

# From the Armchair Ruggerville

by Chakradhar Singh

"I didn't know Dalhousie had a rugby team." That was the usual reaction when I started to research the history of our club. One of the staff at the Archives, in the Killam Library, knew that Dal played rugby and suggested I start looking in the old Gazettes about 1920. The next few days were like going back in time as I read old Gazettes by students who are not with us any more. The articles told of people familiar to all of us even now, such as Munroe and Forrest.

Finally I found what I was looking for — an article in the Gazette that read as follows:

Since the opening of the present session, Dalhousie has taken quite an unusual interest in foot-ball. Once a week, at least, the majority of our students have been indulging in a promiscuous kind of play between themselves. As a result of this practice, a challenge was received from the Halifax foot-ball team, in which we were invited to play a friendly match on Saturday, the 19th inst. Owing to lack of

experience in the game, most of our students were unwilling to accept this challenge. Nevertheless, the following collegians reluctantly consented to represent the "College" in the approaching match, viz: — Campbell, Mellish, Patterson, Fraser, Reid, Jas. Macdonald, Taylor, Martin, Currie, Robinson, Johnson, J. Pitblado, Calder, MacLean and Torey. Macdonald acted as captain *pro tem*, and, at 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the day appointed, both teams appeared on the South Common — ready for action, with the exception of Robinson, Currie and Torey, in whose stead the collegians were forced to take Blair, Kaye and Fitzpatrick. Macdonald wins "the toss for gaols", and the game commences. Both sides start vigorously. (Dalhousie has no umpire; but no such thing as foul play can exist where Johnson is.) A singular display of heads and points immediately follows; but

Dalhousie's inexperience is against her and a goal is soon won by the "Halifax". After half an hour has passed away, the collegians are more 'at home' and, by maintaining a decided advantage until the end, almost succeed in compensation for what they have already lost. At length all is over, and the contestants disperse with cheers, barked shins, &c., which latter, we are afraid, fell largely to the share of the Haligonians.

Many spectators were present, the universal opinion being that this was the most interesting game of its kind seen for a long time.

That article was dated November 25, 1881. To all the people who ask, "Does Dal have a rugby team?", the answer is definitely yes. We have had almost a century of rugby at Dalhousie University. My thanks to the staff of the archives in the Killam Library and also to those past Dalhousians of 1881 — your work has truly been appreciated.




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