

# Wickwire paying dividends

matches.

Aside from this, Fraser points out that injuries on the old Studley field arose from the several ruts and divots that developed through overuse; not to mention the "lake in the middle." Despite the poor reputation artificial turf has for injuries, it has proven less dangerous thus far.

Dal women's soccer coach Neil Turnbull echoes Fraser's thoughts regarding injuries. He has also made available information to his athletes and to the intramural program on techniques to reduce the chance of injury while playing.

Varsity programs have gained

The University itself has also received valuable publicity locally and nationally. The CIAU Men's Soccer Championships will be hosted at Wickwire field in November 1997. This follows the successfully hosted women's Nationals in 1996. Athletic Director Tony Martin says, "We got it because of the field."

While the field has brought national exposure to the university, Martin emphasizes the benefit to the community, calling the surface "an awesome statement for soccer," specifically in light of the fact that the field is for soccer only and not for football. The facility (when it is not being rented) is open to the community in the summer.

"[This allows for] tremendous community integration and is a resource for the university and the city," said Martin.

He notes that while revenue generation is encouraged there is also an effort to keep one space for students, especially during the school year.

In less than two years since its official opening the F.B. Wickwire Memorial Field has successfully bid for two national soccer championships, renewed interest in the Maritimes' largest intramural program, benefited the sur-

rounding community, and provided countless value in promotional dollars to the University. Any field inquiries should be made to Dalplex.



BY AMIT BATRA

Wickwire Field is not even two years old but already it is paying huge dividends to Dalhousie University.

With a pricetag of approximately three million dollars, the field was rumoured to have been built with the ultimate goal of hosting a football team. Recent news of the cancellation of the proposed football program put these rumours to rest.

Building the field was not a bad decision. According to Shawn Fraser, Supervisor of Campus Recreation and Leisure Programs, the fall intramural program has "been given complete new life" and this is reflected in the large increase in students participating. Fraser anticipates the program growing to include 48-50 soccer teams every fall. He has also been able to offer new intramural programs such as flag football and ultimate

frisbee.

The greatest benefit to Fraser's office has been the easier planning that has resulted from having "a dependable surface."



In the past, on account of poor weather, intramurals were cancelled at the last minute in hopes of preserving the field for varsity

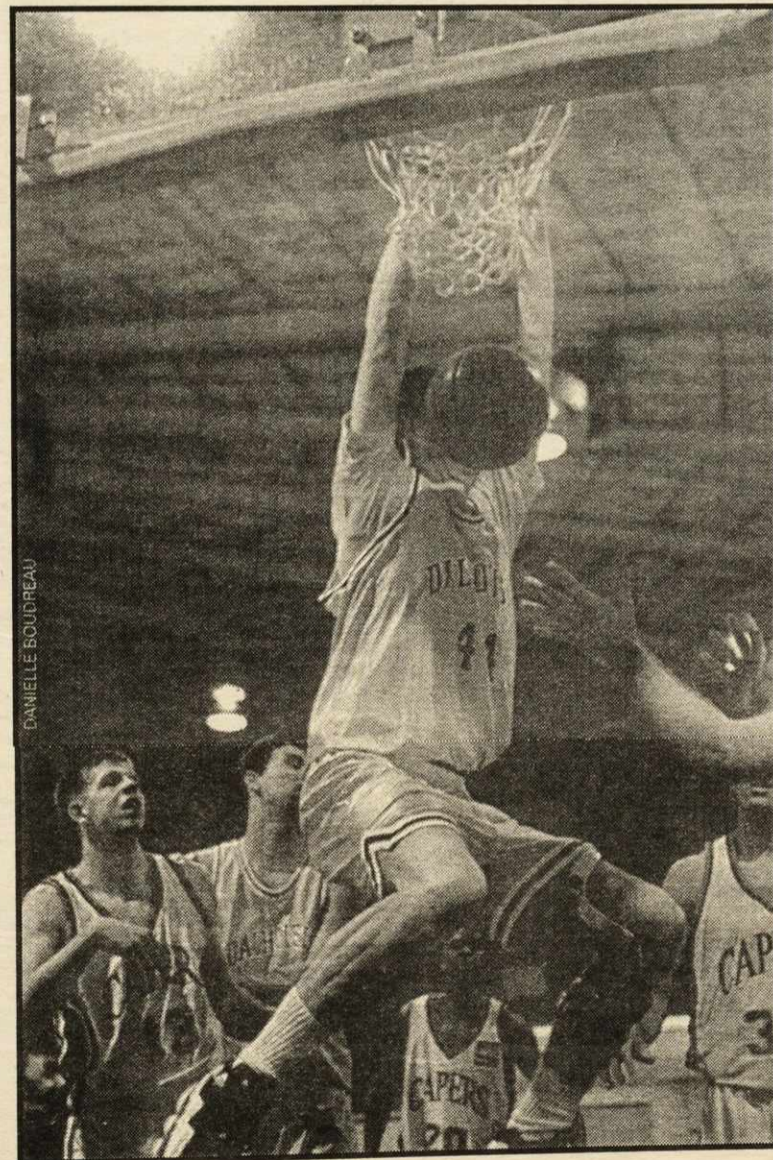
enormously according to Turnbull, also the coach of the National women's team.

"Varsity soccer has gone from a thirteen week program to an eight month program," he says.


He goes on to add that the turf is a "super facility" which has helped recruiting for our nationally recognized soccer programs.

Ian Kent, coach of the men's team, concurs with Turnbull.

Kent also oversees the business aspects of the field. Dalhousie has a rental target of \$35,000 per year to help pay the mortgage on the field. In pursuit of this target Dalhousie hosts an annual spring league. This year ninety-five teams are participating which translates into approximately fifteen hundred players of all ages and levels. In addition, six local soccer clubs are renting the field and Halifax Dunbrack's 1st Division club is using Wickwire as its home field. The facility will also earn money by hosting nine weeks of soccer camps while simultaneously creating jobs for students.



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For more information on this challenging and rewarding volunteer opportunity, contact our office at 1-888-779-0061 or by E-mail: [best.buddies@sympatico.ca](mailto:best.buddies@sympatico.ca)

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