitan Area, calls for "Inclusion of Environmental Impact Statements, as required by law, to insure participation of agencies and citizens in planning," said Henry Fridirici, spokesman for the group. He also urges "including requirements to consider the positive advantages of non-automobile transportation at all stages of the planning process."

The group's position paper on the Action Plan states, "We find an Action Plan written to avoid violation of environmental law, and thus the delays of...court challenges, but not written to implement seeking those systems most beneficial to the people of the commonwealth."

Among reasons for a system not based so heavily on automobile use, the group cites the current "energy crisis" and calls for consideration of plans which will lessen the fuel demands of the automobile as much as possible.

In citing public support for a greater reliance on alternatives to the automobile, the group cited a recent poll by the Harrisburg Area Chamber of Commerce which showed 78.8% of the respondents finding very important better bus service to the city, while only 52.3% cited better highways as a need.

According to Fridirici, many Harrisburg area groups and citizens support the need for more careful planning of transportation systems. Alfred Wadley, President of the Harrisburg Chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People said in personally endorsing the group's statement, "The time has long past when we can afford to sit back and allow haphazard planning to destroy and degrade our communities when what is often needed is a better use or different use of what we have, not just more of the same."

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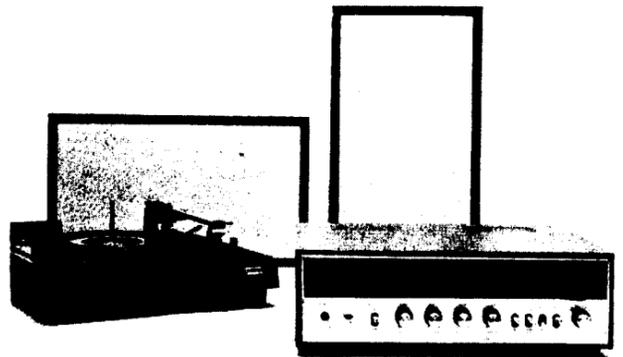
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