

Part 1

Football—Is it time for a rebirth?

by Greg Dennis

This weekend in Toronto the Acadia Axemen and the University of Western Ontario Mustangs battle each other in the College Bowl for football supremacy while students from across the nation look on via the television medium. Being the only one of the "high-exposure" sports (hockey and basketball are the others) to end during the first semester, much interest and spirit is captured by this event, regardless of the finalists.

During the fall, football has a magnetism that bonds all students together in unified spirit for their team and school. New students, unsure of themselves and uneasy in different surroundings, consider a football game to be a great social event, a rallying place to meet friends and show enthusiasm.

Most universities have football programs that instill self-pride in their students; players and spectators alike. Those that have not, do not because of lack of funds or lack of interest. **Dalhousie does not. Why?**

In October 1976, Dalhousie University pulled the plug on its football program after yet another disastrous season. The team's record, the team's

moral and the team's support was poor. The frustration was epitomized by head coach Bob Thayer's resignation four days after the season ended. After weighing all factors the Head of Athletics and Recreation Services, Ken Bellemare and his department in a written report decided to "recommend that Dalhousie University cease its participation in varsity football in the Atlantic Universities Athletic Association or in any other intercollegiate league or schedule." Dr. Henry Hicks, President of Dalhousie, under this advice, officially terminated the program. The AUA was concerned when the termination came about as they feared for the future of the league. Other losing university teams, like UPEI, UNB and Mt. Allison probably considered the same move Dal made.

The termination was planned and announced quickly and effectively, causing little if any stir on campus. Many students were not aware such a decision had been made (the *Gazette* said not a word about it for several weeks) while others, and most faculty members were apathetic toward the move.

This apathy was one of several reasons for ter-

mination cited by Mr. Bellemare in the position paper. A further cause for termination included the great number of injuries incurred by the players, probably due to lack of conditioning which in turn was caused by a lack of field control for practices. While not an unusually large number, approximately twelve players were sidelined at the end of the 1976 season. More than with physical injury, real concern lay with the effects a losing, frustrating record had on the players' mental attitudes. Many felt constant humiliation and embarrassment to be playing for Dalhousie, a situation that does not produce enjoyable experiences nor sound educational opportunities.

The coaches and staff also suffered mental anguish. Five quality head coaches resigned during a ten year period, frustrated by demoralizing defeats and the lack of administrative and student support. It has been said people went to Dal football games simply to see how badly the Tigers were going to get whopped or how many players were going to be scraped off the field. Richard Slaunwhite, trainer for the football squad for ten years, used to spend sleepless

Friday nights before a game. "It sickened me to see those kids being pounded out there," said Slaunwhite. He went on to say, "Some players claim the losing had no psychological effect on themselves but I can't recall anyone really enjoying themselves when we were being beat by 50, 60 or 70 points."

Another reason cited for the termination of football was the lack of local talent produced by N.S. high schools. It had been estimated in 1976 that only 16 graduating high school students, that could meet Dalhousie's academic requirements, would have enough skill to play college ball. Although Doug Quackenbush, coach of Dartmouth High School says the number has since doubled, the competition for these players is fierce among the N.S. universities. Regardless, to complete a roster at least 30 students would have to be recruited from outside the Maritimes. This is where the most significant reasons fall into place. They are the philosophical and budgetary attitudes of the administration.

To recruit legitimate students with sufficient skills in football, a fair amount of

dollars has to be divvied out. According to a Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union regulation (C-3) no student can receive financial assistance based solely on athletic ability. Some universities offer funds under the guise of leadership grants to assist athletes. According to Bellemare's report "Financial inducement in any form other than the regular University scholarship and bursary program has not been condoned by Dalhousie University."

continued next week



Swimmers set winning traditions in Dalplex pool

by F.A. MacLeod

Dalhousie hosted its first swim meet in the new Dalplex pool last Saturday afternoon and won the double dual meet, defeating Memorial University of Newfoundland women 58-33, and the University of New Brunswick women 60-35. In the men's events Dalhousie also won, this time the score was Dal 71 MUN 24, Dal 64 UNB 29. (In individual swimming events first place scores 5 points; second place 3 points; and third place 1 point. Relay events score 7 points for the winning team, no points for second.)

Dalhousie dominated the meet with 15 wins in the 22 swimming events. Brian Jessop and Susan Mason were the individual stars for Dalhousie with 3 wins each. Jessop won the 1500m freestyle and 200m butterfly in CIAU qualifying time as well as taking first place honours in the 400m freestyle. Mason

won the women's 200m freestyle, the 200m butterfly, and the 200m backstroke, all in CIAU qualifying time. In addition, the 200m backstroke time for Mason was a Dal record.

Other CIAU qualifying times were turned in by Dal's Louise Deveau in the 800m freestyle and 400m freestyle, Krista Daley in the 50m freestyle, Janie Flynn in the 200m individual medley, and Susan Bennie in the 200m breaststroke. Bennie's time of 2 minutes 56.9 seconds was also a Dalhousie record. Another record was turned in by the women's 400m freestyle relay team of Susan Bennie, Krista Daley, Louise Deveau, and Janie Flynn, who reduced the previous mark by over 7 seconds.

The most exciting event of the meet was the men's 400m freestyle which was a close contest between Brian Jessop and UNB's David Banks. The entire Dalhousie swimming

team stood at the edge of the pool cheering Jessop on with deafening gusto during most of this race. The last lap was very even, but Jessop touched out Banks at the finish with a time of 4 minutes 20.4 seconds. Banks was very close with 4 minutes 21.2 seconds.

This weekend Dalhousie travels to Sackville to meet host Mount Allison and the visiting Acadia University squad in dual meet competition. The Tigers will be hosting their second annual AUA Invitational Meet in the Dalplex the following weekend, November 24 and 25.

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