BUD COLLINS

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The Madman Of Beanpot



The worst thing that happened to John Cunniff Monday night was winning the silver platter that is engraved to the most valuable inmate of a mental ward called the Beanpot Hockey Tournament.

Until he got the prize, Cunniff had steered through the night of shrieking hysteria untouched. He is a rough and ready kid out of Southie who wears No. 2 because he's from 2d st. He does some boxing, and he can take a punch. But when the announcement came that he was lifting another platter out of the Garden—to go with the one from last year's tournament—his Boston College comrades swarmed him.

Snooks Kelley, his coach, belted him and the rest of the Eagles started whacking him and everybody from B.C. in the frothing-at-the-mouth mob of at least 15,000—no matter what the fire laws say—wanted a piece of him. That is the kind of brotherly love you get in a nuthouse when you've scored two goals in the biggest game of your life. Cunniff loved it. He stood there getting belted and smiled, enjoying it the way Hurricane Jackson used to eat up being punched.

The worst thing that happened to Boston University was Cunniff. None of the Terriers got close enough to push him around the way his buddies did after the game. The Eagles knew they were going to win when he scored his first to shove them ahead, 3 to 2. They had been behind, 2 to 0. This goal was a masterpiece that shook the Terriers seconds after they had benefited from a penalty.

Cunniff seized the moment when the B. U.'s were formulating plans to assault to sneak away from the group casually. In an instant the B.U.'s knew they'd been had as Fran Kearns pushed him a pass at the blue line. Cunniff was gone and it was just he and John Ferreira, the B.U. doorman, playing the game as nine others watched.

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nine others watched. With a magnificent fake he pulled Ferreira from the net—as though he had a vacuum cleaner instead of a stick—and inserted the puck into the right

corner.

Cunniff was born with a silver spoon in his hand that turned out to be a hockey stick. He was also born, apparently, to preside over the Beanpot madness during his term at B.C. They may as well have the platter engraved for him next year and make it about the size of the Garden clock.

The Bean Pot syndrome affects increasing numbers in our town every year. You can't get a ticket unless you can scream like an elephant who has forgotten his mate's birthday. And if you don't scream every second, an usher comes along to throw you out—or pronounce you dead.

A trumpeter in the B.U. band stood up and blew his brains out on "Blues in the Night" between the first and second periods, and that's what the B.C.'s had until Cuniff decided it was platter time. After he got going the B.U. crowd all wanted to blow their brains out, but not with a trumpet.

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Our enemies think Americans are soft, but if we could send the appreciators of B.C. hockey to Viet Nam, they'd chase Ho Chi Minh back up his trail. The hypertensive roar when Bob Kupka started the Eagles' scoring in the second period would have shattered windows in the Soviet embassy in Washington if the wind had been right.

It is lovely to go mad every once in a while, though—perhaps there is therapy in madness. For the next Bean Pot tournament I've ordered a hound's tooth check straitjacket for me and a silver platter for John Cunniff. He says that instead of planning an acceptance speech, he'll try to keep his left hand high. It is ever dangerous for Cunniff to make his people to insanely happy. so insanely happy.