

sports

The king returns to squash the Dalplex

As teacher, Keith Boyle is articulate and mannerly; as a competitor, he simply rules. He has been teaching squash at the Dalplex for five years. I've never witnessed man and his game being so decisively together. Save, of course, Tyrone Williams of the Dallas Cowboys.

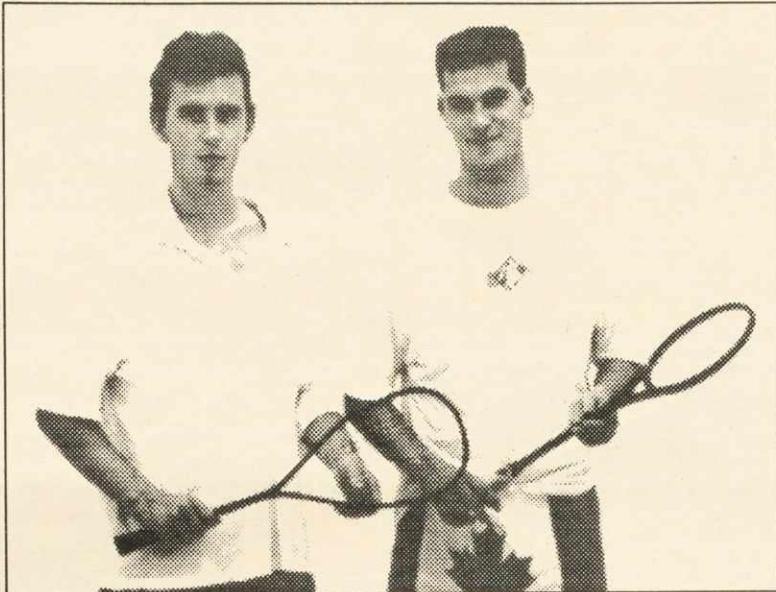
The fall has arrived and the competitors are gearing up for what promises to be very exciting year for Metro squash. This upcoming season, which incidentally begins this weekend, is sure to be highly entertaining for the spectator. The opening tournament of both the women's and men's seasons will be hosted at the new Cole Harbour Place courts this coming October 1 to 4 in Dartmouth.

Several top players from the area compete in national level tournaments. This has been made possible by more devoted players and coaches who see it as necessary to travel to tournaments in order to elevate the standard of squash being played in Nova Scotia.

Several clubs around town furnish international-sized courts. There are four at the Dalplex, another four at the Saint Mary's University Tower, and two at Fenwick Squash. There recently has been a new facility opened in Cole Harbour Place featuring four glass-backed courts.

This year's tryouts for the provincial team that will travel to Saskatoon in January will also begin on October 1. "A talented crop of young players and some rather wily veterans promise to make spots on this team hard-earned", says Boyle.

Currently Boyle is the top-seeded player in the province. His involvement with the game began ten years ago by playing his father and coach



DALPHOTO: TARA GIBSON

Julian and the King heavily favoured to place and win.

Peter and brother Julian. Julian Boyle, no slouch in the game, provides intense competition while himself vying for the top seed.

Julian is one of the few players with the weaponry to throw against his brother Keith. He is one of Keith's fiercest foes, with both having met in many tournament finals over the past decade. To a large degree the development of the game in this province parallels the development of these two key players.

I asked Keith Boyle about some current top names in the game. "Matt Holland and Matt Easingwood, like my brother, are two more young players who have reached the top level in the province," he said. "They all have played internationally in London, England where they enhanced their skills." Both Matthews have represented the province in the Canada Games. The quality of the squash has improved due

to the commitment and perseverance of this elite core of players. "A younger player named Matthew Bishop appears to have all the necessary tools to keep the fellas at the top on their toes," Boyle says. Bishop anchors the upcoming Canada Games squad.

There are many divisions and city leagues that accommodate all ages and skill levels. The game is truly a wonderful workout that combines elements of strategy, finesse and physical ability. Instruction and lessons are available at all clubs for the novice. No great amount of money or experience necessary! Squash is an ideal game for students as it can easily fit into a schedule.

A good beginner's racquet can be purchased for between \$50 and \$100, and non-marking, indoor footwear for as little as \$25. CSRA (Canadian Squash Racquets Association) eyeguards are about \$10 to 15. Pro shops with this equipment can be found

at both the Dalplex and the SMU Tower, as well as local sporting outlets.

The first thing that struck me about the game of squash was how incredibly civilized it is. I mean the name itself, 'squash', seemingly implies a rather brutish form of competition, right? But there we were, my opponent and I in the Fenwick Squash Club (a very pleasant, tasteful atmosphere), sharing a few guffaws about our new professors and rehearsing a few simple rules of play. Had I only known what a complete lamb/lion match which awaited.

My opponent Keith returns my opening serve with a wall-grazing length shot to my forehand. No problem, a length shot was my reply. I returned to the centre of the court and watched as the ball boasted about in some bizarre geometric formulae that I may not soon comprehend. Ahh well, loss of my serve.

His serve... la, la, la, nine straight points. Game one went deservedly to Keith Boyle. As did the following three.

Sure, maybe I was a tad naive when I referred to the game of squash as 'just another racquet sport'. However, playing the returning provincial champion was an immense honour and I am indebted for the great lesson in civilized recreation.

An epiphany of sorts occurred to me on the court as I lay belly-up and gasping. This hitting of a small ball, as hard as one possibly can, is a deep human need. This deep need is satisfied when body and mind unite in the action play. I highly recommend this game to those who have not yet tried it. And as for those who Unbeatable? Yeah, I do pity the fool that plays him in the regular season.

Upon being asked what it was like to hold the pole position in this year's race for number one, Boyle replied, "There is a constant pressure to keep your game sharp. Otherwise it is quite easy to be bumped off the top by the ever-improving younger players."

Geoff Ineson

Psycho experience in men's soccer...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

"It was good that we played them right away so we can get back at the point that was dropped. And since Dal was undefeated at home last year, we wanted to win bad and we got it."

Elsewhere in the AUAA, St. Mary's was blanked 2-0 in a brow-raiser by Saint Francis Xavier in Antigonish, while Memorial did the same against Mount Allison in Sackville. This puts StFX at 2-1-1 as it heads into Halifax to

play Dal on September 29th (score was unavailable at press time), while Memorial, at 3-0-1, remains the best-placed team in the league. These two sides have risen out of the ashes of dismal past seasons to become serious contenders in the race for the Final Four.

Also in the fray is l'université de Moncton, at 2-0-2, who drew 2-2 with New Brunswick over the weekend. For any seasoned AUAA-watcher, all this amounts to perhaps the most competitive league in many years. With no

undisputed pretender for the championship, like in past years where Dal was the dominating powerhouse, this fall's roundup of soccer holds a lot of exciting entertainment, if not a serious case of nail-biting.

Take this coming weekend, for example. After an incredibly important match against StFX on Wednesday, Dal hosts Memorial first on Saturday, and then Prince Edward Island on Sunday. Three games in five days is brutal, but when they include two of the best

teams around, it makes for a rather intense situation. Add to the fact that Memorial's playing style is usually like a game of smear-the-queer, and you've got the recipe for one very rough weekend. Both games start at 2 pm at Studley field.

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