

SPORTS

Dal's big stick

Dalhousie student shares info on his equipment

BY CHRISTIAN LAFORCE

Ever seen a lacrosse game? Few have, and even fewer know the rules or particularities of the game. Despite its official status as Canada's national summer sport, lacrosse does not enjoy a significant following, especially in the Maritimes.

However overshadowed lacrosse may be by its winter cousin, hockey, fans and players of the game are passionately devoted. This was evident at the Canadian Field Lacrosse Championships held in Halifax this past weekend. One of the players representing Nova Scotia was Dalhousie's Brock Robertson.

Brock has a big stick.

"Yeah, it's like six feet long ... with a big head," he said, laughing.

Brock plays defence, or "big-stick" for Team Nova Scotia. This year's national championship was the second-year kinesiology student's first crack at organised field lacrosse. He has, however, played the indoor version of the game, box-lacrosse, for the past seven years. In that time, he's picked up bronze and silver medals at the Canadian Junior National Box-Lacrosse Championships.

"Field lacrosse is a lot different from box," he said. "Box is harder hitting and more physical while field is more tactical and open. There's a lot more room to make passing plays and runs — and my stick is almost twice the size too."

Big-sticks are not allowed past halfway because of the tremendous leverage generated by, well, their long shafts.

In field lacrosse, each team consists of 10 players. A goalie, three big-sticks, three midfielders, and three attack men. Midfielders and attack men usually wear more protective equipment to shield themselves from the punishing slashes of defenders. The game is divided up into 20 minute quarters and is very, very physical.

"There are three types of penalties," explained Robertson. "A technical foul is given for 30 seconds for something like offside or touching the ball with your hands. A personal foul, which can be 1-3 minutes depending on the severity, would be something like cross-checking or slashing somebody's head. If a personal foul is bad enough, it's an expulsion foul — a game misconduct."

"I once saw a big-stick spear an attack man in the throat," said Robertson. "He was in mid-stride and flipped over onto his

head."

Lacrosse is fast-paced, physical, and high-scoring. Scores routinely total better than 20 goals. Despite its spectator appeal, the game hasn't really boomed in terms of following or participation.

"A lot of people are afraid to play. Slashing the arms is legal when a player has possession of the ball. That looks scary, but most guys have pads on their arms. In field lacrosse, anybody within 10 feet of the ball is fair game, too — even if he doesn't have the ball. Also, it's a hard game to televise. The ball is small and hard to see."

Lacrosse registration is up in recent years, especially at the youth levels. Paltry senior participation continues to hinder the development of more competitive provincial teams in the Maritimes. Brock's brother, box-lacrosse goalie and Lacrosse Nova Scotia Secretary, Dirk Robertson, hopes that increased registration at the junior levels will ensure a steady flow of talent into the senior league in the years to come.

Anyone interested in playing lacrosse or lending a hand should call Lacrosse Nova Scotia President, Brian Thompson at 865-8017.



Lacrosse: big stick, little balls.

Poor officiating ruins men's derby match

BY TERRY HAWES

The cross-town rivalry between the Dalhousie Tigers and Saint Mary's Huskies continued last Wednesday as both the men and women's teams began the stretch drive to the AUAA playoffs.

While the Dalhousie women polished off SMU 3-0 in a relatively incident-free contest, the men's match was filled with excitement and controversy as the teams played to a 1-1 draw.

As a result, if SMU and Dal finish tied at the end of the season, it will come down to goal difference with the winner hosting the AUAA Championships in two weeks. The ladies continue to lead St. FX for first place in the Eastern Division and despite the fact that the playoff tournament will be held in either Moncton or Sackville, New Brunswick, the division winner will have a favourable schedule as the higher seed.

The Tigers are back in action on Saturday when they host the UPEI Panthers and Sunday when the Mount Allison Mounties are the visitors to Wickwire Field.

Men's Soccer

Dalhousie 1 Saint Mary's 1

This match will be remembered for the incompetent officiating of referee Jose Farias as he made many unnecessary and questionable decisions throughout the game.

When it all was said and done, two players had been sent off, Dal assistant coach Darrell Cormier was also ejected and Farias' decision to award the Tigers a penalty in the 89th minute (which was converted to level the score) drew a chorus of boos from SMU fans.

The first half saw chances few and far between. Matthew Boulton belted a Saint Mary's free kick over the bar and a long-range effort from former Tiger Chris Devlin went inches over the crossbar.

Dalhousie's first scoring chance came on the half-hour from Joey Fraelic, but his free kick went straight to SMU keeper Carlos Loureiro's arms.

With most of the play in midfield, the match was failing to live up to expectations and the game looked destined to finish scoreless.

Enter Mr. Farias.

In the 41st minute, he sent off Tigers midfielder Nador Awanen and SMU defender Daniel Fournier for rough play after both players challenged for a loose ball. Despite Fournier's blatant kick to the back of Awanen's leg, Farias sent both players off, enraging the Tigers coaching staff, who pleaded with the referee to talk to the assistant on the sidelines. Farias warned both Pat Nearing and Darrell Cormier that any further protest would result in an immediate ejection.

A minute later, a ball out of touch appeared to have last touched a SMU player, but the

linesman awarded the throw to the Huskies, a decision that Cormier questioned. Given his previous warning, this was all Farias needed to eject him. There were no more scoring chances and the half ended 0-0.

"The ball went off [SMU's player] and [Farias] told me to leave," Cormier said during the half-time break.

The strange occurrences continued before the ball was kicked for the second half as the Tigers had only nine players on the field. Cormier tried to get Nearing's attention, yelling "we're a man short!" but Farias blew the whistle to begin play. By the time defender Aaron Barkhouse came on, over a minute had been played.

Saint Mary's elevated their game and were unlucky not to open the scoring after Idris Mert caught Dal keeper Ian Van Zoost out of position and lobbed over him. Fraelic cleared the ball off the line much to Mert's disbelief.

Dalhousie came back with a Jeff Hibberts shot going wide and an Emmanuel Gaopotlake cross just missing the leg of striker Colin Duffy.

Then came an extraordinary five minute sequence where the Huskies had three great opportunities. The best one came from a Blake Geddis free kick that came off the cross bar. Van Zoost then stopped a shot from 10 yards out after another SMU cross. Luck would be on their side as their hard work was rewarded with a goal in the 77th minute.

The Huskies played another

1-2 with Idris Mert setting up brother, Mesut, who blasted a shot past a helpless Van Zoost, sending the crowd into a frenzy. Several fans even came down from the stands to join in the celebration.

With two minutes to play, SMU had a golden opportunity to put the Tigers away as Andy

Atkins was sent in alone on Van Zoost, only for Atkins to shoot inches wide from the right-hand post.

It would come back to haunt SMU as Farias made the controversial penalty call after Dal

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Swim teams win at AUAA Invitational

BY SCOTT SANCTON

Dalhousie's swimmers continued their winning streak at the Amby Legere Invitational Swim Meet last weekend at the University of New Brunswick. The women won 15 of 17 events while the men took top place in 14 of their 17 races at the five-team event.

The Tigers' Men's contingent was lead to victory by meet-MVP Chris Stewart, who set new meet records in all four of his winning performances. Stewart, already a CIAU qualifier, dominated the pool in both the 50 and 100m breaststroke. He also picked up convincing wins in the 100 and 200m individual medley events. The MVP was backed by a number of Dal rookies, all showing themselves to be in fine form since early season. Rob Coleman won the 50 and 100m freestyle events, Mike Terrauds picked up a win in the 100m butterfly, and Nick Graham stole the 50m butterfly. Not to be forgotten is third-year swimmer Oscar Stachowiak's first place finish in the 800m freestyle. The Tigers also won all five relays.

Amy Woodworth walked away from UNB with the Wom-

en's MVP after winning three of her individual events. In addition to winning the 200m individual medley, Woodworth also took the 400 and 800m freestyle events, setting new meet records in both. Her 800m time was good enough to make her Dal's second CIAU qualifier.

CIAU veteran, Angela MacAlpine followed suit as she too qualified for the national championships on the strength of her performance in the 50m fly. Other winning Tigers were Gail Whittaker in the 50 and 100m backstroke, Sandra McLean in the 50 and 100m breaststroke, and Lori Borgal in the 100m fly. The Dal Women also set new meet records in two of their five relay victories.

"The team has a lot of potential," commented Women's team co-captain Sarah Mathieson. "This was a solid win that should set us up for a great season."

The Tigers will put their win streak on the line at Dalplex on October 22 when they host Mount Allison University. The Tigers will also put their top relay teams up against the best teams from across the province this Sunday in the Annual Dalhousie Pepsi Relay meet, also at Dalplex.