

Sports

Spotlight on the hockey Tigers...

A night on the Road

by Colin Mann and John Perkyns

There has not been very much written about this year's Dalhousie hockey team, however, their record indicates that they are one of the strongest teams to represent Dalhousie in recent years. Both the individual and team records are testimony to this. To find out a little more about the team and the individuals involved, we accompanied them on their recent road trip to Moncton. Included are a few excerpts from interviews taken on that trip.

Dalhousie finished in first place in their division this year with 17 wins, six losses, and three ties for a total of 37 points, two ahead of second place St. Mary's and third place Moncton. Also impressive are the figures for goals for and against. Dalhousie scored the second highest number of goals and combined this with the third lowest number of goals against in the entire ten team league.

The most remarkable individual achievements were the scoring records set by Brian Gualazzi. The first to be broken was the all-time Dal scoring record previously set by Ron Naud between 1969 and 1972 as Gualazzi picked up his 143rd career point. The second, and more prestigious, was the AUAA single-season scoring record. Brian scored 37 regular season goals, 2 better than the old mark set in 1971-72 by Dalhousie's Greg McCulloch.

Brian played 4 years of junior hockey with the Sault-Ste. Marie Greyhounds after which he was drafted by Minnesota. This is his third year with the Tigers and he has one year left in his commerce degree.

Gazette: How did you feel about breaking the record?

Brian: Well, I was pretty happy. I didn't think about it at the beginning of the year, but then as I got closer to it... it was nice to break.

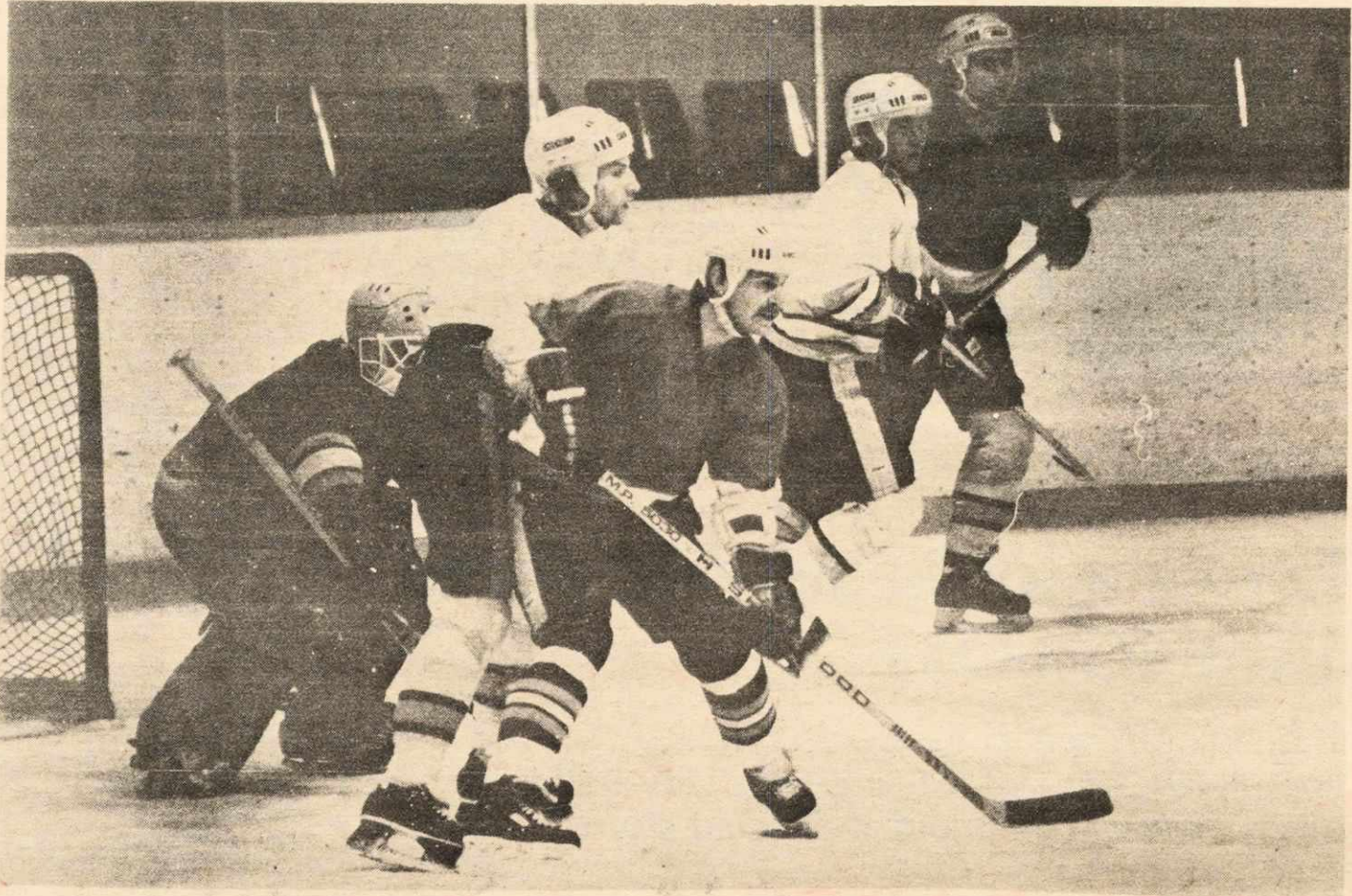
Gazette: Towards the end do you think your line was feeding you?

Brian: Oh, there is no question -- they were feeding me. The last couple of games (when) we knew we had first place, we started thinking about it more.

Gazette: Do you find it difficult to integrate your studies with hockey?

Brian: The first year I was here it was kind of difficult because, after playing junior A - you play 80 games - it was a little different, but now I've become accustomed to it. It's difficult at times, with exams and that, but I don't find it too bad.

Brian has two more years of eligibility remaining. He looks ahead to continuing to play hockey and would like to try for the 1984 Olympic team. Coach Esdale describes Brian as a "talented, gifted athlete who has a lot of poise with the puck. He has a magic touch around the net -- that's his primary role and he does that very well. I'm glad he's on my team and not on someone else's in the league."



Brian is on a line with Kevin Zimmer and veteran Adrian Facca. Kevin, a native of Edmonton, finished the year with 8 goals and 23 assists. Adrian also had a productive year with 7 goals and 22 assists. This is Adrian's last year as a Tiger and his strong play is an asset which will be missed.

Perhaps the most valuable player on the Tigers this year has been captain John Kibyuk. His quiet leadership and constant hustle have picked the Tigers up in many second period lapses. "He demonstrated the kind of leadership that I think is necessary on and off the ice last year, and he has done it again this year," says Coach Esdale. "You can see the emotion he plays with -- he gives everything he has on every shift... I think we're fortunate to have a captain of his quality."

John played Junior B for 2 years in Cape Breton. He then played 2 years for the Toronto Marlboros in the Major A league. He has also played for the Windsor Spitfires and during the 1974-75 season for the SMU Huskies. He is a third year Phys. Ed. student, and is the proud father of a one month old boy.

Gazette: How do you see your role and responsibilities as captain?

John: It varies in different games... I like to try and provide leadership on the ice with a little bit of spunk, and to try and keep things going. In the dressing room I'm not really as much of a leader... Brian and Kenny (Johnston) sort of take over -- and people like Paul Jeffrey with their razzmatazz. (I) go between the players and the coach... the

coach and I have a good rapport... I can come in and tell him exactly what the guys are feeling.

John says his future will likely include "more of the academic and coaching aspects of hockey." Both of John's linemates are newcomers to the Tigers this year. Center Moochie Friesen joined the team in January after sitting out the regulation 12 months since leaving the SMU Huskies. Moochie is still adapting to Dal's style of play which he finds "much more systematic." Left wing Mike Jeffrey comes to Dal after burning up the Metro-Valley Junior A league last year. Although Mike found the transition from Junior hard at first, because "the players are bigger and more experienced," he has found the second half of the year to be more productive. He finishes the season with 14 goals and 19 assists.

Chuck Tuplin, Paul Jeffrey and Bobby Hull, Jr. make up a line which contributed a total of 79 points to the Tiger's cause. Bobby is a freshman this year whose name is obviously well known to hockey fans. When asked if his family background is a source of pressure he replied, "there is a little pressure; there used to be a lot more pressure in Junior. Here I find that people just come to see Bobby Hull's son play, but they don't yell things or anything like that... the two coaches have made it a lot easier here for me... they just tell me, 'be yourself'."

Dal's fourth line consists of Peter Glynn, Neil Megannety, and John Cossar who have been playing very strongly recently. Their ability to score was apparent in late season games and these roo-

kies are sure to continue to produce in years to come.

Defense duties are shared by Ken Johnston, Louis Lavoie, Paul Leck, Don Woodworth, Gary Ryan and Bob Crawford (who sometimes plays forward). Ken Johnston and Louis Lavoie are not only a vital part of the Tiger's defense but also provide a major portion of Dal's scoring as evidenced by their combined total of 68 points.

There can be no doubt that Dalhousie has the strongest goaltending duo in the league. Glenn Ernst and Ken Bickerton had the fourth and fifth lowest averages in the league, having split the 26 game schedule almost exactly in half. Ken Bickerton is in his last year of eligibility, although he has one year left in his recreation program.

Gazette: How do you like alternating the goaltending duties?

Ken: At first I thought it would be hard, but now I believe it's working out pretty well, because around this time you'd get pretty tired - (if) you'd played three-quarters or more of the games. Now you know what game you're playing and you're ready for it.

Glenn: I've played in systems like that before. I don't really mind it at all... you know the games you have to play and you get ready for the games you have to play... and when it's your turn you're not really tired.

This is Glenn Ernst's first year at Dalhousie. He played major Junior hockey for Niagara Falls and Brantford before coming to Dal. Glen has found it easy to fit in with the team. "The team is really quite a close-knit team. The coach really works on keeping a good atmosphere amongst all the

players. All the new players are really accepted by the veterans and there is really a good team spirit." Glenn will do much to fill the hole which will be left when Ken Bickerton leaves.

Tigers coach Peter Esdale and his assistant Paul Gallagher are obviously well liked, and respected, by the players. In turn, Coach Esdale speaks highly of all his players and points out the contributions of every individual to the team. "You have to be really pleased with the season we've had... we've come a long way... we have a lot of young players on the club -- a lot of players who really don't get their share of credit for our record."

Gazette: In these days of economic restraint, one of the cost-saving measures which has been suggested is the elimination of varsity sport. How important do you think varsity sports are to university life?

Esdale: There's no question in my mind that the intercollegiate program is crucial to the balance and quality of life and I just can't imagine a university in Canada not wanting to provide that quality of life for its students. It's an experience you can't find anywhere else. You can't compare it to junior hockey or professional hockey... the programs, in my mind, are a very necessary component in a student's life."

The Tigers are now finished for the year after losing a close game to the UPEI Panthers 4-3 in overtime. They are only losing 2 players from the roster, however, so we can look forward to another exciting season next year in the new rink.