

sports comment

College hockey has problems

It appears that as the Atlantic Intercollegiate League is in its final stretch, teams from the various university campuses are striving for a playoff berth. In fact, this year Dalhousie, Mt. Allison, U.P.E.I., Acadia, St. F.X., and St. Mary's are all looking for a spot when the league winds up in mid-February.

To add to the surging pressure on each team, the league fathers have been up to their "bush-league" decisions. Unfortunately, the Dalhousie squad was most drastically affected. I'll expound on this matter. However, let me make one thing perfectly clear, that being, the aim of this article.

First and foremost, it is my aim to describe the bush-league operations of the league fathers. It is my aspiration that the letter to the Gazette last week from "a loyal Dal hockey fan will be answered.

Secondly, it is my aim to examine the officiating that has marred the Atlantic Intercollegiate Hockey League thus far this season.

Last weekend the Dalhousie team travelled to Mt. Allison to play the Mounties. The last time the two clubs tangled in Allison Gardens, the Tigers came out on the long end of an 8-3 drubbing which was nothing short of a continuous brawl...it was obvious that from the opening whistle the referee had allowed the game to get out of control. The game was scarred by chippy playing by both teams. In fact it was apparent that you could "get away with anything". Fans may not be the best judges of officials but even both coaches expressed their displeasure with the officiating. It was deplorable.

On January 15th., the Tigers again travelled to Sackville to tangle

with the Mounties. It was all of that. Three Dalhousie players were involved in fights but strangely enough nothing was done in terms of discipline at the time BUT low and behold when the Tigers left the ice after the game league President Warren Lutes, who is also the Athletic Director at Mt. Allison summoned Dalhousie mentor Pierre Page to the officials room to discuss the fighting episodes. Well, the sum total of the deliberation was that right winger Grant Pyle was suspended for one game. Incidentally the Tigers were scheduled to play the following day in a key game against P.E.I.

It appeared that Pyle was to sit out on the deliberations of one man...Warren Lutes. It certainly doesn't seem fair that one man should make such an important

decision without consulting with the other league fathers??? To add to this Lutes, being from Mt. Allison certainly has a latent vested interest in Mt. Allison. This move was certainly detrimental to the Tigers, who have continued to be rivals with Mr. Allison for a number of years. Currently both clubs are striving for the playoffs.

The best is yet to come. This past weekend Dal pucksters were gearing up for the Acadia-Dalhousie game on Friday when all of a sudden Lutes informed the Dalhousie coaching staff that rear-guards Rick Roemer and Tom Macleod are to sit out the game due to their part in the fight in Mt. Allison—Certainly another bush move especially since the game was a mere twenty-four hours away. How convenient to contact the Athletic office at four o'clock to send the "good news". It might of been better to call an hour before the game!!! Well Dalhousie coaches were upset to say the least but rather than fight the cause, they set out the two rear-guards and fortunately won the game.

Well what's up now? Can we expect another amateur move before the league ends or are the tactics over for another season... we'll have to wait and see.

With Lutes off the Tigers backs for a week, it appears that the officials have picked up. It is becoming apparent that the officials are getting worse as the season goes on.

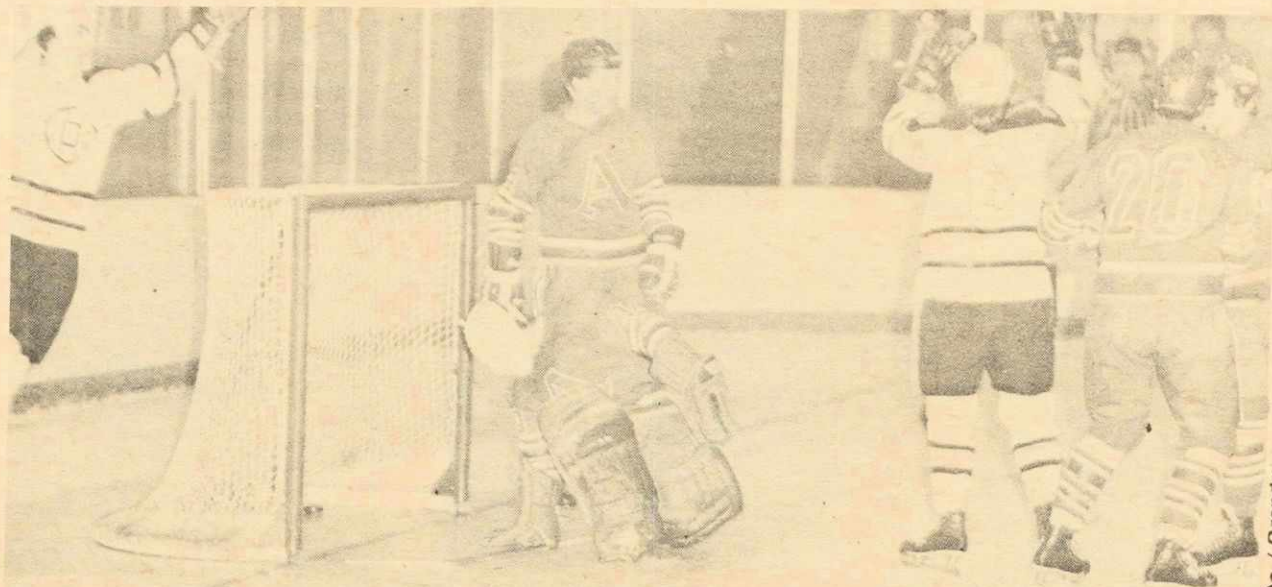
Last weekend the Dal squad were involved in a close contest with Acadia when the Acadia squad put on a fine offensive drive. The Dal net was literally torn off its posts but nothing was done...so the Axemen's Bill Young fired the puck into the dislocated net. The goal

judge was estatic...in fact he went to the officials room between periods to tell the referee that the net was obviously out of position. It was all in vain...he was told to mind his own business. It seemed that, in fact, the judge was doing his job. The point to be made is that, although, this isolated incident was chosen to depict blatant officiating. This has been going on for the past five years to say the least BUT nothing is done. How many officials attend clinics to improve their jobs? How many officials review game films to pick up mistakes? How many officials want to take any steps towards improvement their involvement in the game? The answers to the questions are simply NONE. In fact, it appears that no disciplinary action is taken for gross incompetence, BUT, let a coach or player speak against the inefficiencies that are becoming more and more important and what happens? Misconducts, fines, suspension, and the whole gamut of action that accompanies the action.

It is about time that coaches and other people involved with the planning and implementation of hockey constitutions sit down and review the inadequacies that are a legend in college hockey.

Maybe, however, the league fathers would rather see increasing violence in hockey or even animalistic behavior of fans before something is done. Maybe, it is time for fans, who come to enjoy hockey will put an end to these bush-league operations. Unfortunately, the fans participation could be rather violent for officials.

Can you imagine the head-lines some-day: Fans revolt...three officials sent to hospital. Change is necessary or revolt is pressing.



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