

Long football season looks endless

by Joel Fournier

Well long suffering Dalhousie Football fans, once again it looks like this is not the year of the Tiger. This edition of the team has fallen on hard times in their last two outings and have been humbled twice in succession. First the Acadia Axemen performed the feat at Wolfville and most recently St. Francis Xavier X-Men repeated it at the Wanderer's Grounds. In case you hadn't heard the score was 61-7.

The Antigonish squad displayed a devastating, well balanced offense in rolling over the seemingly helpless Tigers and scored almost at will. Meanwhile, the Dal offence could find little running room against what appeared to be an impenetrable "X" defense.

I had written an article for last weeks issue of the Gazette, but for some reason it never got to print. It's just as well that it didn't because in it I had implied that Dal's loss to Acadia was just one of those bad days and that it was certainly not likely to happen again. Well obviously I was dead wrong. I'm afraid that after seeing the team play against Mount Allison and having been with them through pre-season camp, I had let my optimism get the better of my judgement.

It has become painfully clear to this observer that again, the Atlantic Football Conference for all intents and purposes is a three team league and sadly, we're not one of them.

Why isn't Dal in it? It's not because the players don't do their best and play their hearts out. It's not because the coaching staff are poor or not dedicated. It's not because there's little or no fan support, because this year there has been. Basically, the reason why we don't finish near the top is because

we are outclassed, both in ability and size. We have some players who can play for any team in Canada at the college level but unfortunately we don't have enough of them. Couple that fact with injuries and inexperience and it doesn't add up to a championship team. What makes it especially hard to swallow this time around, is that the off-season recruiting drive had built our hopes up a little higher than was warranted.

By now you might well be asking the obvious question, if we can't win even with recruiting, how can we? The problem is, the obvious question doesn't have a simple answer. The first response that would come to mind would be to recruit bigger and better players-and if need be, offer them some kind of incentive to come to Dal to play. Which is like saying, if you can't beat them, join them.

It's common knowledge that most of the colleges offer financial awards of some description to their top athletes, and at one time Dal did also. But this doesn't necessarily work, or at least not with any degree of certainty. Take the case of Mount Allison who have been known to beat the bushes far and wide in search of the elusive winning combination. As yet, to the best of my knowledge, they have never come up with a real winner.

On the other side of the argument you have the "Big Three" who are consistently at the top or near it. Why does it work for some and not for others? Your guess is as good as mine- certainly it can't be traced to one single factor.

So where does that leave us? Well we seem to have four alternatives. We can stay as we are and go on being humiliated by certain teams, a choice that doesn't appeal to me

and to anyone else I know - especially the players and coaches. We can go for all-out recruiting and if necessary end up buying a team. This alternative besides being contrary to CIAU legislation- if not the letter of it then certainly the spirit - has some very serious inherent problems. The most noteworthy example being the mess that American colleges find themselves in after several decades of this practice. Thirdly, we could try and persuade the other "Have-nots" in the conference to join us in forming a second league. Second class you say? Well maybe, depending on what you think college athletics is all about. The last choice is to drop out completely. But who wants that, other than a few super purists who would only be happy if universities taught nothing but fine arts and classics.

Perhaps I'm being unfair, there are no doubt many people in university who have no interest in athletics for very good reasons. However, for anyone who has ever played the game or for the fan who enjoys not only the game itself but the pageantry and colour that goes with it, a college without a football team when fall rolls around is definitely unappealing.

What course the university will decide to take is anyone's guess. There can be no doubt that a few arduous hours will be spent hashing over this problem. As can be seen even by the superficial analysis I've attempted above, there is no simple or easy answer. I am sure of one thing-the worst path that could be pursued would be to maintain the *status-quo*. The other three alternatives while having serious disadvantages just have to be better than doing nothing.

Meanwhile, until next year the

battle goes on. The Tigers could still finish the season with a break-even season provided of course that they come up with wins against UNB and PEI. Dal has this weekend off and there is no doubt that they need the time to recuperate and lick their wounds. The wars resume again on the eighteenth of October against arch rival SMU in the annual "Lobster Bowl" game. Even the most enthusiastic of Dal supporters would have trouble putting any money on the Tigers in this one. But what the heck, we'll keep hoping anyway.

Mean machine

by Greg Zed

The newly formed edition of The Mean Machine 1975-76 will plan to show several clubs that hockey is the name of the game and that Dalhousie is the team. Backed by a base of seven veterans and thirteen rookies the club has arranged games with other teams to give fans a preview of its talent. On top of that there may be a few points to prove. Firstly Acadia Axemen under the rookie coach of Pierre Gagne will invade the Tiger's Lair but coach Page and company will be out to show the young mentor why he was only second best. Although both Gagne and Page worked very well together it'll be interesting to see how they fair when meeting face to face.

Vince Desjardin who wants more ice time may get more than ice when he comes to Dal, with his Moncton Blue Eagles. I'm sure Vince has started months ago to psyche himself up for the Tigers but The Mean Machine may show Vince a few pucks.

Hockey will be ready

by Greg Zed

With only one week left before the Dalhousie Varsity Hockey Tigers hit the exhibition trail, the coaching staff is extremely pleased with the way the two week training camp has gone. Certainly it was a large task to build a team from some sixty hopefuls. I viewed the club's work-outs last week and my first impression was the conditioning of many of the players. After only a week on skates many hopefuls are showing signs of "pre-season talent".

Four rookies that come to mind include Rick Hooke, Hal Davidson, Bob Lewicki and Jack Gray. Both Hooke and Gray made appearances at last year's training camp but due to circumstances vacated early. Lewicki and Davidson are new to Dalhousie, however, both mentioned the great morale and "togetherness" that is part of the Tigers squad.

"I can't believe how loose the boys are in the dressing room" said Davidson. "Here are fifty boys all trying out for spots yet they help each other out. This is great". One thing Davidson, who played on the Nova Scotia Junior B Silver Medal Winners Canada Games Team was very surprised with, was the lack of audience at the practices. "In Amherst, we use to get hundreds of fans out just to watch a practice but here there is only a handful." Davidson is from Amherst and his 6' 3" frame and 190 lbs weight makes him not only a strong skating left winger but one can expect some good hard hitting contact from him. When asked about his trip to the Nova Scotia Vees (for exhibition

games) he suggested that the jump is quite a big one, however, he certainly has the size to handle himself. In fact, once this rookie builds up self-confidence Dalhousie will certainly benefit from him.



Hal Davidson

Jack Gray, another native of Nova Scotia, played with the Dartmouth Arrows for two years and was selected best defenseman on the team (1974-75). He joined Hal Davidson on the Nova Scotia Jr. B. team in the Winter Games. Gray is a 5' 6" frame with 145 lbs of flesh, but, if the camp is any indication of stability, it appears that no player in this league is going to take him lightly. Although defense has been his past position, it is quite obvious

that the coaching staff will use bursts of speed up front. Gray who played against Dal last year (as a member of the Winter Games Team) suggested that the team has more balance than last year. Thus far this appears quite accurate, however, only time will tell.

Rick Hooke, a native of Halifax saw action with QEH in the area two years ago and certainly has been quite impressive. His 5' 11" frame" along with 165 lbs. of "muscle" allow him to fly down the left lane of the rink and his quick shot has surprised many hopeful Tiger goalies. Hooke's most noticeable talent is the ability to move quickly. He can go with a check and after falling to the ice-he's up in a flash and going. Without a doubt he'll aid the Dalhousie cause.

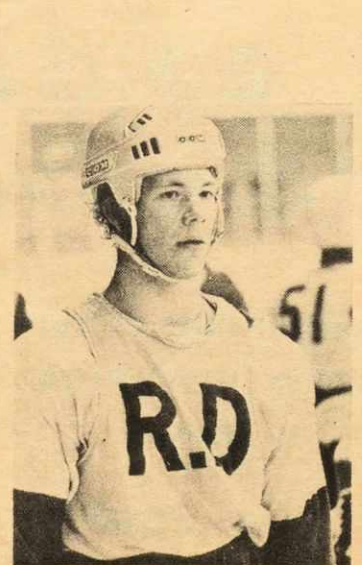
Finally Dalhousie has set its eyes on the traveller. I say the traveller because Bob Lewicki, who stands 5' 10" on a 175 lb. frame has been all over the continent playing hockey. He played for Thunder Bay Hurricanes which is in the Midwest Jr. A. League. He spent a year with the Spokane Jets in Washington U.S.A. This was in the Pacific International Semi-Pro League. To top it off Lewicki is only nineteen years old. Bob played a few exhibition games with the Vees, however, he is with the Tigers for the season.

One thing Lewicki noted was the fact that the calibre of hockey in the Atlantic Intercollegiate League is on par with his past experiences. He also made mention of the "great team morale that is bubbling over in the team dressing room" The boys on the team play together and then hang around together. It may sound like a clique but the whole team is like that. We are all part of each other and hell we all help each other

out." Lewicki is a tough centreman who *should* get added support from his residence groupies from Bronson House. Year after year Howe Hall has supported the Tiger's hockey club and with Bob (a Bronson House floor representative) on the team he'll have his own fan club. The question, however, is who'll draw the most fan support-Lewicki or Hal Davidson.

Veteran defenseman John Gillis will be out until after Christmas due to an injury in practice, however, his spirit and team leadership ability will definitely be used from the bench.

All in all it appears to be a well balanced team. The club appears to have several strong skaters, tough defensemen and an array of sharp shooters. In my opinion the team will fair better than last year's, however, all predictions will come when the club is finalized.



Jack Gray