

REPORT ON M.I.A.U. CONFERENCE

Dal Drops out of Maritime Sports Group As Result of Regulations Preventing Over Half Student Body from Competing

At the annual meeting of the Maritime Intercollegiate Athletic Union held Wednesday at Sackville, N. B., Dalhousie University withdrew from all Intercollegiate Competition for the 1951-52 season.

It is well known that intercollegiate contests are an important part of any college athletic program, and it was with extreme regret that Dal officials reached the decision to withdraw from the M.I.A.U. However, the D.A.A.C. felt that since the Union had abandoned its original purpose, the promotion of "free and open" intercollegiate athletics, and pursued the purpose of cutting Dal down to size with such vigor that less than 50% of Dalhousie males were eligible for competition, then Dal, in fairness to the hundreds of students thus eliminated, must enter leagues in which all Dal students could participate.

Dal Proposals

Dalhousie advanced three proposals for the consideration of the meeting.

First: That provision be made for the reinstatement of all professional athletes to Intercollegiate sport.

Second: That graduates be allowed to compete in Intercollegiate athletics if they have not had four years of Senior Intercollegiate competition.

Third: That the rule which allows Dal students enrolled at Kings to choose which college they will represent be ratified and clarified.

Reinstatement of Pro Boxers

The first business of the meeting concerned the relation of professional athletes to Intercollegiate sports. A motion was passed which stated that any professional athlete, regardless of his professional experience, could apply to the M.I.A.U. for reinstatement. Professional boxers were not covered by this motion and a further ruling prohibited such boxers from ever applying for reinstatement. Mr. Kerr of Dal, pointed out that a pro boxer could even be reinstated to an Olympic team, the ultimate in amateur athletics. He then moved an amendment which is a standard rule of every amateur body in the world: "That a professional athlete, including a boxer, could after certain waiting period, apply for reinstatement." The motion was defeated by a large majority. This means that a National Hockey League player may, upon application, play Intercollegiate hockey the following season, but that once a man has boxed one professional fight he is excluded from college boxing for life.

It is probably a coincidence that the Dal representatives had intended to advance the names of three Dal boxers, who had appeared on pro cards, for reinstatement.

Date of Meeting

In the past the annual meeting of the MIAU has always been held during the Dalhousie final exam period. For their failure to attend these meetings, the Dal representatives have been criticised from all sides. A motion by Mr. Kerr to change the date of the annual meeting to the second Thursday in March was passed by the members. It was the only time during the meeting that more than four of the 24 members supported a Dal motion.

Graduate Students

By Rule 9 of the By-Laws of the MIAU, graduates shall not be eligible for competition. A motion was introduced by Mr. Vitalone that "graduates be allowed to compete in Intercollegiate athletics if they have not had four years of Senior Intercollegiate competition." This motion was met with a storm of protest, but when the meeting was asked why such a motion should not be adopted the only reply was that "Dal would have too many athletes available". In other words the present rule was aimed at cutting down Dal's strength. For a body,

which states in its constitution that "The object of this Union shall be to encourage participation in athletic activities", to enforce a rule which eliminates over 500 students of one of the members is somewhat at variance with its original purpose.

Objects of M.I.A.U.

Prof Small of Acadia then stated that the object of Intercollegiate athletics was "clean competition, balanced competition, and free and open competition". How can competition be "free and open when the Union rules that over 50% of Dal students are ineligible? These same rulings affect less than 10% of the students at other colleges.

Mr. Vitalone told the meeting that its efforts should be directed toward encouraging Intercollegiate athletics instead of trying to balance off the strengths of the various members. He cited a very pertinent example. The University of Toronto has 18,000 students while Queens and Western, in the same league, have only 3,000. No attempt is made to cut Toronto down to 3,000 eligible athletes, and a large number of the players have degrees. Some have played as many as 6 years of Intercollegiate sport. As a matter of fact, this MIAU ruling re degrees is unique in Canadian sport bodies.

In all other places a college can put its best team on the field, a team truly representative of the university. The large universities do not always win. All Maritimers should point with pride to the athletic achievements of St. F.X. However, the Dal officials feel that it is the right of every student, provided he meets the scholastic requirements, to represent his university.

Players Penalized

The MIAU penalizes players for scholastic inability, ruling that all athletes must pass at least three courses per year. On the other hand, the student who comes in from Grade XII, and works hard enough to get a degree in three years is also punished for his scholastic ability. If that student were to fail a course or two, he would then be eligible for an extra year of Intercollegiate sport. Take the case of Scott Henderson and Andy MacKay. Both these boys have played two years of Intercollegiate basketball and both obtained their degrees last year. If they had failed one course last year they would still get degrees this year as first year lawyers, and be eligible to play basketball this year. Have MacKay and Henderson, with two years of basketball and degrees such a tremendous advantage over Hank Propper of St. F.X., who is currently playing his fourth season of Intercollegiate sport? Does the fact that a man has letters behind his name automatically boost his athletic ability to such an extent that he would be a menace to Intercollegiate sport? If there is to be any restriction, let it be the four year rule. They will serve to keep sport. The present rule excludes extra-good students.

Students Ineligible

Mr. Vitalone presented facts and extra-good athletes out of college figures to the meeting to show that Dal has only 712 of its 1237 male students eligible to play on Dal teams. (A further 102 students were prohibited from representing their college by a later ruling of the Union.) A growing number of Dal students are becoming dissatisfied because they are excluded from athletics. One student from Western Canada, where no such rules as these exist, was informed the day before the boxing meet that he couldn't fight. A swimmer from the prairies found out on the day of the Swimming Meet that he could not participate. These students come here thinking they will be able to play, as they would be everywhere else but in the Maritimes.

Mr. Vitalone stated that if the true aims of the Union were those stated in the Constitution, then in all fairness to the hundreds of Dal students eliminated the restrictions should be lifted. If the Union felt it should cut out the more experienced athletes, let it apply the rule allowing a maximum of four years of competition. The rule now in force eliminates less experienced athletes because of their scholastic ability.

Mr. Vitalone then moved, seconded by Mr. Kerr, that graduates be allowed to compete in Intercollegiate athletics until they have had a total of four years of competition for any combination of universities. The motion was defeated by a overwhelming margin.

The next question on the agenda was that concerning the eligibility of students registered at Dal and enrolled at Kings. The constitution reads that "students registered at Kings may not compete for Dalhousie". This clearly refers to the students in Divinity and Journalism, since they are registered only at Kings. All the other students of Kings are registered at Dal, pay their fees at Dal, take their courses at Dal, are under Dal supervision, and obtain their degrees from Dal.

Dal-King's Friction

During the past hockey season Prof. Dysart of Kings forbade a Dal Commerce student enrolled at Kings from playing for Dal on the grounds that he was ineligible. Mr. Vitalone informed Mr. Dysart that this student was not registered "only at Kings", he was also registered at Dal, and therefore perfectly eligible to play for Dal. When the student informed Mr. Dysart that he intended to play for Dal soon, Acadia and St. F. X. in some mysterious way became acquainted with his "Ineligibility", and protested. The Dal authorities, eager to make this a test case, used him in all Intercollegiate games. However, Dal lost the games, and no formal protest was forthcoming.

Later, a Dal student enrolled at Kings turned out for the Dal swimming team. On the eve of the Intercollegiate swimming meet, held this year at Acadia, Mr. Dysart phoned Mr. Vitalone and informed him that the man was ineligible. Mr. Vitalone replied that the swimmer certainly was eligible, and that such a distorted interpretation of the MIAU rules could lead to bad feeling between the Dal and Kings student bodies. Approximately twenty minutes after this conversation, the Acadia coach, by a strange and inexplicable coincidence, heard about the swimmer's

alleged ineligibility and informed Mr. Vitalone that Acadia would protest if the man was used.

Expert Testimony Ignored

The DAAC has had in its hands for several months a document prepared by one of the leading legal authorities in the city, prepared after an extensive study of the whole situation. This report flatly states that an interpretation of the MIAU ruling, such as that made by Mr. Dysart, to mean that these Dal students can compete only for Kings, is completely erroneous and unconstitutional.

Further, by Rule I of By-Law 5 of the MIAU constitution, "no person shall be eligible for competition in any Intercollegiate contest who is not a bona fide student, regularly in attendance at the University which he represents." How a Dalhousie Commerce student could be registered and regularly in attendance at King's College is beyond the comprehension of the Dal officials!

Wishing to clear up this situation once and for all, the DAAC asked the MIAU for a clarification of the rule. Mr. Vitalone suggested that the question of the eligibility of these students be subject to the Dal-Kings Agreement. In this agreement, drawn up by the Dalhousie and Kings Students' Councils, and ratified by them this year, it is stated that "any student registered at Dal and enrolled at Kings could choose, of his own free will, which institution he would represent". Mr. Vitalone pointed this out to the meeting as an equitable solution, since it was acceptable to the Students' Councils of both Universities concerned. Thereupon Mr. Dysart of Kings, in direct opposition to the policy laid down by the Kings student body, moved that these students be eligible to compete for Kings only.

Dal-King's Agreement

The King's Faculty advisor and their Athletic Union have thus far shown no intention of living up to their side of the Dal-King's agreement and apparently have no intention of doing so. It is presumed, however, that they expect Dal to keep their side of the bargain by extending the use of their gym and playing field and honoring King's Student Council Cards at all functions.

It was suggested by several of the delegates that perhaps the dispute could be settled by determining to which institution the fees of the students are paid. Mr. Kerr informed the meeting that such fees are paid to Dal and a proportion returned to Kings. Such students registered in Law, Dentistry, Medicine, Pharmacy, Science, Commerce, Engineering and Education, pay their fees to Dal only and the funds are kept only by Dal. The fees of Arts students are paid to Dal and a large percentage of the money is returned to Kings in payment for the use of Kings professors and classrooms by Dal students.

King's Interpretation

Mr. Dysart then stated that the Dalhousie Registrars Office served only as a collection agency and that the fees of Dal students enrolled at Kings were returned to Kings less registration costs.

At the close of the war the Dept. of Veterans' Affairs wished to know to which institution the D.V.A. grants of these students were to be paid. A Federal Government Investigation Board found that students registered at Dal and enrolled at Kings were Dalhousie students and the money was to be paid to Dalhousie. By arrangement with Kings, Dalhousie turns over 50% of this money to cover classroom and professorial service.

Threatened King's Withdrawal

It was suggested that perhaps Kings would withdraw from the Union if the students in question were given a choice as to which college they would represent, as they have been for years. The feeling of the meeting was that this point ought to be considered when voting on the motion.

Threatened Dal Withdrawal

However, when Mr. Vitalone stated that if any further restrictions were placed on Dal, the DAAC would be forced to withdraw from Intercollegiate competition, an immediate storm of protest arose. Some of the members refused to vote under what they termed a "threat". Major MacCormick of Mount Allison somewhat placated the members by stating that he had heard such Dal threats before, and that they had never meant anything. The DAAC President, Mr. Kerr said that Mr. Vitalone's statement was intended neither as a threat or an ultimatum, but was a carefully considered decision of both student and University officials. However, the members, apparently sure that this was merely a Dal attempt to swing the vote, carried Mr. Dysart's motion by a large majority. This ruling, that Dal students enrolled at Kings could compete for Kings only, revoked the right of over one hundred Dal students to represent their University.

Dal Withdraws

Dr. A. E. Kerr, President of Dalhousie, the Faculty Athletic Advisor, The Senate Committee on Athletics, the Physical Director, and President-Elect of the Council, and President and President-Elect of the DAAC met some days before the MIAU meeting to discuss the question of Intercollegiate athletics. It was their unanimous opinion that the restrictions which excluded 50% of Dal students from Intercollegiate sport were unfair, and that any action taken by the delegates to the MIAU meeting would be endorsed by the Senate.

Mr. Vitalone then requested that the following statement be entered in the Minutes of the meeting. "Dalhousie withdraws from the Intercollegiate competition for the next year pending review by the Senate Committee on Athletics."

Result of Withdrawal

It is not felt that Dal athletic activities will be curtailed in any way. Rather, they will be enlarged, they will be enlarged, with Dal teams entering Senior, Intermediate and City Leagues in all sports. Competition with other Universities will be limited to exhibition games, and full-scale ventures into local leagues will be possible. Now for the first time every athlete at Dal will be eligible for competition provided that he meets the scholastic requirements.

Plans are already brewing to enlarge and expand the Halifax Intercollegiate Hockey League which functioned so successfully during its first season. The DAAC also hopes to stage a monster Maritime Boxing Meet, in which all colleges, services and clubs may compete. With the Intermediate basketball squad only one round away from the Dominion finals, the basketball picture is brighter than ever. The Canadian and English Rugby teams will again enter the City Leagues next season. This year's City Amateur Tennis and Swimming Meets were highly successful and will undoubtedly be repeated next year. The Dal girls will continue in Intercollegiate competition.

All in all, the sports picture at Dal is extremely promising for the coming year. When a Dal team takes the field, it will be the best team the University can produce, and not a squad picked from less than half of the male student body.

Dal can certainly get along without the MIAU. The question is, can the MIAU get along without Dal?