

Rugby Report

By LIONEL D. WILD

LUCK AND INJURIES ARE terms often heard in sports, words the casual fan interprets as excuses for sub-standard performance. To those closely involved with any game, though, they are words which often ring true.

For the Dalhousie Rugby Club, they were frequently used to describe the 1985 Nova Scotia Rugby Union (N.S.R.U.) season.

"We were extremely unlucky to have played our best matches against the best teams in the league," said Dalhousie coach Rowland Smith.

The margins by which Dalhousie lost matches to such perennial league powers as Pictou, the Halifax Tars and Halifax R.F.C. were slim. In these matches, Dalhousie had numerous scoring opportunities, but failed to capitalize on them.

Against less formidable opposition, injuries and defensive breakdowns hurt Dalhousie's performance.

"In the first ten minutes of our game against Dartmouth, we lost a hooker, scrum half and fullback because of injuries," said Smith.

After a win and a tie to open the season, Dalhousie narrowly lost their next seven matches to finish in the bottom half of the N.S.R.U. standings.

A positive feature of Dalhousie's game was their scrum. Front row forwards Dean Jackson, Steve Cole, Nick Juryman and Steve Linehan matched up well against their opposite numbers. In the lineouts, second row forwards Mark Piesanen and Adam Rienenstock were the team's grim leapers.

Wing forwards Blen Crane, Jamie Van Wiechen and Mark Vernon were aggressive in their ball pursuit.

Dalhousie's backline included the powerful open field running of Chris Carter, the shiftiness and game sense of Paul Wogan and the leadership of team captain Ian MacLeod.

Stong individual performances were not enough, though, to assure a winning season. A solid aspect of team play one weekend was often missing in the next match.

This was due to lineup changes and the minor injuries that invariably disrupts the consistency of a team's performance. With a small core of players regularly coming to practice, substitutes were often hastily thrown into matches.

Coach Smith, though is optimistic about the team's future. "The stronger and more visible players we had this year are newcomers," he said.

If this core returns intact next year, Dalhousie's rugby future will be bright.

Ed Carty, tournament organizer and coach of the St. Francis Xavier University rugby team, issued the invitation to the tournament in Antigonish.

St. F.X., Saint Mary's University, and Mount Allison University will be the other teams competing in the four-team tournament.

After the University of New Brunswick pulled out of the tournament, Dalhousie was asked to come as a replacement.

This will enable Dalhousie to replay their disputed match against Saint Mary's. Dalhousie captain Ian MacLeod had filed a protest with the N.S.R.U. over incompetent officiating by a substitute referee in the Oct. 5 match.

"As far as I can discover, Dalhousie got a raw deal in that match," said Carty.

"This is a reasonable way of resolving that conflict."

THE DALHOUSIE WOMEN'S volleyball Tigers had a very active weekend, with two league games and a pair of tournaments included in their schedule.

The Tigers won both league contests against University of New Brunswick. On Friday night, they took 15-6, 15-3, and 15-4 decisions and on Saturday triumphed by 15-9, 15-7, and 15-4 margins. Karen Fraser and Simona Vortel recorded seven kills each in Saturday's match.

On Saturday, the Tigers also participated in the University of New Brunswick Atlantic Invitational. In the round-robin section of the event, they defeated UPEI 15-1, 15-4, triumphed over Fredericton Seniors 15-6, 15-7, and dropped University of New Brunswick 15-9, 15-7.

In the semi-finals, they met UNB once more. This time the verdict was no different, as the Tigers won 15-4, 15-8.

Dalhousie then went on to dispatch Mt. Allison in the finals, 15-5, 15-6.

Mt. Allison had upset University de Moncton in their semi-final, 15-7, 15-4.

Fraser and Vortel were named to the Tournament All-star team.

On Sunday, the team competed in the Mount St. Vincent invitational. In the round-robin event, the Tigers defeated Acadia 15-6, 15-2; St. Francis Xavier 15-9, 15-2; Village Gate 12-15, 15-6, 15-9, and Mount St. Vincent, 6-15, 15-6, 15-6.

Vortel racked up 42 kills in Sunday's games, while Beth Yeomans had 19 kills and rookie middle blocker Sandra Wright recorded 13.

Paula Clark notched 12 stuffs while Janet Rhynes had seven aces and a 94 percent service reception ratio.

"Both tournaments were a good experience, especially for

our less experienced players," noted Dalhousie coach Lois MacGregor. "It gave me a chance to see what the younger kids could do, and also to use some of the younger players in specialized positions."

Although the league wins boosted the Tigers' unbeaten game streak in AUA play to 72, MacGregor is not hung up on retaining the unbeaten streak. "You learn from losing too," she said. "We lost a couple of games in the Mount St. Vincent tournament, and I think we learned from that."

"The weekend's games were very positive," she noted. "The rookies are looking very good, and it was excellent preparation for this weekend."

The Tigers will travel to University of Winnipeg this weekend to compete in the Winnipeg Classic.

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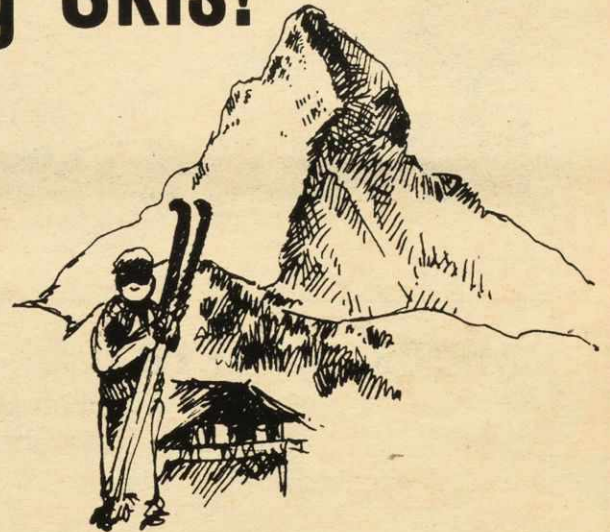
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DALHOUSIE RUGBY CLUB has been invited to the Maritimes Universities Rugby Championship this weekend.