

Brawling hockey Tigers leave much to be desired

BY EUGENIA BAYADA

The Dal hockey Tigers left much to be desired over the past week as they lost three games to rival teams, dropping 4-7 to the Acadia Axemen, 3-4 to the St.FX X-Men and 4-6 to the UPEI Panthers.

"The only thing that worries me is the inconsistencies of our guys — we don't seem to be learning from when we win," noted assistant coach Jake Grimes. "Before this week, when we came off a loss, we'd get inspired to come out and play a good game for a win, so we've proven that we can learn from a loss."

"The problem is we were never putting two games back-to-back. When we'd win one, we'd seem to come out the next night and not remember how we played well the game before. That's a problem because obviously if you do that [consistently], you can only do worse and that's actually where we are right now. We've lost three in a row so there's definitely a consistency problem."

On Wednesday November 12, a lacklustre Tiger team awarded Acadia their second win of the season. The Axemen exacted their revenge on the Tigers at Memorial Arena, taking the second season game between the two

teams by the same score that Dal had beaten them in the previous face-off.

Acadia played an offensive fore-checking game from the start and were rewarded with their first goal at just over the halfway mark of the first period. The Axemen scored once more in the second period before Tim Hill replied on the power play for the Tigers. By the time the Tigers scored again, Acadia was up 6-1. Chris Pittman, Jan Melichercik and Dallas Gray put the puck away in a serious comeback bid for the Tigers, the three goals coming within a 1:30 time-frame, but that was about as close as the Tigers were going to get. Axeman Doug Reynolds sealed Dal's fate at 13:24 of the third.

"We basically shot ourselves in the foot — we should be counting how many toes we've got left 'cause I don't think we have any toes left," commented head coach Darrell Young after the game. "There were only twenty shots that they got on us and we didn't get a big save all night. Those twenty shots, except six of them, they were all avoidable. Those were all breakdowns."

Tempers were short during the game and referee Bob Best was no exception, handing out minors liberally as well as seven misconducts, one game misconduct and ejecting three players. Leading the way for the Tigers was Jody Shelley with two

misconducts, a game misconduct for roughing and a handful of minors, while Axeman Jeff Mercer collected a misconduct for clashing with Shelley and a game ejection, as well as four minors. Melichercik and Pittman also received misconducts while the latter was ejected in the final minute of play due to an altercation with Axeman Trevor Fraser who was also led off the ice.

Friday saw a strong start for the Tigers over the X-Men at Memorial Arena, with Trevor Doyle making the first shot against St.FX goaltender Shawn Silver in the first minute of play. Referee Todd Thomander kept a close check on the Dal team (Shelley in particular) and made more than his fair share of fictional calls while missing many unfair plays by the X-Men, prompting chants of "bullshit" from the 1200-strong crowd.

Shelley was handed a double minor at 5:07, allegedly for



Tiger Shane Gibbs is led off the ice as X-Man Yanick Evola is escorted to the penalty box during Friday's game. The second period altercation resulted in a three-game suspension for Gibbs. Photo by Lisa Verge

Shelley and a roughing minor to Shane Gibbs. Meagher was also given a game misconduct while teammates Brad Peddle and Carl Beaudoin were given 10-minute misconducts for their involvement, and Yanick Turcotte picked up a double minor for roughing and unsportsmanlike conduct.

Corkum made the pad save off a shot from Rob Massa. Turcotte added another before Pittman deflected the puck through the five-hole to narrow the difference to one. Evola put away the game-winner at 3:12.

Tiger captain Dave Haynes was given a tripping minor and a misconduct with less than a minute left to play before Gray added another goal for the home team.

"We've been involved in games where [refereeing] is

coach Kim Houston.

"We have to focus on what we can control, not on what anybody else does — not what the referees do, not what the other team does, not what the other coach does, but on what we can do."

On Monday, AUHC chairman Dave MacLean awarded Gibbs and Shelley three and two game suspensions respectively for their efforts. Gibbs received one for fighting and two for instigating in Friday's game while Shelley received one for fighting and one for racking up his second game misconduct of the season. St.FX's Meagher was given a single suspension for fighting.

"We have a big physical team and other teams are going to try and go after our physical players," noted Haynes. "[Shelley] is probably one of the toughest players in the league, he's one of the toughest players that's been in the league for a while so we've just got to watch ourselves and try and have a bit more team discipline."

"I think that maybe [the suspensions have] distracted our focus from what we want to do but I guess we're not the only team by the looks of the way

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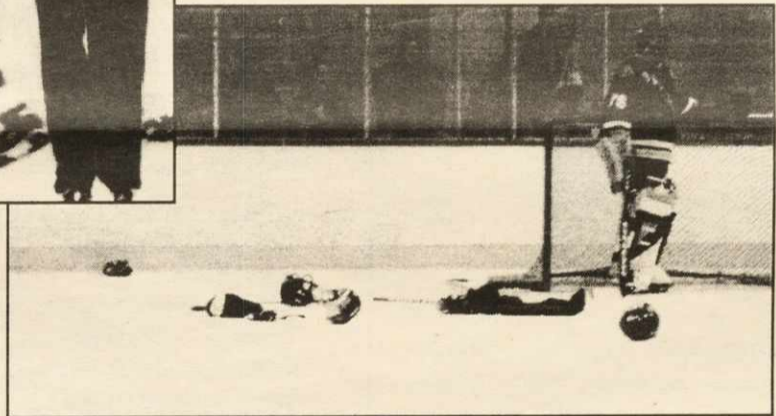


Referee Todd Thomander looks on as the linesmen attempt to separate Gibbs and Jody Shelley from the X-Men in Friday's brawl. Photos by Lisa Verge

goaltender interference and holding when in actual fact he was pushed onto Silver by a St.FX player.

Chris Angione opened the scoring for the X-Men at 14:24 of the first frame on a slapshot from the face-off circle. The Tigers tied it up at 15:55 on a two-man advantage as Chad Kalmakoff deflected the puck from the slot with the assists going to Ted Naylor and Martin LaPointe.

The X-Men came out strong in the second period but Tiger goaltender Fred Corkum made some spectacular saves to keep his team in the game before play broke down due to the eruption of a brawl between LaPointe and a St.FX forward in the Tigers' end. A number of players from both teams became involved and things came to a head when Shelley squared off with X-Man Maurice Meagher. Thomander handed out misconducts to Tigers LaPointe, Pittman and Marc Warner, a game misconduct to



Tiger goalie Fred Corkum surveys the aftermath.

The brawling did not stop there. St.FX star rookie Yanick Evola and his shit-disturbing tactics bit off a little more than they could chew when he slashed Gibbs with under six minutes remaining in the frame. Blueliner Gibbs responded physically and verbally, and was handed a double minor for fighting and instigating, and a game misconduct, while Evola received a minor for slashing. Thomander's decision is questionable considering that the exchange happened in front of one of the linesmen.

Dal blueliner Craig Whynot was also given a misconduct in the dying minutes of the period. Neither team was able to score during the frame.

At 7:37 of the third, Evola gave the X-Men their go-ahead goal as he slapped in the rebound after

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