

SPORTS

Deadline for stories is Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m. Sports Desk 453-4983

Sticks hope to bring home a National Championship

by Allison Clark

The UNB Redsticks captured their third straight AUSA field hockey title by beating SMU 2-0 in last Sunday's final. Nancy Pepler and Josette Babineau each contributed a single to give the sticks the win. Head coach - AUSA coach of the year for the second consecutive season - Donna Hornibrook admitted UNB felt some pressure in Sunday's game. They were "quietly confident" going into the tournament but their game against SMU was quite a close contest. Hornibrook says, "we played an average game; there was tight marking by SMU and they had a hot goal tender; she made some unbelievable saves."

With the first step toward a shot at the national title completed, the Redsticks will be concentrating on team work and mental preparation. Hornibrook says the teams in the CIAU tournament this year are very evenly matched and she anticipates "there will be very little difference between first and fifth place." She feels that UNB has just as good a chance to win as anyone and it will come down to the way her team responds under pressure. "We are better prepared than we were last year, we had a good season and I feel we have the players to do it (win a national title)".

"We have more experience and have made a few changes offensively - the changes we made give the team more punch". Josette Babineau, this year's AUSA leading scorer and most valuable player, has seen more forward line action. The "inner" combination of Babineau and Joan Robere has given opposing defenders more

to contend with.

UNB is traditionally known as an offensive team - 5 Redsticks were named 1991 league all stars: Josette Babineau, Wendy Gallant, Kelly McCormack, Joan Robere and Tanya Whaler - but Hornibrook says "defence has been known to win championships". It will be a



Michael David Smith photo



Michael David Smith photo

Red Sticks are in Halifax to compete for CIAU title

matter of putting the two together.

UNB's game by game strategy will focus on combining the individual efforts of each team member. Hornibrook is very optimistic, yet she seems to have set realistic goals for her team. Their first goal is to make the playoffs and if they do that they would like to win a medal. She says she will be pleased if UNB "goes out there and does their best." Hornibrook is extremely pleased with UNB's tournament draw. They are ranked third and are in a pool with UBC - number two in the nation and SMU - seeded sixth with a bye to the tournament as it's host. The other pool consists of University of

Toronto - number one seed, and the two wild card teams: University of Victoria - seed four - and York University - seed five. UNB plays their first game on Friday at 12:45 against Saint Mary's and meets UBC later that day at 5:15.

UNB travelled to Saint Mary's on Wednesday of this week to practice on the turf and get used to the environment. The number of advantages UNB has going into this CIAU championships - speed, talent, great coaching, a good draw - just may push them over the top. The Redsticks have had a terrific season and will hopefully attain their goals this weekend.

Go get 'em UNB!

Harriers on their mark to repeat

by Frank Denis

Perhaps the toughest challenge faced by any sports team following a championship season is defending its title. Your competitors seem to single you out and will do whatever it takes to keep your winning streak at one. For the UNB Red Harriers cross country team that is no exception when they try and defend their AUSA title tomorrow in Moncton.

Last season the men's team captured the AUSA title by edging out Dalhousie in a tight race. This year in their head to head meets, Dalhousie has prevailed, but only barely. In their last confrontation two weeks ago at St. Francis Xavier Dalhousie edged UNB by a single point, 27-28.

On the women's side, the Lady Harriers, have not had as much success against Dalhousie this fall. The Dal Lady Tigers have been the class of

the league this year and only an upset would give UNB the women's crown. Yet coach Rick Hull has remained optimistic. "Certainly, the incentive of challenging the second ranked team in the nation should fire the Lady Harriers up as we head into the AUSA Championships. In our last meeting with Dalhousie our women lost by a score of 53-18".

Hull went on to say that he would do whatever it took not only to make that score more respectable, but to dethrone Dalhousie "There is an outside chance that we could beat Dal. Right now it's a long shot, but something that we know we might achieve."

The Lady Harriers biggest hope lies with Felicia Greer. Greer has been consistently finishing up on the leader board all season. A strong race by Greer could see her going to Victoria, BC to compete in the National Championships. If

she can finish in the top two, Greer will be on her way. Her two toughest competitors are both from Dal, Shari Boyle and Anne-Marie Fournale".

"If Felicia runs the race of her life on Saturday, hopefully she'll qualify for the CIAU's. She has put in four years for the team and was determined to make this season her best and with her commitment and dedication to the sport she has certainly shown that she is a premiere runner." Says coach Hull.

Also running for UNB along with Greer is co-captain Heather Eagle, Nicole LeBlanc and Mary Pugh. There is loads of experience amongst those runners and they'll be ready come the start of the gun.

The men's team will not have as difficult of a time defeating Dalhousie as the women will, but it certainly won't be easy.

UNB and Dal have been in a dogfight all season long with

Dal prevailing each time. UNB is led by Rorrie Currie who is one of Canada's best cross country runners.

According to coach Hull his team's success does not so much depend on how well Currie races, but on the other Harrier runners and in particular Keith Fahey. "When Keith runs well the two or three

people who usually race with him place well. In our last meet he finished second behind Currie. Because of our performance we have thrown one heck of a scare into the Dalhousie team because traditionally we have never raced well before the AUSA's and I think the tide will turn in our favour this weekend".

Athletes of the week

Tanya Whalen of the UNB Red Sticks is the female Athlete of the Week. The 3rd year education student from Chatham, NB was a 2nd Team All Canadian in 1990-91. Over the weekend Tanya was nominated to the 1991-92 AUSA All-Star team. She was instrumental in the Red Sticks AUSA Championship win over SMU. Tanya is a mid-fielder who has been a consistent performer and a key to the Red Sticks attack.

Trevor Boland of the UNB Red Devils is the Male Athlete of the Week. The St. John's NFLD native scored 2 goals in the Devils victory over UdeM (5-3) and has scored 5 goals and 3 assists in the past three games. Trevor is a 1st year physical education student who is deemed to be an impact player with a great future ahead of him.