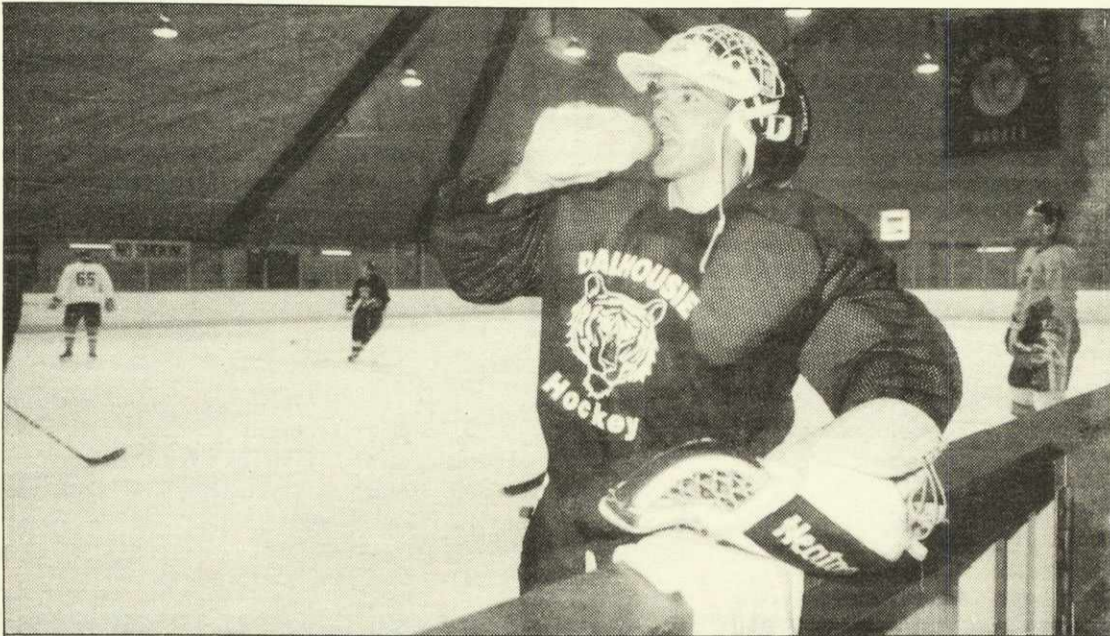


SPORTS

Suspended goalie no loss for Tigers



Kevin Stairs takes a breather during practise. The Tigers tied Cape Breton at 4 apiece on Saturday, and lost 6-3 to St. FX on Sunday.

BY GORDIE SUTHERLAND

For most hockey teams it's a luxury to have two quality goaltenders. For the Dalhousie Tigers it's a fact a life.

"I believe we have, if not the best, then one of the best goaltending tandems in the country try," says Darrell Young, who's in his seventh year as head coach of the Dalhousie hockey team. "We know that both of them can play

well at the college level."

Goaltenders Kevin Stairs and Pat McGarry are both in their third season with Dalhousie. Last season, the goaltending team completed the regular schedule with a goals against average of 3.95, the best in the league.

McGarry has emerged as one of the league's top netminders. In 1989-90, he was selected as the Rookie of the Year in the Atlantic Universities Hockey Conference.

The following season, he was recognized as the conference's all-star goaltender.

McGarry, an economics student finished serving a three game suspension last weekend. He was suspended after receiving a gross misconduct while playing Acadia in the season opener.

Young says missing McGarry for the suspension shows how important it is to have two quality goaltenders.

"There's a lot of teams in a situation where if the number one goalie is suspended or injured, they're fighting for their life," says Young. "Here we are still chugging on and winning."

Stairs played four of Dalhousie's first five games, including a 0-0 exhibition game tie with the St. Mary's Huskies. This is not the first time Stairs has performed well when called to duty.

In his rookie season, Stairs tended goal for 386 minutes and sported a stingy goals against average of 2.96.

McGarry, 21, isn't an easy goalie to replace. He was a 1991 draft pick of the Toronto Maple Leafs, and played three exhibition games with the St. John's Maple Leafs of the American Hockey League before returning to Dalhousie for the season.

Coach Young says McGarry has real pro potential.

"Toronto was only one of five teams that planned to draft him last year," says Young, who scouts for the Washington Capitals. "Washington was going to draft him but unfortunately four teams ahead of us also wanted to draft him."

McGarry and Stairs are good

friends on and off the ice. They even help each other with their goaltending.

"I get him to watch me in games and we talk things over in practice," says Stairs. "It's the best tandem I've ever had."

The two are still competitive though.

"We're friends but both of us want to play — which is good," says McGarry. "You have to have that or you're not going to be pushing yourself."

Alan Perry was added to the Dalhousie coaching staff at the start of the season to work with the two goalies. Perry played goal in the St. Louis Blues' system and saw time with the Halifax Citadels.

Stairs and McGarry say Perry is a helpful instructor.

"He has been in the pros, he has that much on top of us," says Stairs. "Everything he says is of benefit to us."

This weekend, Stairs and McGarry will lead the Tigers into an important two game homestand. The Tigers host Mount Allison on Saturday night at 7:30 p.m. and then take on the University of Prince Edward Island Panthers, last year's AUHC champs on Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m.

Hot Dal runners head for B.C.

BY SATISH PUNNA

As AUAA Champs for the sixth consecutive year, and ranked number one in the nation, the Dalhousie women's cross country team are looking forward to an exciting CIAU championship meet this weekend in Victoria B.C..

Gaining the top seed was a fitting reward for a team that has totally dominated its AUAA competition since day one. And if any doubts remained, they were quickly dispelled at the AUAA championships this past weekend.

The final standings saw the Tigers shut out all rivals from the top six finishing positions, for a perfect score of 15. UNB came next, on the horizon with 55 points.

Rookies Shari Boyle and Rayleen Hill of Dal finished first and second respectively, followed by Anne Marie Farnell, Heather Ostic, and Dorianne Mullen, in third, fourth, and fifth. Heather Sweet finished sixth, and Kristen Sweet eighth, in her best race of the season.

Now CIAU bound, the team is ready to try and beat last years' fifth place national standing. Head coach Al Yarr, was optimistic but cautious when asked about his expectation of the team at the big meet. Given the intense competition from schools such as the University of Victoria — currently ranked second — Yarr speculated that the team had "...a good chance

to get in the medals — if they run well".

If this season has been any indication, with the teamwork that ties the talent of the rookies to the experience of the veterans other schools would be crazy to underestimate this team. This may in the end be a memorable year for women's cross country at Dal.

On the Men's side, a heartbreaking loss to UNB this weekend came at the end of a season which saw Dalhousie defeat the team from Fredericton at every previous meet.

In the point total, the men finished with 31 points, just six behind UNB's 25. The top runner for Dalhousie was Paul Smith, who finished fourth in a "super performance" — his best all season.

Brent Workman came in fifth,

Dave Ruggles eighth, Jamie Cliff ninth, and Chris Halfyard tenth.

CIAU hopes did not end here for the men however, as they received a wild card entry over Manitoba. They will travel to Victoria as the seventh seed.

The CIAU entry came at the perfect time for the team, which was stopped at the end of last years' bitterly contested season by arch rivals UNB. The Tigers will build on the experience gained at the CIAUs to hammer opposition in the future, as most of Dal's star runners are in their early years of eligibility.

Watch for a strong finish this weekend, as all the Tigers go out for blood in Victoria amidst tough national competition.

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