

Two second place finishes for V-Reds

by Peter J. Cullen
Brunswickan Sports

First place finishes eluded both the men's and women's cross country teams last Saturday in Antigonish at St. Francis Xavier. While the women finished relatively close behind the winner, the men were reduced to a distant second as a devastating Dalhousie squad captured the meet.

Both the UNB men and women secured second-place finishes with Dal crushing the UNB men by 26 points. However, cross country coach Tim Randall does not consider this a disaster. "The guys ran reasonably well. We didn't have our best seven there, but we

finished a fairly strong second, so we may be able to come close to winning." Randall has consistently cited Dalhousie as tough competition. "The Dalhousie girls were ranked sixth in the country this week... [and] Dal is probably a little bit stronger this year than we are on the guys' side," he admitted.

However, the women still remain a strong contender despite their runner-up finish. "The women's team certainly has enough to make the CIAUs," Randall boasted. "Looking at the results and putting people in where they probably would have finished, we would have won. Probably pretty easily." Randall feels positive about the women's future races because the entire team did not

compete this past weekend. In fact, three out of the top five runners did not accompany the team to St. FX. "Part of it was on purpose and part of it was just because of sickness," Randall explained. "There's a game to be played; I didn't want to show everybody the whole team yet, but a couple were sick."

The absence of some female runners enabled Beverly White and Melanie Spinney to display their abilities in their first race of the year; White placed fourth, while Spinney finished sixth. "Melanie and Bev are two of my stronger girls," said Randall. "And Jen Philips and Meghan Roushorne will probably fit into the top four."

But the men fared poorly against Dal. While three runners finished in the top ten, the team lost by a very large margin. Although Randall believes that the seven men who participated ran reasonably well, he knows that their chances of winning are slimmer than the women's. "We could make it a lot closer. On a great day we might win," he said.

James Murphy again led the team, achieving a fourth place finish, while Andrew Dunphy raced to seventh. But overall Randall appears pleased with his male runners. "Dave Fraser finished tenth; he will get better, probably—hopefully—finishing in the top seven by the end of the year," he stated. "We may be able to make up the difference."

The cross country team's next meet will be the Université de Moncton Open, scheduled for Saturday, October 7.

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my skills more now and I'm able to keep on playing in the future, that would be great," he said.

And while UNB races off to an impressive start this year, LeBlanc believes the success should continue if everyone continues to play as a team. "We're not all individuals; we're all one team. If we keep that attitude, we should have a great year," he stated.

As a third year Phys Ed-turned-Business student, LeBlanc has three more years of soccer eligibility after the current season.



I was going to try and avoid the whole Mike Tyson mess, but the recent arrest of Expos pitcher Carlos Perez on rape charges has forced me to deal with the issue of the behaviour of athletes. These days it seems like the sports news is full of articles about cases such as these, where an athlete behaves—or is accused of behaving—in a manner which is totally reprehensible. Just recently, *Sports and Women Illustrated* published an excellent article about the frequency with which high profile athletes physically abuse (beat the snot out of) their partners. Interestingly, a subsequent issue contained an even more intelligent letter from a reader who pointed out that a substantial part of the blame for this tendency to treat women as objects should lie with *Sports and Women Illustrated* itself, since it is the single most notable purveyor of the infamous and now ubiquitous swimsuit issue.

Sports and Women Illustrated has also put itself at the forefront of the campaign to suspend all athletes who are accused of such crimes. Recently, they wrote that the Cincinnati Bengals should suspend defensive tackle Dan Wilkinson because he has been charged with punching his four-months-pregnant girlfriend in the stomach. This is obviously an amazingly disgusting crime, and—if proven—I hope that he gets an appropriately severe sentence. Meanwhile, however, he remains innocent until proven guilty. I realise that the current embarrassment that is the US justice system makes this statement a little bit of a sop, but it nevertheless must remain true. Still, even if he is convicted and sentenced, once he has paid his debt to society (yet another sop) he must once again be eligible for play.

Sports fans have to begin to realise that being an athlete does not necessarily make an individual a good person. The only thing that makes a person a good person is being a good person. The old maxim that sports builds character is quite simply a crock of shit. Nevertheless, children are still encouraged at many levels to idolise athletes. A case in point is Michael Jordan. The man has a serious gambling addiction, and yet advertising slogans suggest that we "Be like Mike."

We have had over thirty years of semi-responsible journalism with regard to athletes. No longer do reporters turn a blind eye to Babe Ruth's womanising. Instead, incidents such as the Wade Boggs-Margo Adams affair are splashed all over the pages. One would think that we would have realised by now that athletes aren't heroes by definition simply because they've helped your team win. Obviously, we haven't.

The down side of the pedestal upon which we place athletes is that the spotlight on that pedestal has a tendency to be very bright. And, since our expectations of athletes are so very high, we are overly zealous in our reactions to those athletes who have let us down off the field. It should be understood that athletes are simply employees, and that as employees they should receive neither benefits nor sanctions which are not also received by other employees. It is doubtful that many people would advocate that a janitor, who committed the same crime as is alleged of Dan Wilkinson, be fired or suspended from his job even before the case went to trial.

In recent years the sports world has been very adamant that sports is a business. They are, of course, absolutely correct in this assessment. It is time that we, as fans, realise this truth and stop treating athletes as anything more than ordinary employees. Thus, the only consideration we should have when an athlete is signed by a team should be his ability to help that team win. The signing of Darryl Strawberry by the New York Yankees should have only been condemned because Strawberry is no longer able to help a team to any great extent, not because of the highly publicised complaints that it was giving a three time drug abuser another chance that he didn't deserve. Of course he didn't deserve another chance so far as his personal worth, as measured by drug-phobic America, but a case could be and was made that he did deserve another chance because he could still play the game. His playing ability has proven to be debatable, but the point remains that it was a calculated gamble on the Yankees part.

I would be negligent if I failed to mention just how difficult it is to enjoy a Varsity Reds game up at Chapman Field. The problem is that unless you are an initiate with the team in question, you have absolutely no idea who the players are. Thus, instead of cheering players along individually, you are forced into such inspiring cheers as "Go #8!" Thus far this season the field hockey and men's soccer teams have failed to provide the spectators in attendance with programs. Only the women's soccer team has done so, and theirs are unfortunately inadequate, since they don't include jersey numbers to go with the names. Embarrassingly enough, the Mt. Allison portion of the program did include jersey numbers. Still, the women's soccer team must be commended for making an attempt. It is an attempt that they should not have had to make. UNB's varsity athletics program should be taking it upon themselves to get the information needed for a program, and they should also take responsibility for having them distributed at the games. Hopefully, someone will take some initiative and inform them that this is a very fundamental step to take if you are at all interested in promoting fan involvement and appreciation of these teams.

My other complaint about watching games at Chapman Field is that it is incredibly uncomfortable. First of all, by what law is UNB forced to locate the majority of the stands where they are almost perpetually in the shadow of the Aitken Centre? I realise that September and October in New Brunswick are going to be cold, but is it really essential that we help the cold weather along? Take those stands and put them on the other side of the field, where there's at least a chance for some sun. While this is being done, it might not be a bad idea to buy a whole new set of stands. The metal ones that we have at present may be the most uncomfortable seats I have ever had the misfortune to sit upon. Not to mention the fact that on a cold day these seats manage to radiate a coldness all their own. While I'm on this rant, by the way, would somebody please set up a coffee stand nearby as well. Thanks and see ya.

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