

Dirk Leers, first Yeomen to have jersey retired

It was a very special Homecoming for one Yeoman in particular. Last Saturday, Dirk Leers returned to the scene of his football triumphs and was handed his number 67 jersey in a unique half-time presentation. Dirk Leers, the former nose-guard, became the very first Yeomen footballer to have his number retired. And as the saying goes, "it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy."

After completing four seasons with the red and white last year, Dirk Leers left the university with a trail of honours behind him. He was selected three times as an Ontario University Athletic Association (OUAA) all-star, twice as all-Canadian and twice chosen as a finalist for the J.P. Metras Trophy awarded to the most outstanding college lineman in the country.

Despite the recognition, Dirk Leers is most vividly remembered for the tremendous respect which all his teammates, coaches and opponents held for him.

Leers garnered this reverence because of his wonderfully refreshing attitude towards the game he loves. "Everything was fun for him," says Yeomen associate head coach Nobby Wirkowski. "Never a dirty sneer or anything. He would hit a kid and offer him his hand to pick him up and smile," Wirkowski added.

In fact, there is the opinion that Leers may have been a more effective player had he possessed a mean streak. "His biggest drawback was that he was too much of a nice guy. At times he would allow people who were not his equal to get a hold of him," claims Rick Lyall, the Yeomen line coach who tutored Dirk during his four years as a Yeomen.

Nevertheless, Leers could still be dominant by way of his awesome strength and quickness. In 1985, Leers was the Canadian power-lifting champion. Even on the football field—a game played by giants, Lyall says that sometimes (Leers) "was like

MEL BROITMAN

a man playing with boys."

Yet Leers was and is the consummate gentleman. In a way he was the antithesis to the stereotypical down lineman, who is cast as the big bad guy. Breaking the rules is simply not in the character of Leers. "I wanted to show that I could play as good as I can, but within the rules and still excel," Leers said.

Presently the former all-Canadian lineman is studying at the Theological Seminary in Regina. Whereas once Leers aspired to a pro football career, it is no longer a dream of his. His frustrations of two years ago at a CFL training camp in Calgary, soured him on the professional ranks.

Despite being the best athlete at the Stampeders training camp in 1985 (he won a competition among the players), Leers was released. His relative lack of height (only 5' 10") was a strike against him that he could not overcome. Calgary tried Leers as a linebacker, but he never had his heart in it—he had always wanted to be a down lineman.

"I thought Dirk could have played somewhere (in the CFL). "They pre-judged him on requisite height," claims Ed Nowalkowski, head therapist for the football Yeomen. According to Nowalkowski, "he's exactly the same size as James Parker, who is a perennial CFL all-star. They have designated Parker as a rushing lineman in specialty situations. I saw Leers as being that type of lineman."

This past summer, Leers came to the crossroads of his football career. Two opportunities came his way. The first was a chance to go to the Phillipines as a Christian missionary. The second was another shot at Canadian professional football. "I was offered a contract by the Saskatchewan

Roughriders. They wanted me as a lineman, which was what I always really wanted. After a lot of soul-searching, I came to a point where I decided to go to the Phillipines rather than play football," Leers says.

And so the first Yeomen football player ever to have his number retired, will not make a similar mark as a professional. Although Dirk Leers loves the game of football, a calling from deeper within has led him down another path.

The powerful lineman leaves us with a few words that best describe Dirk Leers the lineman, missionary and man. As he says, "it doesn't matter how big, tough and strong you are; you can still be a gentle person."



Yeowomen tie the Lady Blues

By NICK LAPICCIRELLA

The York Yeowomen field hockey team scored with about five minutes left in the game to earn a 1-1 tie against U of T.

The first half York played tentatively missing many passing opportunities. Coach Marina Van der merwe attributed York's slow start to the poor field conditions. "The north side of the field was very poor, there was no footing whatsoever," Van der Merwe said.

The Varsity Blues opened the scoring in the first half on a goal by Kim Fowler. York picked up the play in the second half and completely dominated Toronto. In the dying minutes of the game Cathy Timmins tied the score when she smacked in a rebound off of a good shot taken by Tracy Minaker.

York plays their first game of the Ontario Women's Inter-University Athletic Association playoffs this Friday at Lamport Stadium at 2:00 p.m. York is pitted against a weak squad from Carleton and should advance to play either Western or Laurentian at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday.

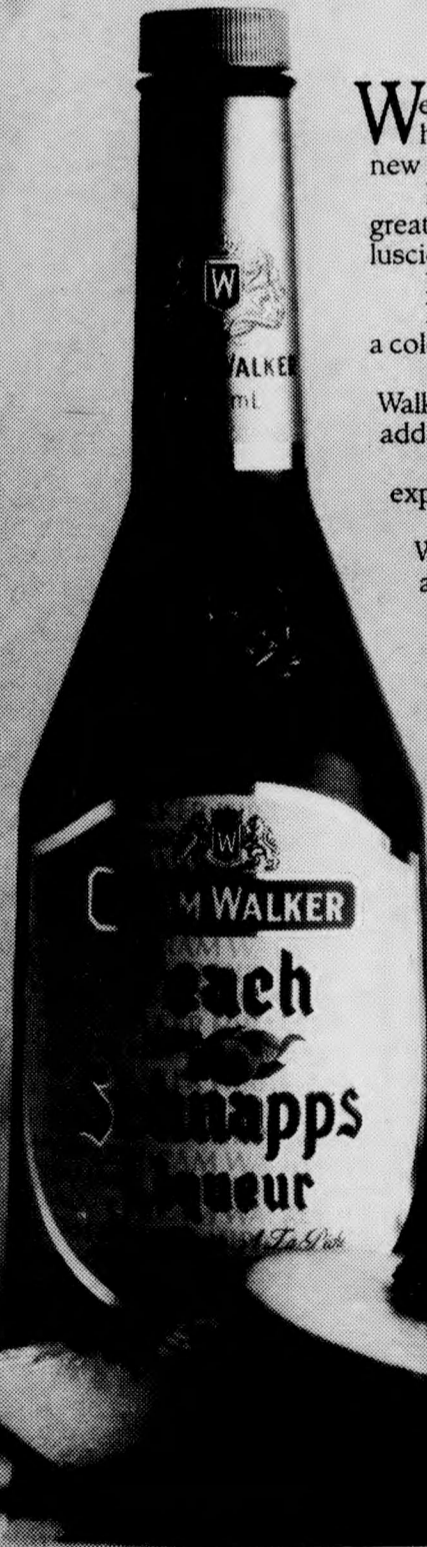


ROBERTA DI MAIO

TRACY "MARILYN MONROE" MINAKER: In her audition for the field hockey version of the 7 Year Itch Minaker stands over the future subway grate close to the York University station.

**IF YOU TOO
WANT TO SHOW
YOUR ASSETS
COME TO TODAY'S
3 P.M.
EXCALIBUR
STAFF MEETING**

From fuzzy thinking comes one peachy idea.



We at Hiram Walker are very happy to bring you our brand new Peach Schnapps.

It's a clever combination of the great taste of Schnapps with the luscious flavour of peaches.

It's great straight or all mixed up. For instance, you can easily make a cold Fuzzy Navel.

Just pour 2 ounces of Hiram Walker Peach Schnapps over ice and add orange juice to taste.

Or how about the chilling experience of a Peaches and Cream.

That's 1 1/2 ounces of Hiram Walker Peach Schnapps over ice and top it with milk or light cream.

Anyway you like it, our new Peach Schnapps has a cool, crisp, peachy taste.

And ideas like these don't just grow on trees.

**New Hiram Walker
Peach Schnapps.
Taste the Difference.**

For some peachy recipe ideas write Hiram Walker Schnapps, P.O. Box 2343, Department P, Brampton, Ontario L6T 3Y9.