

sports

Men's soccer snuffed in AUAA final

by Angel Figueroa

Inches. After it was all over, at the end of 120 minutes of passionate soccer, one might admit that it was all that separated the Dalhousie men's soccer team and a *threepeat* at the 1993 AUAA championship weekend, held in Antigonish over the weekend.

The case in point occurred in the 26th minute of regulation time, in the championship match between Dal and Saint Francis Xavier on Sunday, November 9. The two had won their rights of entry with close semi-final wins the day before, and were equally ambitious in a playoff bout that had been dreamed as the ultimate championship finale since September — the two-time defending champions, Dal, up against this year's pretenders and the season's most winningest team.

When a sharp, 20 yard shot from Dal striker Craig Janc hit the inside of the left goalpost, forcing the ball to creep agonizingly across the face of an open net, instead of rebounding in for a decisive goal, it seemed certain that the tempo had nonetheless been established for an inevitable win, and yet another AUAA crown.

But, in the words of Janc, "it somehow wasn't meant to be," and after both sides tried to a goalless draw after 90 minutes of fiercely entertaining soccer, the challengers broke the ice (and celebrated) by scoring twice in overtime to end the contest, pre-empt a Dal dynasty, and claim their first AUAA title in more than twenty years.

Just two inches to the left and the day's story might have been a different one.

Yet it was a championship match that had all the trappings of a bonafide finale in a league that had witnessed the tightest and most entertaining race for playoff contention in recent memory. There was controversy, atmosphere, and action — and plenty of it. Play was held on an atrocious, muddy

pitch that seriously affected any semblance of strategy, while arbitration was, as usual, controversial, and a vociferous, rather violent home crowd added more to the maritime version of a sport that tries hard to emulate the British style of "sah-kar."

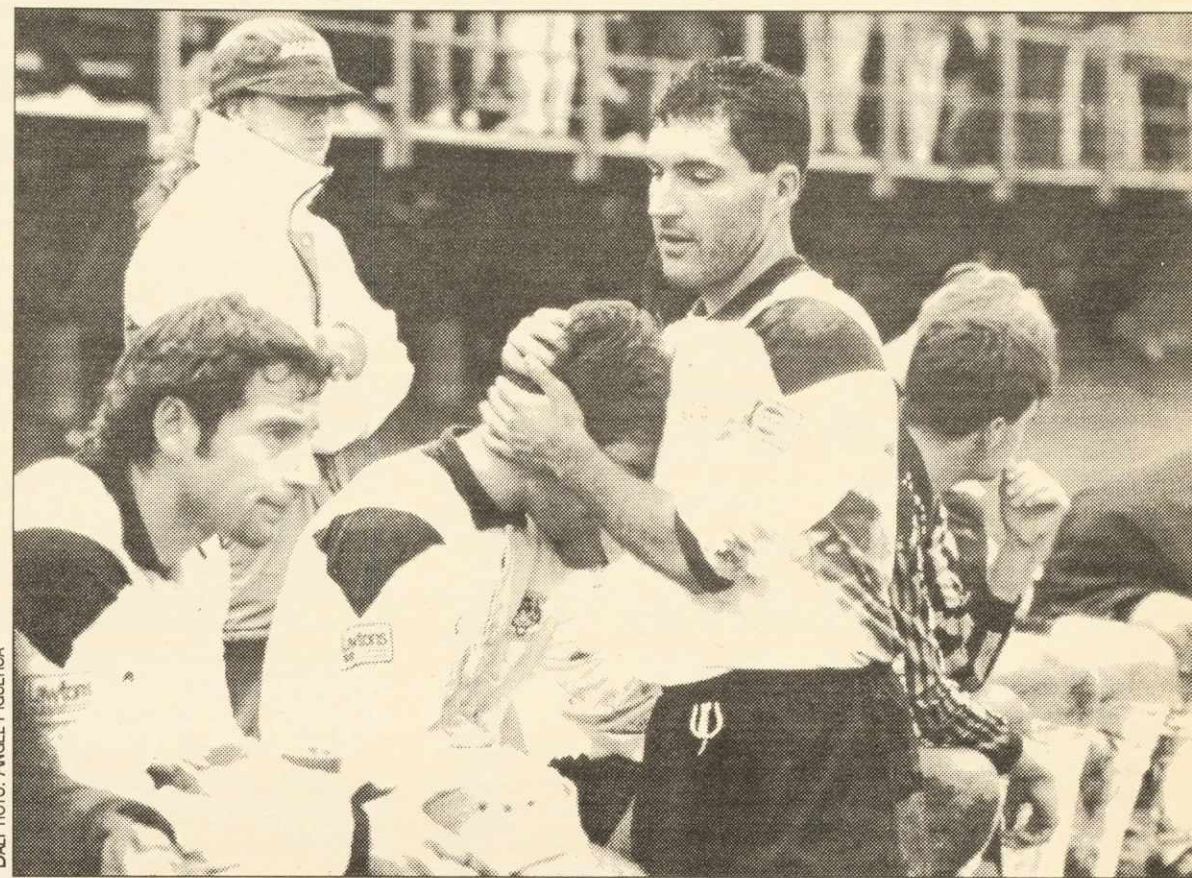
Soccer with less thought, just thuggery, was what characterized Dal's semi-

DAL 1 final match against
UdM 0 l'université de
shootout Moncton, a hangover contest that was sport

clutching the toilet-bowl of hooliganism. More than a dozen bookings, two ejections, a flurry of choppy tackles, high cleats, and Latin-style dramatics marred this mud-bowl of bitter anxiety, dragging the rivalrous game into gut-wrenching overtime that was still 0-0 after two hours of slushing and slugging. Highlights of the match include a tough-minded stop on the goal-line by Morten Mooers in the 65th minute of play, after keeper Trevor Chisolm was roughed-up and bundled out of play; striker Danny Burns ramming his way through the Moncton defense to head a Janc cross that was on its way to the roof of the net, before being blocked by a defender's outstretched hand; Colin Audain hitting wide the resulting penalty kick in the 71st minute of play; veteran midfielder Tony Pignatiello being red-carded shortly after in a dubious arbitrary call; and a spectacular, mud-flying tackle by Dal defender Jamie Sawler in a 99th minute breakaway during overtime.

Penalty kicks was the only solution, and it was a textbook case of simple mental discipline ridiculing Moncton's cheap flamboyancy in the deciding shoot-out. Dal scored on the first three shots (Jamie Sawler, Janc, Chris Devlin), while Moncton missed on its second and third attempts, leaving it to Adrian Ibbetson's final, glorious goal for Dal's qualification to the championship game.

Deciding the other berth was an-



DAL PHOTO: ANGEL FIGUEROA
Captain Adrian Ibbetson consoles a teammate as Craig Janc ponders what could have been after the loss in the championship final.

other shoot-out after a tight, goalless stalemate between StFX and Memorial Univer of Newfoundland. Xavier won 5-4 after six attempts, settling the dream match-up on Sunday before 700 fans.

As play began over grey skies in dense, chilly air, and as the ball was

soon covered in muck,

StFX 2 more than just a couple

DAL 0 of interesting points

overtime could be noticed in a

game that was the absolute

match-of-the-year. Jorge

Rodriguez, Xavier's own Maradona-

in-residence, was being marked by

rookie half-back Matt Serieys, whose

coverage was like a fly circling a cow-

pie. Just as intimate were the Xavier

markers of super-striker Janc and veteran Colin Audain; all of which promised a tight battle of attrition between the top defensive squads in the league (the two had recently played to a scoreless draw, following a 1-0 win for StFX in league play). Also prophetic were the absence of two important members of the Dal scoring machine: second-year brat (and Scot) Chris Devlin, and veteran midfielder Tony Pignatiello, both missing from yellow and red cards in the semi-final the day before. In the middle was replacement Cuong Duong, who hadn't played a minute in the entire season, and in the net was second-year sensation Trevor Chisolm, who was toughing out an injury but was grimacingly fit to play before his home town.

It was Chisolm who started the sensational tempo of the game, with a brilliant save in the 22nd minute of play, as much of the first twenty minutes was held to Xavier's territorial advantage. Xavier was a team psyched to win, and it showed. But Janc's nerve-shattering strike on the goal post (gosh, it was agonizing) marked an uneasy, sobering equilibrium that was held until the end of the first half.

With a change in ends (only a little less muddier) Dal also changed its composure, playing with more fluidity and adding some creative touches by midfielders Morten Mooers, Geoff Axell, and David McFarlane. Fullback

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Dr. DUNCAN S. ARMSTRONG
is pleased to announce that
Dr. HELEN ROBERTSON & Ms. PASCALE LOVE
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NOTICE
ATTENTION
CLASS OF '94

The Dalhousie Student Union and the Alumni Association would like to invite individuals or groups (societies, clubs, departments) to attend a meeting to discuss social activities for Graduation Week in May. The purpose of this meeting is to develop a plan for the events in May of 1994.

Wed., Nov. 17th
3:30 pm. #316
S.U. B.

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