

Another One Bites the Dust

— RED SHIRTS CIAU CHAMPS

UNB has at last reached the pinnacle of national team competition. On Sunday the Red Shirts defeated the Wilfred Laurier Golden Hawks 3-1 to capture the CIAU Soccer crown. The win gave UNB its first national championship since the conception of CIAU.

The game began on a frozen College Field as both teams played cautiously at first in order to become accustomed to the conditions.

Robbie MacFarlane gave UNB the all-important first goal. MacFarlane connected with a shot to the low right side after receiving a pass from teammate Ebenezer Dania. Four minutes later the Dania-MacFarlane connection struck again. This time it was Dania who scored as he tucked in a rebound from MacFarlane shot which hit the post.

The Red Shirts finished the half with a 2-0 lead.

The Shirts began the last half of the season well but a bad break allowed Laurier's Scott Fraser to score from a short free kick that got by the UNB wall and past goaltender Dave Harding.

With the help of the almost 200 cheering fans in attendance, the Red Shirts picked up after this goal and continued to control the play.

As a result of their relentless attack, Dania scored his second goal of the game to give the team the insurance goal that they needed. The goal resulted from a breakaway as Dania received the ball from a Harding kick and outraced the defense to the goal.

As the whistle to end the game sounded the fans swarmed the field to congratulate the Shirts. After the team was presented the Sam Davidson Memorial Trophy they ran a victory lap of the field, a sight which may very well be seen several times in the future.



Ebenezer Dania scores U.N.B.'s third goal to seal the win.

JUDY KAVANAGH Photo

Summary of Red Shirt's Year

By ALBERT EL-KHOURY

The UNB Red Shirts have been proclaimed Canadian University Soccer champions by virtue of a convincing 3-1 victory over Sir Wilfred Laurier University. It was an exciting and rewarding season, but not without its ups and downs.

Fortunately for the Red Shirts the low points were mostly at the beginning of the season: losing the first game of the regular schedule, holding third place in their division about one-third of the way through the season, not being ranked nationally for the first four weeks of the season, lack of off-campus media coverage and an aura of pessimism surrounding the team as a result of previous play-off performances.

The high points came during the second half of the season and gradually increased in intensity until the climax was reached at that memorable day at College Field where UNB was officially declared Canadian University Champions. Some of the high points were: remaining undefeated after their initial loss, finishing with the best record in the Atlantic Conference as well as having the most powerful offense and stingiest defense in the nation, an abundance of press coverage at the end of the season, and large

turnouts at both the Canadian Eastern and Canadian National Championship held here in Fredericton.

It was only fitting that UNB met arch-rival St. Mary's in the Atlantic championship. St. Mary's had beaten UNB the previous year on penalty kicks and it just so happened that St. Mary's was UNB's stiffest competition on their route to the championship. The Red Shirts gained a measure of revenge by edging St. Mary's 3-2 to win the Atlantic Soccer Conference.

After three seasons of finishing as bridesmaids, the Red Shirts finally put it all together and shook the choke image that they were labelled with once and for all. No one (except the players and coaches) expected the Red Shirts to do well this year. They had lost two key starters and their starting line ups included three rookies. The loss of last year's leading scorer George Wood early in the season due to injury could have had a negative effect on any other team. But not our Red Shirts. Their depth at every position and the skills displayed by the substitutes overcame this and every other misfortune that arose.

Losing the first game of the season did not help UNB's cause and it was an uphill struggle for the boys in red and white when their season record stood at 1-1-1 after three games and they were buried deep in third place in the Western division of the Atlantic League. But the rebirth of the Red Shirts was meant to be.

What happened to the UNB Red Shirts in the weeks that followed is the greatest success story that this University has ever experienced as far as sports is concerned. UNB went on to win their next eleven games, outscoring the opposition 34-3. This they accomplished with limited press coverage and fan support. Although the Red Shirts were an almost forgotten team during their drive for the Canadian championship, they began to show signs of greatness when they invaded St. John's, Newfoundland and beat the always powerful Memorial Beothucks by scores of 2-1 and 1-0. It was the first time even that Memorial had been swept by any team either away or at home.

UNB had to overcome various adversities throughout the year including injuries to key personnel practices under less than ideal conditions (cold, rain, muddy field and strong winds), the choke syndrome that they were labelled with after losing the finals for three years running. None of these prevented the Red Shirts from continuing to give 100 per cent day in and day out and from representing their university with honour.

They never let anything get in their way as they drew closer and closer to becoming the premiere soccer team in Canada. They literally destroyed any team (with the exception of St. Mary's Huskies which proved to be a formidable opponent in the Atlantic finals) that was in their path. In the Atlantic semi-finals they were

definitely the superior team as they outclassed St. Francis 3-0. Then in a hard fought match against defending champions St. Mary's their dedication, perseverance, determination, courage and overall teamwork resulted in a come-from-behind 3-2 victory.

UNB made believers out of their critics with their very impressive play in the championship tournament. Only then did the press and general public start to realize that this was not just a good team. It was a team with character, togetherness, and skill that deserved recognition. The Red Shirts are a first class, well-coached organization and although they lacked fan support throughout the regular season they continued to do what they do best - win soccer games and at the same time entertain the few devoted fans as they have for several years.

Towards the end of the season, one could sense that this team had what it took to be champions. After three heartbreaking losses in three previous finals Coach Brown's fortunes had taken a turn for the better. It was becoming more and more evident on the field that the Red machine was operating with efficiency and almost to perfection. McGill a university with an enrollment four times that of UNB, would be the test. The Red Shirts outran, outplayed, outshot and outscored McGill 3-0 an any delusion of grandeur that McGill might have

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Captain Eddie Hansen holds the victory cup aloft.

BEVERLEY BENNETT Photo