



ZWOL ON SPORTS

TENNIS BLUES

"You can't open your mouth to an official and expect to get away with anything. That's the coach's job--that's what he's there for..."

Matt Galante, New York Mets

Mark Zwol

When a team enters an inter-varsity tournament with one of its players acting as coach, it is immediately placed at a disadvantage. How can any team member represent the club, have full knowledge of team rules, and concentrate on his or her game? If you ask me, it's a bit futile for a team to play with such a handicap, but the Yeomen Tennis Team--Mark Goldhar, Laurie Dale, Nick Woolf and John McLeod--did just that at the OUA Eastern Regional Tournament in Hamilton. And although York finished a more than respectable second, a knowledgeable coach might have allowed them to take top honors.

The lack of a coach at the tournament was nothing new for the Yeomen. In fact, the team has gone through its whole season without any coaching representative whatsoever. "Our tryouts started the first day of school. No one was hired for the job; no Prof wanted to take a stab at it, so Laurie took on the role of choosing the team. We went to the OUA Eastern regionals and did extremely well," commented Goldhar.

With York and U of T running neck and neck in the tournament standings, Goldhar's victory in the Men's Singles Championship gave the Yeomen a slight edge, but the doubles championship still stood between his team and overall victory. In the end, York's lack of a coach decided both the doubles event and York's final placing.

Typical U of T move

Theoretically, or in accordance with rules that always seem to get broken, a team must submit a player roster before the tournament begins; the players on that roster are trusted to represent the team throughout the tourney. The Yeomen were scheduled to play the Blues in a doubles match a day after the tournament began. As it turned out, U of T cried the "Blues"--claiming one of the players had come down with an ailment of some type. The player was replaced by David Givens, who also happens to be a club player. Givens was listed as an alternate, and although the substitution is not a direct contravention of tournament rules, the funny thing is that the "ailing" U of T player showed up at the match--he was "unable to play".

"It was a slimy thing to do--a typical U of T move," Goldhar said.

The Blues went on to defeat York in that match, capturing the overall team title. Acting Yeomen coach Laurie Dale's protest against the proposed player change proved futile, as his argument was "lost in the

shuffle"--he didn't have full knowledge of the league rules (not that he should, he is a team member don't forget). A coach would have had complete knowledge of the OUA rulings on such matters, but since the Yeomen had no representative, they had to settle for a hard-to-swallow, second-place finish.

"Just a question of bucks"

So what's being done about the coaching situation with York's Men's Tennis Team? Men's athletic director Knobby Wirkowski looks at both the tennis coaching situation and the nullified tournament protest as "things that have to be taken in stride."

"People say to me, 'Why do you keep tennis alive? Why not just have football, hockey, and basketball?' But I try to treat every inter-varsity team as an equal. I vote in favour of tennis at the league meetings but the scheduling is really tough--why should the season be prolonged when the championships are over? I can't get a coach for two weeks. I mean, it's kind of fruitless, you know, to get a top-notch guy and ask him to work two weeks into his schedule. Besides, other schools like Queens and Western start on the 20th; we start on the 13th. That'll cut the season short," Wirkowski said.

"I have this problem all the time--teams come to me and ask for this and that. I'd love to oblige them, but it's a question of bucks--and we don't have 'em," he went on to say.

"As far as the protest goes, Laurie and I went over the whole thing and there's not much you can do about it. Other coaches said that they (U of T) shouldn't have done it, but it depends what side of the fence you're on. Legally they can do it and get away with it--the rule states: 'A player forced to withdraw during or after a match may be replaced for succeeding matches by the extra man on the team.' It's just a question of ethics."

Deja-vu

Wirkowski has his hands full with many similar such situations involving intervarsity teams. It's not a case of the man at the top keeping his "patrons" happy by giving them enough to get by. Really, it's just a question of dollars--a tune I'm sure you've all heard before.

The whole thing has become somewhat "deja-vu", especially in light of more recent Yeomen defeats at the hands of their local rivals. U of T has been noted to come up with such manoeuvres in the past, and will unquestionably continue to do so in the future, because money "to do everything" and elevated nasal passages never seem to mix with ethics.

It's unfortunate that the York men's tennis team came across such a situation in the battle for the OUA crown. They displayed a lot of class and character in spite of the final outcome. So, "all ye fellow Yeomen", grit your teeth harder the next time you see "blue and white".

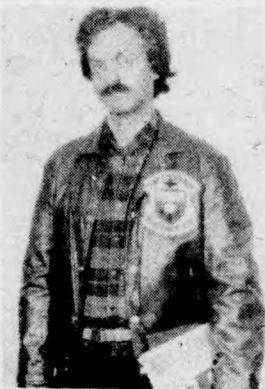
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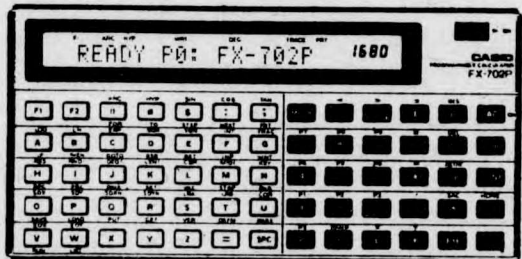
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Red and White draw at Queens

Bob Klein and Mark Zwol The York Rugby Yeomen travelled to Kingston this past week-end to do battle with Queen's. And although the Red and White gave one hundred and ten percent, they only managed a 7-7 draw.

Queen's capitalized on Yeomen disorganization, taking the lead on a penalty kick, and scoring later on an unconverted try. They led at the half 7-0.

In the second half York regained its composure and played the calibre of Rugby Yeomen fans are used to seeing. The York forwards muscled in a five yard try, that was touched down by "eight man", Domiche Kokanakis. York continued to dominate the second half, which also saw an unfortunate series of events: a Yeomen try was called back by the referee, who was in the defenders' way. Leo Koopman managed to tie the game at 7-7, on a penalty kick.

York continued to pressure Queen's with strong play by their forwards and backs. Queen's provided excellent defense to keep the game locked at seven all, despite York's strong advances.

The Yeomen are currently in second place in the OUA standings with a respectable 3-1-1 record. This week-end the Yeomen play host to the Western Mustangs. Something to keep in mind is the "Boxer short and shade party" this Thursday in the Bethune Junior Common Room. The money raised at the bash will go a long way towards organizing a club.

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