

sports

Young Tigers learn a hard lesson

by Joe O'Connor

With an exciting array of electrifying young talent, the Dalhousie men's basketball Tigers are a team with unlimited potential. However, in its infant stages, potential carries with it the burden of youth and inexperience.

Last Friday night at the Metro Centre our wave of the future was dispersed by a defensive breakwall erected by the Saint Francis Xavier

X-Men. In short, St. FX, a team somewhat short on talent but long on experience, taught Dal a valuable lesson about winning the big game. Thus what could have been, might have been, should have been, wasn't.

I for one would be comfortable blaming the whole sorry defeat on the Dalhousie "spirit squad", but such action might alert the Senate bloodhounds. Therefore, one must give credit (sigh) where credit is due. St. FX outplayed our hoopsters from start

to finish and deserved the victory. At both ends of the floor X exploited a size and weight differential, allowing them to dominate the offensive boards and force our greatest scoring threats to take low percentage shots from the perimeter. Essentially, if you hail from Antigonish this game was yours to watch.

St. FX guard Merrick Palmer held the ball on a string and drove the basket with silky smooth grace. Guy Mbongo was all over the map draw-

ing fouls and converting the penalty. Late in the second half he crumpled to the floor with an injury. I think every Dal fan in attendance thought game over.

Wrong.

Their substitutes filled the void and carried the team to a 91-87 OT victory.

Dalhousie was not without its heroes. There were two endings to this game. In the game I watched Jeff Mayo sink a miracle three-pointer to tie the game in its dying seconds. Then, following an X turnover, Mayo drove to the hoop and iced the victory 86-84. The refs however saw the game differently.

In their game, sadly the official game, Mayo travelled, OT happened,

and our season ended in defeat. So much for privileged seating.

A famous redhead once said that: "Just thinking about tomorrow clears away the cobwebs and the sorrow." So take heart Dalhousie, the future is yours, come what may.

In closing, congratulations to departing coach Bev Greenlaw, and players, Shawn Mantley, Gary Blair, and Chudi Igobemeka, take pride in your careers.

To the returning players, you have built a following, and to the fans, remember these names: Jeff Mayo, Christian Currie, Matt Finden, Peter Hunt, Marcus Jamieson, David Reynolds, Kevin Bellamy, and Shawn Plancke.

Season sweet but short

by Sam McCaig

The Gazette managed to catch up with Hockey coach Darrell Young shortly after the Tigers were ousted by Acadia in the conference semi-finals. Here's what he had to say about the trials and tribulations of the team this year.

Gazette: This was a season that was very exciting for the Tigers, they enjoyed a very successful regular season but it ended a little prematurely and short of a few people's expectations with a playoff loss to Acadia. What did you see, from the team point of view, as the high and low points of the season and do you feel that these lofty expectations for the team were warranted?

Darrell: First of all, you are right, we had a great regular season. I think the people saw we had twenty-six student-athletes on the hockey club and we had a great stretch drive and everyone contributed; actually we had twenty-seven players contribute in that drive. I think what you saw was a hard-working hockey club; very disciplined, the least penalized team in the league. We really stressed defence - we only had one star so our efforts were on the team, more so than they've ever been in the last two or three years and this was probably the best team we've had in three years here.

In terms of our playoff drive, sure, the expectations were very high - you shoot for the moon, you shoot high, and one of the reasons we've had one of the best programs here in the country for the last ten or fifteen years is that our expectations are very high. I think Dalhousie is a proven school in terms of academics and we try to have a program that matches it.

Gazette: I notice you use the word 'student athlete'. Can you explain that term?

Darrell: I don't think that we're a hockey factory, I think that there are schools in our conference that are hockey factories. We've only had one student-athlete flunk out in the last ten years and considering that this is a school where 40% of the freshmen don't return or so I'm told, that's a pretty good number. The fact is, our players do graduate; we usually have two or three players on our team that are in graduate school. We have a couple, such as Kevin Meisner, who are considering going to graduate school next year. Plus, we've had three of the past four winners of the Godfrey Award which goes to student-athletes in our conference for hockey.

Gazette: Speaking of the past few years, you've been head coach of the Tigers for nine years and how do you feel that this year's team compares to others that you've coached here?

Darrell: Like everything, just because of the way the university sport is, you have a turnover. Four years ago, we were 16-5-5 and won the pennant again but lost in the finals. This team matched that team in that we had a number of seniors; we had great leadership; again, no stars; a very disciplined hockey club - just very easy to coach. There were no real major problems and as players mature such as the Wilcox's and the MacDermid's and the Suk's, it was the same thing with the Morrison's and Melanson's and Baldwin's from '91.

Gazette: How successful do you think that this year was for you, personally?

Darrell: I really don't look at personal success as much as the achievements of our student-athletes. Again, I go back to guys like Wilcox, I think he came a long way. I think of the difference between players such as Mike Polano from before Christmas to after Christmas and to the development of Mark Myles as a leader on our hockey club: those things are more satisfying than personal goals.

Gazette: Going back to the playoffs, Acadia was a really strong team. What was your reaction to not only the fact that they beat us, but the manner in which they did so?

Darrell: Obviously the scores were very surprising to me, I felt that we were a pretty even club with maybe a one or two goal difference. It's a game of momentum and we've only lost three times all season and that first loss at Acadia was just so disap-

pointing because we probably outplayed them for the first two periods. They got the hops, bumps and jumps and took advantage of it and they scored the goals late in the period and that took the steam out of our sails.

Gazette: They're a very fast team and it was Dalhousie's game to bump along the boards rather than open it up against them, but when you fall behind you have to open it up a bit.

Darrell: You're going for the Hail Mary's, it's like a football game and you're down by six points with 30 seconds left. Once you get down 2-0 to Acadia or 3-1 or 4-1, you're going for it, you open it up, your defencemen are jumping up and you're causing a defensive liability. That's what happened, we left our goalies, Scott MacDonald and Greg Dreveny, on their own a lot of times because we were trying to get that goal and we're not a team known for offence - defence first.

Gazette: Although Dal was an experienced team this year, Acadia had the benefit of last year's CIAU championship. Do you think that factored in their ability to lift their game a notch for the playoffs?

Darrell: You see guys like Kevin Knopp, I thought he was an all-star in the regular season and a super-star in the playoffs. He's a defenceman that's been there, along with others like O'Reilly, Culahill and MacLeod. The same goes for the goaltending.

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First Baptist Church Halifax

1300 Oxford Street (across from Shirreff Hall)

March 20; 10:30 a.m. Worship

Sermon: *Religion of the Heart*

- Wendy Johnson

Music: Byrd, Bach, Brahms, Schumann

Student Luncheon Sundays at Noon

March 27; 10:30 a.m.

Psalm Sunday Worship

Sermon: *"Hosanna!"* - Rev. John E. Boyd

Music: Weelkes, Widor, Bach

Ministers: Rev. John E. Boyd

Rev. Adele Crowell

Director of Music: David MacDonald