

SPORTS

Laurier coach gets the call

New blood for Yeomen football team

by Riccardo Sala

The athletics scene at York has been healthy, but the football programme stands out like a sore thumb, plagued by one poor season after another and seemingly doomed to failure, or worse, outright extinction.

In a show of support for the programme, York athletics has named Tom Arnott head coach of the Yeomen to replace Nobby Wirkowski, who left at the end of last season.

Arnott takes this job after six years with Wilfrid Laurier University. From the winning Laurier programme — Ontario champion in 1987 — Arnott faces the challenge of turning the Yeomen, if not winners at first, at least into performers.

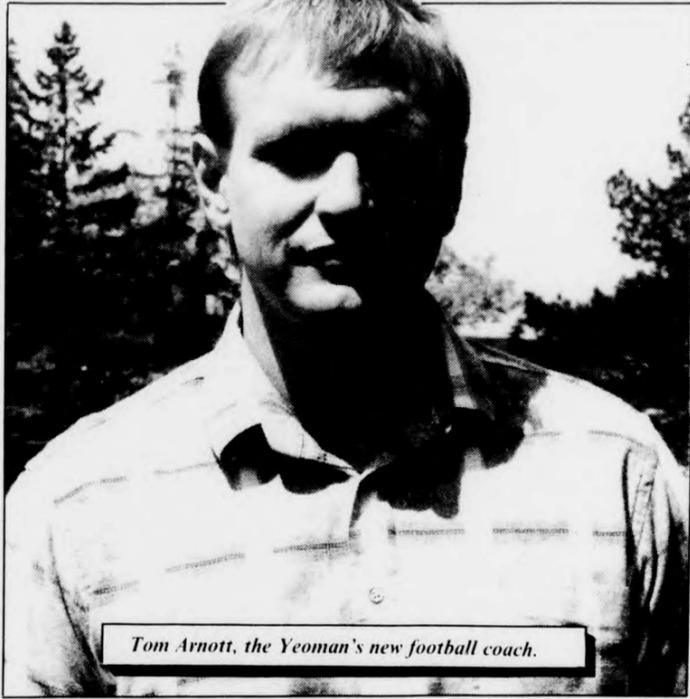
Arnott's coaching career began with Guelph. Having played for the Gryphons through university, he was drafted by the Toronto Argonauts in 1977. Unable to

make the cut, Arnott returned to Guelph, originally as defensive line coach and then as linebacker coach. He remained with the Gryphons for five years before moving to Laurier.

The agreement to take the York post stems from the belief that the Yeoman football programme "enjoys the financial and moral support of York athletics," Arnott said, adding, "I believe that York athletics is committed to making Yeoman football first class."

This support is crucial. York football has been unable to establish the campus-wide support enjoyed by groups such as the hockey Yeomen. Among members of other York teams the football programme is seen as a white elephant devouring money that could be spent on teams that have consistently performed better.

Arnott has no specifics on what it will take to turn the Yeomen around. "We have to create a new atmosphere," he said, "because



Tom Arnott, the Yeoman's new football coach.

York has gone nowhere with the old atmosphere."

Arnott refused to blame former coach Wirkowski. "Too much emphasis is placed on what the coach does. A team does not go winless if it is talented." Arnott believes that "mass frustration set in everywhere and developed into apathy and cancer [within the Yeomen]."

Apathy on the part of York students, administration and athletics also came under fire. "Lethargic," Arnott remarked. In contrast to Guelph and Laurier, "there has never been a push behind football here," he added.

A captain doesn't take charge of a sunken ship. In the same way, Arnott's acceptance of the position is a tacit acknowledgement that something can be done with the football programme.

Arnott believes "people [at York] in general want to see football."

photo by Peter Stathis



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