

Tigers rebound to whitewash X-men

by Greg Dennis

After suffering an embarrassing 7-2 loss to the Acadia Axemen a week ago Wednesday and playing without leading scorer Brian Gualazzi, no one would have been too surprised if the Dalhousie Tigers fell flat on their faces before the high-flying St. Francis Xavier X-Men on Saturday. However, the mark of a champion is the ability to get back on its feet after being kicked to the ground. The result a 3-0 whitewashing of the X-Men in what many Tigers followers are calling the best game in recent history.

Displaying a combination of tenacious checking, controlled defence, and outstanding goaltending, the Tigers kept the vaulted St. F.X. offence off stride all evening. And when opportunity knocked on Dal's door, the Tigers were quick to answer it. When X-Man Steve Topshee was sent to the penalty box early in the third period for hooking, the Dal power-play, plagued with ineptness all season, rose to this occasion. At 2:09 Rick McCallum banged home a semi-blocked Louis Lavoie slapshot to register the game's first

goal—the only goal the Tigers would need.

While pleased with the all-out effort he received from his personnel, coach Pierre Page was ecstatic with the play of his defencemen. "After the incredible number of times we coughed up the puck against Acadia," said Page, "I'm thrilled with the way the guys performed tonight. They played the man well, were strong in the corners and kept their forwards tied up in front of our net." The defencemen—Louis Lavoie, Ken Johnston, Peter Aldrich and Gary Ryan—came under criticism earlier in the year for their anemic play. But Page, a stickler on fundamentals and technique, has worked his blueliners hard in practice and it appeared on Saturday that his teachings had sunk in.

The Tigers forwards deserve much credit for their tireless skating—forechecking intensely and coming back to help out the defence. McCallum, undoubtedly Dal's finest two-way performer, played another strong game, notching the winning goal. Captain Jim Bottomley scored the second Tiger goal and his



Ron Skinner

first of the season on a pretty set-up from linemate Glen O'Byrne. O'Byrne, a native of Amherst, N.S., picked up a loose puck outside the St. F.X. blueline, out-skated a defender into the corner and fed a perfect pass from behind. With less than a minute remaining in the contest and Barrett on the bench in favor of an extra attacker, Adrian Facca directed a Kevin Zimmel into the unguarded cage to complete the Dal scoring.

Ken Bickerton played a flawless game in the Tiger net to record the shut-out, kicking

out 36 shots directed at him by the Antigonish squad. When called on, Bick came up big; especially on an Andy Culligan shot that he snared with a rapier-like glove hand in the third period that could have changed the complexion of the game.

Going back to the Acadia game, it is evident that there are two ways to beat the Axemen; (1) break Juan Strickland's right leg, (2) break Juan Strickland's left leg.

The speedy and very

talented Strickland, who is a veteran of three AUAA seasons but only 18 years of age, found the net four times to singlehandedly defeat the Tigers. However, it could be argued that the tigers managed to defeat themselves. Playing extremely sloppy and uninspired, Dal let the Axemen skate all over them. Dwight Howser and Keith Meagher scored Dalhousie goals; Meagher's coming with Tiger goalie Darcy Stevens on the bench as coach Page tried to stir his charges up a bit. The loss broke a six game winning streak for Dal.

As a result of Saturday's win over St. F.X., the Tigers are back in first place in the Atlantic University Hockey Conference's tough Eastern Division, one point up on the X-Men. Acadia is in third place while the slumping St. Mary's Huskies are last.

In the final regular season game before the Christmas break the Tigers entertained the Huskies last night at the Forum. After Christmas, the Tigers will head out west for exhibition games against U. of Regina, U. of Calgary and U. of Alberta (a rematch between last year's Canadian finalists).

Athletes of the week

ANDY STUART—volleyball—is a first year Medicine student from Fredericton in his fourth year with the Tigers. He is coming off a serious ankle injury that bothered him for a year and a half, but led the nationally-ranked Tigers to two resounding wins last week. He had eight kills and three ace serves against Acadia and added ten kills against St. F.X. In each game, he was the top player for the Tigers plus 10 and plus 5 totals in successes minus errors.



ANNE LINDSAY—basketball—a graduate student in physical education, Anne had an outstanding tournament for the Tigers at the Concordia Invitational. The captain from Connecticut scored 24 points in the opener against Concordia, tallied another 18 against Guelph in the semifinal and earned all-star status for the tourney. Her performance against Guelph was supported by nine rebounds.



ADRIAN FACCA—hockey—is in his third year with the Tigers. A native of Toronto, the leftwinger played excellent games against Acadia and St. F.X. last week. He scored his seventh goal of the year Saturday against Xavier, surpassing last year's total production of five goals. The Arts student also forechecked strongly in the shutout over St. F.X.

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Jackson states that to be internationally successful national programs should use universities' "expertise, sport sciences, and subsidized coaching." Jackson said sport governing bodies have "not established formal contacts and concludes the federal government "has to help national governing bodies to involve universities."

Justification for university sport funding, Jackson explains, also lies in its contribution to sport. Universities, he states, do a "lot of research", both biomechanical and psychological. University resources can also supply strong support that in East Germany has helped athletes to succeed.

Consequently, Canada is capable, through federal support, of making the commitment for international success, he said. However, the commitment now is lacking and available resources like universities are not being exploited.

The answer for a long term renewal of success is probably the funding of national programs that can use sophisticated collegiate resources.

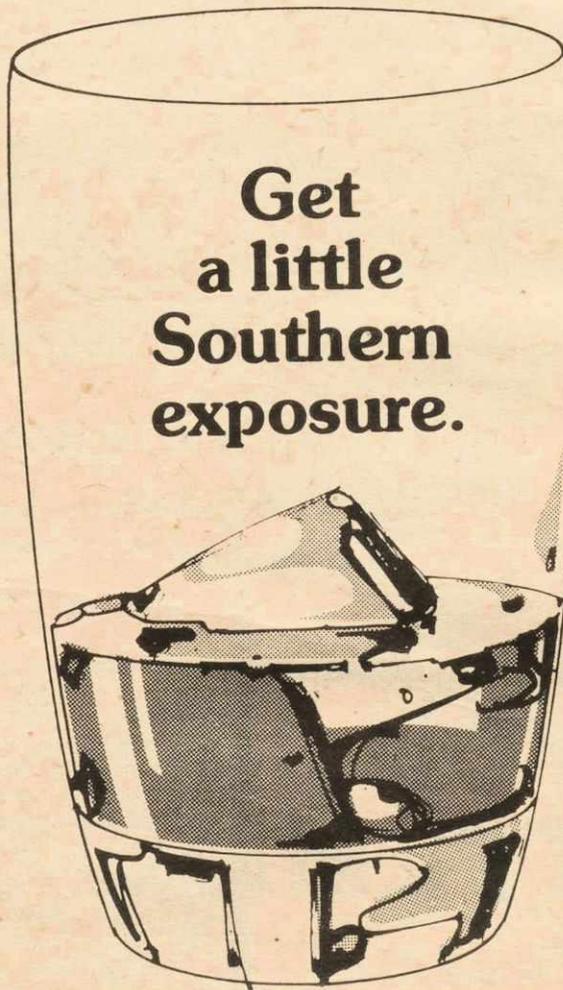
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