

Hachey a threat to AUAA keepers

by Mark Savoie
Sports Editor

Leslie Hachey has already become a force in AUAA women's soccer, despite the fact that she is just 19 years old and has only one year of experience playing soccer at the university level. Even that much experience is misleading, however, since the one year of eligibility which she has used up was given at UNBSJ. The competition she faced at that university is not comparable to that which she faces now, but she has somehow developed the skills and instincts to have become the leading goal scorer in this year's AUAA.

Hachey is that rare type of player who is able to generate excitement every time she touches the ball. Every time she enters her opposition's goal area the possibility of a goal looms. Part of the reason for this is that many of her seven goals have been of a spectacular nature. She is able to use her sheer power to fight through close marking, and she is able to use her pace to blow past defenders on her way to a loose ball and a composed put-away. Her strength and speed become particularly evident in the second half. While her opponents find their energy flagging, Hachey's fitness enables her to continue at a high level of performance.

"I do a lot of sprinting," is how she described her style of play, "running on to balls and stuff like that. Our practices are pretty good because one day we'll do endurance and then the next day we'll do sprinting drills. So we're working both, which is very important to me. I have to have both. I have to be able to run out there for the 90 minutes and I have to be able to take that burst of



Leslie Hachey dazzles yet another hapless defender; this one from UdeM. photo by Warren Watson

speed when I need it."

One thing that Hachey has not yet become is unaware of her function as a single player within a larger team. "As long as I'm out there doing my job, not just scoring goals but creating the opportunities to score the goals," she answered when asked about her goal scoring success. Basically, just doing my job. If scoring goals is my only job then that's what I'll do, but I think I play a bigger role than just scoring goals."

Still, scoring goals is what she seems to do best, and she exhibits on the field a willingness to accept the pressures which a top-flight striker must face.

While in the offensive zone Hachey is constantly driving toward the net, though many of her runs have a tendency to start on her side of midfield. As a result, her team-mates know where she is likely to be, and also know that she possesses the ability to finish off their feeds positively.

Hachey, a Saint John native currently in her second year in Phys. Ed. here at UNB, plans to remain with the V-Reds for another few years. Welcome as this news is for UNB Women's soccer fans, it will not be nearly so well received by the keepers in the league who will continue to be forced to face her.

Kamal Gurung

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injury," he admitted. "I've gone down to back [defence] 'cause I don't have to do a lot of running as compared to midfield." Being the enthusiastic competitor that he is, it seems just as painful for him being unable to race up the field. "It can get frustrating just sitting

at the back and waiting for them to come at you. You want to be involved in every play and everything. But it helps the team, so why not? That's what everybody wants to do, make the team win."

Gurung pinpoints particular contrasts between his native style of soccer and North America's approach, saying, "When I was playing in Singapore, it was more touch-and-go, plenty of movement off the ball. Here, we hold the ball and we have several set plays that we're looking for." But do the differences affect Gurung's work on the field? Not at all. "I enjoy playing so it doesn't really matter to me," he said. Quite simply, nothing could deter his love for the game, and Gurung has certainly made that point.



Unfortunately, my ramblings of last week went more than a little bit long, so I wasn't able to comment on the joke that has been the American League Playoffs. The National League Playoff structure is just as bad, but they got lucky this year. The wildcard (Colorado Rockies) had to play the best team (Atlanta Braves), while the number two (Cincinnati Reds) and three (Los Angeles Dodgers) teams played each other. The homefield advantages were a little bit screwed up, but all in all there was a sense of fair play about the whole thing.

The American League, on the other hand, was a complete mess. Think about it. What team would you have preferred to face: the Cleveland Indians or the Seattle Mariners. After all, the Mariners had been near .500 for much of the season and only a late season charge coupled with the California Angels' collapse had allowed them into the post-season. The Indians, on the other hand, flirted with .700 throughout the season. Had they managed to sustain that plateau they would have been Major League Baseball's first .700 team since the Indians of 1954, the last team from Cleveland to make post-season play. That team got swept in four games at the World Series by the New York Giants, but this does not mean that this year's Indians will necessarily suffer the same post-season fate. This is a very good baseball team; easily the class of the American League.

Thus, obviously, much of the incentive of winning the AL East was removed. In fact, there was a substantial disincentive, since the only reason to win the division is pride and the fact that it takes you out of the doubt of the wildcard hunt. This is not sufficient. The Boston Red Sox got screwed over this year. Despite the fact that they finished well ahead of the New York Yankees in a head-to-head divisional race, the Red Sox were forced to face the best team in the American League in the first round. Granted, the Yankees got no favours in facing the Mariners, who have been baseball's hottest team down the stretch, but clearly an injustice has been done.

The solution to these post-season injustices is simple. The team with the best record should play the wildcard, with the other two division winners facing off against each other. In each case the team with the better record should get home field advantage. The only exception should be when the wildcard and the team with the best record come from the same division. Then, and only then, the wildcard should play against the second best division winner, with the division winner getting home field advantage. Once again, the other two teams will play off against each other, with the best record having home field advantage. This is essentially the way the NFL playoff structure works, and it works well, but the powers that be in baseball are simply too blindly stubborn to accept the possibility that another sport might actually have something worth adopting.

So far this season the Varsity Reds have had one of the best starts to the sporting year that I have ever seen. Each of the field hockey, men's soccer, and women's soccer teams are as yet undefeated in regular season play. In fact, only the cross country teams have lost an event that was not a mere exhibition. This, of course, is misleading, since the nature of cross country makes the entire regular season nothing but a training schedule in preparation for the AUAs. Coaches will actually try and hide the strength of their teams from the other coaches, leaving one or two of their best runners behind for each meet, hoping to lure the other teams into a false sense of security. The standard joke in cross country circles is that Uoft's cross country teams competed so separately during the season that the various runners only got introduced to each other at the OUAA championships. This can be dangerous, since only a predetermined number of teams from each conference is assured of a spot at the CIAUs. There are also two wildcard selections for the CIAUs, these being selected on the basis of the team's performance throughout the year. Thus, theoretically, the V-Reds are behind in their hunt for a wildcard spot, but the reality is that there is no way in hell that an AUAA team will ever get a cross country wildcard.

So, the cross country teams aside, this has been a remarkable season thus far for our fall sports teams. The only winter sports team to have played thus far has not been so successful, but fortunately the hockey team's blowouts have just been exhibitions. This team sees its first real action this weekend with games against UCCB and St.FX. It is expected that the hockey Varsity Reds will be 2-0 after this weekend, since neither UCCB nor St.FX are expected to ice strong teams this year. However, until this team is able to shore up its defence, it will be impossible to view it as a serious contender within the AUAA. After all, no team that gives up 20 goals in two games, even if they were exhibitions, deserves all that much respect. For a reporter to suggest otherwise at this point is simply an example of blatant homerism.

One good thing about the ice hockey V-Reds this year is that it looks probable that Lesley Reddon will be getting the backup job behind Frank LeBlanc. Reddon played one period last year without allowing a goal, but this was against the hapless Mt. Allison Mounties. It will be interesting to see what she can do once she gets to play with something on the line. Hopefully Coach Danny Grant will give her that opportunity, and will not simply ride LeBlanc until he drops. This was a problem for Grant last year and was a notable cause of UNB's early departure from the playoffs at the hands of STU. Quite simply, Grant rushed LeBlanc back into service after his bout with mononucleosis too quickly. Had Jason Payne played that series, UNB might be defending national champions right now, instead of being a team which is playing like they belong in last place secure in the knowledge that they will at least finish fourth and make the playoffs.

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