1. **THOUGHTFULLY NOTATE THIS ARTICLE TO SHOW EVIDENCE OF YOUR THINKING THROUGHOUT YOUR READING.**
2. **RESPOND TO THE “Food For Thought” SECTION BELOW THE ARTICLE.**

**Suck it up, juniors**

**By EARL McRAE, QMI Agency**

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When the privileged, cosseted children from Canada blew their 3-0 lead in the third period to lose 5-3 and the gold medal to the privileged, cosseted children from Russia in the entertainment known as world junior hockey, TSN analyst Pierre McGuire told the national TV audience it was the greatest collapse by a team in the history of the tournament.

But — tsk, tsk — Pierre McGuire was not supposed to have said that.

Says who? Jim Jerome, one of the Three Guys On The Radio of Ottawa's Team 1200’s morning show.

Over a hook-up with McGuire the morning after the game, Jerome’s heart bled for the poor Canadian team, but what angered him was McGuire telling the public what it was: The greatest collapse by a team in the history of the tournament.

Jerome told McGuire the comment was inappropriate and hurtful, that it was unfair and cruel to the Canadian players who now will have to live with the national stigma and shame through McGuire’s statement of fact. They’re just kids, Jerome said, they don’t need this kind of pressure on them.

To his credit, McGuire did not retreat from his comment. The facts are facts: Twenty minutes away from gold, up 3-0, the Canadians folded like a busted accordion, couldn’t muster the character, talent, and pride to respond to the five punches in the kisser from the Russians.

Finishing second is equal to finishing last. You’re a loser. It’s all about victory. The gold.

The Canadian 18, 19, and 20-year-olds are big, tough kids, they’ve not — as McGuire pointed out to Jerome — been strangers to competitive pressure in their careers. They got their asses handed to them by the Russians, they have no one to blame but themselves, they let the country down.

And if, as Jerome fears, their psyches are too fragile to handle McGuire’s comment, what I have to say to that is: Bulls--t, suck it up, grow up, park the self-pity.

If you’re okay with accepting the tumultuous accolades that come with victory, then you have to accept the avalanche of criticism that comes with ignominious defeat.

Pierre McGuire spoke the truth, Jim Jerome didn’t want the truth spoken. Denial of bitter facts is mushy public relations, not journalism.

The kids of Team Canada were the best in the nation at what they do. Compared to the rest of us, they live spoiled, privileged lives. Most, if not all of them, are going to earn salaries far beyond what you and I will ever earn.

They play a game. A game. A game of which the consequences of competition, and losing, are not death, not starvation, not incurable disease, not amputation of legs or arms.

We should feel sorry for them today? Protect them? Condemn Pierre McGuire for stigmatizing the poor, defenceless souls through honest comment? They’re just kids, they don’t need the pressure?

There was once another world “game” that young Canadians took part in. This game was not on an ice surface. This game was often in mud and slime. The Canadians in this game did not travel to their engagements in comfortables buses. They did not have their equipment carried for them. They were not put up in nice hotels. They were not paid big salaries.

The possible consequences in this game were not a mere bloody nose, not mere bruises, not mere hurt feelings. The possible consequences in this game in which children also participated were loss of body parts, and death.

The consequences of defeat in this game were not dented egos, the consequences were loss of freedom to tyranny, loss of our precious way of life. This game was called World War Two.

Many of those who represented Canada in this deadly game were the ages of those who lost a hockey outing to the Russians on Wednesday. Many have their names inscribed in honour, but not on plaques or trophies for hockey.

These young Canadian boys didn’t suddenly fold before a tenacious enemy. There were no galleries of Canadian spectators watching and cheering them on.

Here are the headstones of three of them in the Moro River Canadian War Cemetery in Italy:

Private J.L. Babcock. The Seaforth Highlanders Of Canada. 10th December 1943. Age 20. Rest in Peace, John Dear. Always Remembered. Dad, Mum, Brother and Sister.

Private F.H. Grant. Western Nova Scotia Regiment. 14th December 1943. Age 17. Rest in Peace with God.

Private C.E. Rose. Carleton And York Regiment. 17th February 1944. Age 17. Beautiful memories are all we have left of one we loved and will never forget. R.I. P.

Don’t talk to me today about a bunch of pampered, spoiled Canadian teenagers so delicate of hearts and minds and so young that they wouldn’t be able to handle the “unfair” negative public pressure and attendant stigma of having the uniqueness of their disgraceful defeat in a game of hockey pointed out to them.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT:**

1. **List THREE ADJECTIVES to describe the TONE of this article, in your opinion.**
2. **List three points you AGREED with in this article.**
3. **WHY did you agree with these three things?**
4. **With which point did you most DISAGREE? Why?**