

# Red Shirts take first place

by Sean Dockrill

An injured shoulder, a shattered nose, two red cards, and five tenacious teams could not stop the UNB Red Shirt machine from usurping first place in the western conference of the AUAA soccer league last week. Depth, poise, and personality are the key elements that enabled UNB to capture the throne with a record of 2 wins, 0 losses and 3 ties.

After totally dominating the St. FX Xmen in the first game of the season and escaping the game with only a 0-0 tie, UNB started their struggle for the top spot in their conference by clashing with eastern conference leader, the Acadia Axemen, on Sat. Sept. 21, at 3:00 p.m. here at Chapman field.

It did not look good for the Shirts in the first half of the game. Acadia pressed the ball in UNB's end for much of the first half and at the 15 min mark the Axemen fluked in a side volley from a corner kick. The Shirt Keeper was way out of position and really did not have much of a chance to stop the ball as it bounced into the net. It was kind of a lucky goal," Ex-Red Shirt veteran David Brown commented, "but they all count. If you don't shoot, you don't score." Twenty-five minutes later, UNB salvaged the game. Tony White was hauled down in the 18 yard box and Kevin Thompson aced the ensuing penalty shot to tie up the game.

The second half proved to be uneventful, and even uninteresting. Both teams seemed lethargic. This could have been caused by the freezing downpour that occurred during the half-time break that had a deadening effect on both the players and the fans, but had an overwhelmingly slippery impact on the ball. Shouts from the bench like, "C'mon Boys, you're walking, C'mon!" resounded over the action on the field. This rejuvenated the Shirts squad and motivated Red Shirt right winger, Peter

Tran to make two very spectacular attempts to score, which were thwarted by the Acadia Netminder. The final score was 1-1.

On Sat. Sept. 22, the Dalhousie Tigers were the next game for the Shirts. UNB donned their chair mail apparel for this match as Dalhousie was reputed to be the best team in the entire AUAA league. However, this did not intimidate Red Shirt striker Malcome Lightfoot in the least. Seven minutes into the second half Lightfoot stormed by two tiger defenders and blasted a shot that would have gone through the tiger net minder had he been in the way.

The action did not stop until the final whistle was blown. Both teams darted up and down the field with intricate passes and plays, nullified only by the impeccable defence of both squads. It wasn't until 30 minutes elapsed into the second half that the Tigers' unsheathed their claws and slashed a chink in the Red Shirt's Iron defence.

Dalhousie Striker #10, Andy Wheeler, was the hero for his team as he kicked a long throw towards the UNB goal. The ball struck the post and ricocheted the ball centimeters before Shirt goal tender, Trevor Shaw covered it up. The goal was counted and Dalhousie tied up the game 1-1. Red Shirt centre half, Kevin Thompson injured his shoulder during this incident and was forced to sit out the remainder of this game and the next two as well.

It was personality that carried the UNB Red Shirts to victory against the Universite de Moncton Blue Eagles on Wed. Sept. 15 at UDEM; personality and sheer guts. Co-captain, Mike Connelly, aptly dubbed the match, "the game from hell," with "poison refing". A monsoon like rain drenched the field during the entire match, but this could not stop the charging Shirts in the first half. Again Malcome Lightfoot commenced the



scoring for the Shirts by finishing a marvelous attack that was carefully orchestrated by the Red Shirt midfielders.

Donald Hume sailed in the second goal with a power house shot that almost ripped a hole in the mesh of Moncton's net. The goal came from an attack led by Tony White, who drilled the ball into the post. Moncton's defense stood idly by and watched, flabbergasted, as Hume pounded the rebound through the poles.

It was almost like Deja Vu when Tony White hammered in the third goal for UNB at the twenty minute mark in the first half. The ball was rebounded from the Moncton defence, much like it did for Donald Hume, allowing White to step through the ball with such strength and precision that the Moncton Goalie was helpless to save the shot. He could only watch idly as it went in the left side of the net.

After this, however, things became quite grim for the Shirts. The Blue Eagles swarmed the UNB goal, and in the scramble Moncton Striker kicked the starting Red Shirt goaltender, Trevor Shaw in the

nose with such ferocity that it exploded into shards of blood.

Shaw had to be removed from the game and will most likely be out for another week at least. The referee did not stop the play and the Moncton Blue Eagles put the ball into the empty net. This edged them closer to the Shirts making the score 3-1.

Jeff Downey replaced Trevor Shaw in the UNB goal. He played superbly stopping several nice shots tried by the Moncton Strikers. But after UNB's Mike Connelly and Tony White were ejected from the game in the second half with one yellow, and one red card each, things became tense.

Moncton took advantage of the fact that UNB had only nine players on the field and swooped continuously at the UNB goal. Finally the Blue Eagles scored making the game 3-2. They continued to mount the pressure in the last five minutes of the game, and with 3 minutes left a Moncton striker found Downey way out of position. The lone eagle attempted to softly put the ball in the empty net, but fate would prevent him. A huge mud puddle that had materialized in front of the UNB goal during the game

Jamie Rowan photo stopped the ball dead, and allowed Jeff Downey to pounce on it. This would enable UNB to win the match 3-2.

Depth took UNB to victory over the UPEI Panthers on Sun. Sept. 25 in UPEI. U.N.B. was missing three of their starters due to injury: Kevin Thompson, Trevor Shaw, and Donald Hume. And two because they were awarded a red card in their previous match: Mike Connelly and Tony White. UNB had to rely on their strong bench to defeat the prowess of the panthers.

Bobby Cormier, Miles Pinsent, Andy Miller, and Adrian Thompson all played extraordinarily well, and their effort directly influenced Malcome Lightfoot's goal, placing UNB in the lead 1-0. UPEI failed to retaliate and the Shirts tightened their defensive shell for the rest of the game to easily defeat the chippy Panthers.

This puts UNB in first place at the moment. However, with the teams being so close it is hard to foresee what lies ahead for the Shirts. Their next game is against Mount Allison on Wed. Oct. 9, here at the Chapman field. Game time is at 4:00 p.m.



James Rowan photo

The Sports Department of the *Brunswickan* would like to thank Al White from the *Telegraph Journal* for hosting our workshop on Monday night. It was very useful and informative.