

# Rugger Yeomen on rise ready for run at playoffs

By MARK ZWOLINSKI

Rugby—the game where players never die, but just eat their dead—returns to York as the 1983 Ontario University Athletic Association (OUAA) rugby season gets under way this weekend.

Coach Mike Dinning, who also serves as the president of the Ontario Rugby Union (ORU), brings a veteran squad into the season with the bulk of last year's team returning to suit up for the Red and White.

"We'll definitely be competitive with anyone in the league," Dinning said. "The key will be in a strong second team. We'll have a lot of depth to draw from in case of injury, something we just couldn't afford last year."

The Yeomen are in the midst of an upswing as far as their won/lost record is concerned, having improved their 3-5-1 mark of 1981 to a third place 5-2-1 finish a year ago.

Despite their improvement, however, the Yeomen failed to make the playoffs—they lost a close 9-3 match to the Guelph Gryphons which eliminated them from the second and final post-season spot in the OUAA standings.

York simply didn't have the depth front-running sides like Guelph and U of T had at their disposal.

But with the added experience several players received while playing in the ORU senior league this summer, the Yeomen feel confident they can take a serious run at a playoff berth.

We had an awfully good record last year and still didn't make the playoffs," Dinning said. "This year Laurier has joined the league which means we'll be playing nine games."

"I don't expect anyone with less than a 7-2 record will be in the playoffs, but we should be right in

there come playoff time," he said.

The loss of Joe Parisselli, who opted to return to football this year and Leo "Club Foot" Nishio, who is attending York for a short period of time to complete his masters degree, will leave holes in the running and kicking game respectively.

The 6'3", 210 lb. Parisselli anchored the York club's senior side in ORU action this summer, while Nishio's consistent kicking game was the big reason for York's winning season a year ago.

"Joe was always a football player," Dinning said. "But we have people capable of filling his shoes."

"Mike Clayton and Frank Safian will handle the kicking game and will help us," Dinning added.

"I think our strength lies in our backs this year. Both Clayton and Mark MacCaulay played in the ORU this summer and will give us speed in that position," he said.

"Our main weakness last year was in the tight five, front and second row positions, but John Christie and Dimech Kokkinakis, who also played ORU ball this summer, will help improve on that."

This year the OUAA league will boast an even greater balance of power with defending champion Guelph touted as the team to beat. York opens its season this Saturday with a game against the Waterloo Warriors. Game time is 2 p.m. at the York field.

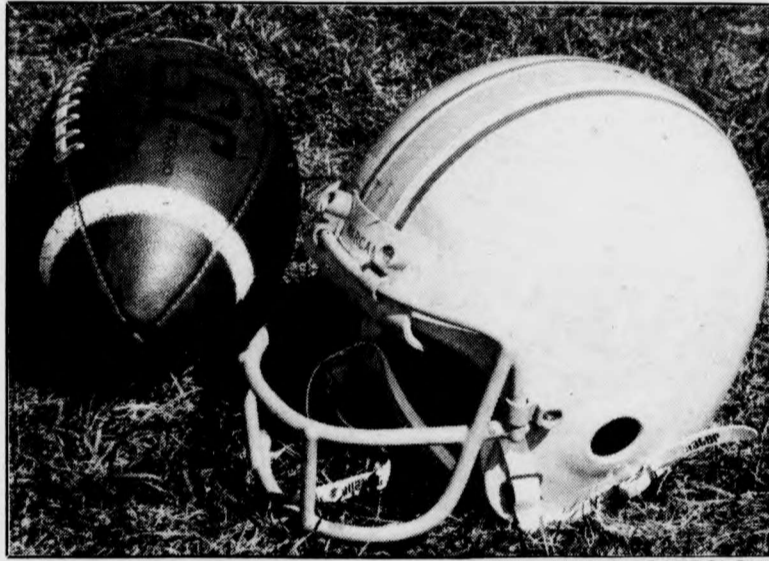


PHOTO: MARIO SCATTOLONI

York's Rugger Yeomen get their OUAA season underway this Saturday, against the Waterloo Warriors.

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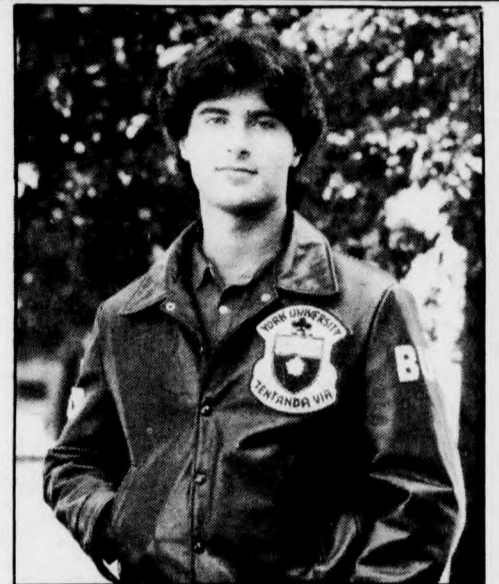
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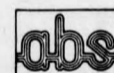
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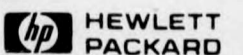


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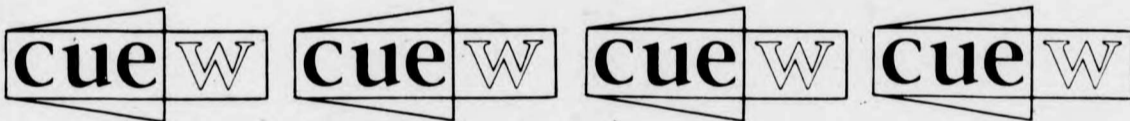


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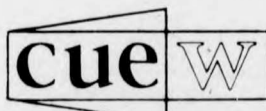
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