

## SPORTS

## Men's soccer clinch AUAA championship

ANGEL FIGUEROA

The legacy has begun. Returning from the AUAA play-offs in Fredericton this weekend, the men's soccer team has *thunderstruck* league history by claiming Dalhousie's first trophy of "maritime supremacy in intercollegiate soccer" since 1976 — a year these golden boys can't even remember.

Defeating first Mount Allison in a hotly contested semi-final (2-1), and then the University of New Brunswick in the championship match (2-1), the victory seals the cap on a quest for glory which has been evident and mounting ever since last year's founding season, when the team qualified for the Final Four for the first time in five years. Now the Tigers have fulfilled their most ultimate goal, and none too pretty either, as they resume their quest for another Holy Grail at the national championships in Kingston, Ontario, this coming weekend.

Victory was sweet in both matches, as their daunted opponents were the harbingers of rivalry and grudges. Dal had been winless against U.N.B. for more than five years, while Mt Allison defeated Dal in last year's tear-jerking championship. Distaste over such a loss is not easily forgotten, and it was only too fitting that they were slated as Dal's opponent for the semi-final on Saturday, a meeting billed by every player on the team as one of revenge, not survival. But tension was high as both teams descended onto the

pitch in a light, drizzling rain, and the quiet intensity of the Dal squad was enough to convince you they were a bunch of men obsessed with ambition.

Dal set the pressure right from the kickoff, and the likes of full-back John Amis and halfback Neil



PHOTO: PAUL REPP

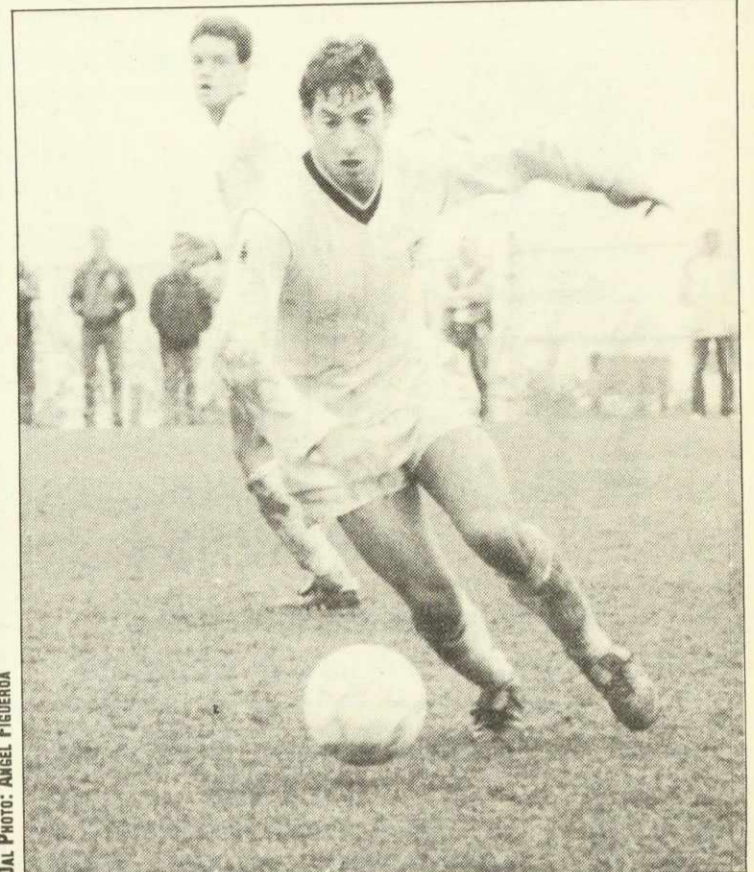
Captain John Amis receives trophy.

Sedgwick immediately showed their talents in early attempts to score. The opposition pressed with their own show of talents, and the match ended in a lock of mutual virtuosity that was, at times, terrifying for both benches. But Mt Allison went up first in the 24th minute when a loose ball bounced out of the penalty box on a corner kick, and then was drilled into the net in a skillful shot by an open attacker.

The answer to such a strike was quick, however, as Dal set the equalizer two minutes later during a blitz counterattack. Veteran striker Tim Hall went down the right wing and made a beautiful cross to the penalty spot, where Amis beat a defender to head the ball past the corner post. It was a brilliant goal to mark Amis' second of the season, and a fitting trophy for a game which would become his best played of the year. (Amazing what brand-new boots from Soccer Pro will do for ya, eh mate?).

Dal keeper Phil Samyn was shutting down repeated attempts by Mt Allison, and with the likewise talents of the opposing keeper, it seemed clear that it was anyone's game heading into the final 20 minutes of play. Samyn's tenacity paid off, as the offence finally came through to score the winner. In the 71st minute, veteran halfback Rob Adams lobbed a trademark pass from centrefield that found John Richmond on the run just inside the box. Beating two defenders, he then let it loose into the far corner for what would become the deciding goal — it wasn't pretty, but it did the job.

Shortly after, Richmond was red-carded for a comprehensive foul, and what resulted was 12 minutes of terror, as frantic mustering by Mt Allison failed to get the equalizer, but were close to scoring more than once. Amis made a very thankful save during a heated scramble in the 6 yard box, and Samyn once again pulled through



DAL PHOTO: ANGEL FIGUEROA

Star halfback Craig Janc weaved through the U.N.B. defence to score Dal's winning goal.

with brilliant, if maniacal, goal-keeping.

At the whistle, it was a total team effort that snatched this seminal victory for the Tigers. The ingredients also included sweeper Adrian Ibbetson, left back Jamie Sawler, and right half Rob Sawler as key corner-stones in the win. Amis and Craig Janc received player-of-the-game honours, but it was Amis especially that deserved

categorical acclaim for his outstanding play this day.

"Very tough game," the Brit captain muttered during the abrupt celebrations that followed, "But we kept the ball on the carpet rather than on the car-park where its been in previous games.... We were able to do the job, and we intend to finish it tomorrow."

Alluding to the approaching game-of-the-year, all regained a look of composure which was as much pragmatic preparation as a sign of sobering relief. U.N.B. had defeated Acadia 1-0 in the other semi-final, and the looming match to decide the AUAA champion was soon an omnipresent reality that descended onto the stadium, like the thick fog that enshrouded the pitch as the two teams began to warm up. This would be the climax of a year that has seen Dal emerge as the strongest bidders for the Atlantic crown, but all that predicament was now meaningless against the second best team in the league, who were just as hungry for the big win, undefeated with 6 wins and 6 ties.

Play began with the aura of a World Cup super-match between two powerhouses who were going to clash and deliver a contest worthy only of the lump of silver that awaited the winner on the sidelines. Shortly after the fateful whistle for opening kickoff, tension soared both on an off the bench, and a bumpy but cautious style of soccer soon developed on the field.

An excellent save by Samyn in the 6th minute off a corner-kick established Dal's defensive standard for the game. Sweeper Ibbetson and fullbacks Jamie Sawler and Adams (the fastest guy in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Women lose 1-0 in squeaker final

BY DEREK NEARY

When the Dalhousie Tigers of the Women's Soccer League travelled to Acadia for the AUAA playoffs this weekend they had one goal in mind. That goal was to win it all.

When the Tigers left they also had one goal in mind, but this time it was the goal that cost them the AUAA championship.

On Saturday the Dal squad opened their weekend with a semi-final match against the Mount Allison Mounties. The Tigers were pumped up and controlled the tempo throughout the first half.

The 12th minute saw the first goal of the game come from Dal's Jocelyn Smith on a pass from Kate Gillespie.

Nine minutes later the Tigers struck again. The play began with a little "give and go" between Carla Perry and Nicole Webb. The ball was then taken upfield by Gillespie who again slipped a pass across to Smith for her second of the game.

In the 39th minute, Smith spun around from the side of the Mounties net and found Perry who

in turn deposited the ball in the corner, putting the Tigers up 3-0.

The Tigers lost their offensive edge in the second half. But defensively they remained solid, as they snuffed out a number of Mount Allison scoring chances. Keeper Trish Wilson also continued to frustrate opposing strikers. She denied them any legitimate scoring opportunities by covering up early.

When the final whistle blew the Dal troupe came out on top with a 3-0 victory.

A long and eagerly awaited championship title was now staring the Tigers in the face, but so were the unbeaten Acadia Axettes, who had edged the St. Mary Huskies 2-1 in their semi-final game.

The Dal crew was in tough against the Axettes. They had been unable to score on Acadia in a pair of games earlier this season, and Acadia's aggressive approach offsets the Tigers' quick, finesse game.

As expected, it was a very physical contest. Unfortunately for Dal, they were often on the receiving end of some vicious hits. Jocelyn Smith was the first victim of the brutal conduct. She sustained a

serious ankle injury as a result of a takedown. A little later, netminder Trish Wilson also went down hard following a brutal collision. Despite suffering from a troublesome knee she remained on the field and finished the game in pain.

"To hell with winning," stated Dal coach Darrell Cormier, "I was more worried about my players getting hurt."

"I did not want to see another person get their knees taken out, and that's where the game was going, in my opinion."

Supporting coach Cormier's argument were the 27 free kicks awarded to the Tigers, most as a result of Acadia's aggressive play.

Both teams had their share of scoring opportunities but the keepers played well and the game remained deadlocked in a scoreless tie after regulation play. This set the stage for the customary two fifteen minute overtime periods.

The biggest blow of the game was delivered in the seventh minute, but this time it was not in the form of a hit.

An Acadia forward sent the ball sailing into Dal's end from midfield.

Axette Marjean Leighton quickly pursued the high bouncing ball and headed it into the net as she sidestepped a Dal defender. The goal put an end to the Tigers' hopes of a championship.

Dal did come up with a couple of chances to tie the game. The closest came with Stephanie Johnson's long, high blast which struck the top of the crossbar, but the game ended 1-0 in favor of the Axettes.

Unbelievably, after allowing just two goals in an entire season, the Tigers now find themselves second best in the conference.

There was some consolation in the post game announcement that Belinda Campbell earned league M.V.P. honours and Kate Gillespie was awarded the Rookie of the Year award. Sweeper Lynne Robertson and mid-fielder Carla Perry were named to the AUAA all-star team.

Coach Cormier summed up the Tigers' season in these words: "No, I'm not satisfied [with the season] because we didn't win the AUAA championships and that was our goal. But I couldn't be more happy with they way this team is, was, and always will be: a super bunch."