

# Halloween Blues

## Championship hopes end for soccer Yeomen

by Riccardo Saia

If movie mogul Cecil B. DeMille were to come back and film a soccer epic, he would go to the Ontario eastern division semi-final match between the soccer Yeomen and the UofT Blues.

The Halloween meeting at Varsity stadium was an emotionally charged affair that saw the Yeomen go down 2-1 in a penalty kick-off.

The Yeomen, coming off a fruitful regular season, were gunning for this game against the defending national champion Blues.

York coach Eric Willis predicted a very close match. His team had met UofT twice during the regular season, and both times had lost by the margin of a lone goal. Willis summed up his forecast by saying, "Anything goes."

The first minutes of the game showed an aggressive tempo that was to dominate the match. Turnovers abounded as players on both sides reacted quickly.

On defence, players like Yeoman Mark Basciano, with their lightning-quick reactions, managed to limit the offensive forays of the Blues. On the other side of the field, York attackers Domenic Giorgi, Mike Mazza and Dario Gasparotto, among others, used their speed to force UofT to work defensively.

At the end of the first half the game stood in a scoreless tie.

Each side was waiting for the other to make a mistake, but instead of the cautious play that could have resulted, the teams went out and aggressively

searched for opportunities.

The second half started with a UofT offensive foray, a shot on net against York that was an easy assignment for Yeoman goalie Jeff Buchanan.

York then advanced the ball to the UofT zone. A shot by Yeoman Mike Mcghee danced on the fingertips of UofT goalie Dave Collie before being brought down. Collie lost the ball for a second on the ground and the Toronto zone was left vulnerable as players from both sides scrambled for the ball. It looked as if York could score, but the UofT defenders managed to kick the ball out of their zone.

The ball had changed ends several times before a penalty shot was called against UofT. A York attacker had fallen in the Blues' zone, and Yeoman Dario Gasparotto was called in for the penalty, but his shot went wide of the UofT goal.

Regulation time ended soon after a scoreless tie. Now the drama shifted into high gear as play went into overtime. Even though the teams had been on the field for close to two hours of intense action, the players returning to the pitch had none of that I'm-tired-let's-finish-it-and-get-it-over-with appearance. Both sides were out on the field ready to play, and to do whatever it took to win.

At their end of the field, coach Willis, assistant coach Norman Crandles and the rest of the squad turned towards the UofT zone, and a mill of players from both sides were in front of the net.

Yeoman Nick Proskos received the ball from teammate Dino Lopez, and slid it under the UofT

goalie to score the first goal.

The York benches and fans erupted with that goal and it took a few seconds for them to get down for their euphoric heights. The important first goal had been scored and the onus was now on UofT to pull itself together.

Unfortunately, that's what UofT did. In a situation identical to the one that had produced the York goal, Pat Cubellis of the Blues took advantage of milling players in the York zone to slip the ball through Buchanan's hands and tie the game.

This latest goal increased the already sizeable tension to a feverish pitch. Crandles, Willis and Yeomen crowded the sidelines while Pignatiello and others took to standing on the benches for a bird's eye view of the action.

Overtime went through the second period and it remained a one goal tie. The next step was for the penalty kickoffs. The stadium was as taut as a violin string, following the penalty kick for every inch of its journey from the kicker to the net. Yeomen Mike Mazza, Erwin Banfi and Domenic Giorgi took penalty kicks for York.

Goalie Jeff Buchanan saved the second UofT shot, putting York in the lead for a second, but when Mazza's second kick was saved by UofT that erased this advantage.

Domenic Giorgi, the next York kicker after Mazza, sent the ball over the net. The York bench lost its colour for a second.

UofT scored twice more and on the second goal the kicker was obscured by a jubilant throng of blue shirts. In the razor's edge action of penalty kicks, UofT had



André Souroujon

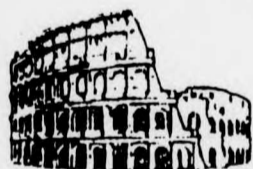
**Squeezed out:** Bryson Madeley gets in on the action during the Yeomen's heartbreaking playoffs loss.

edged out York by the smallest of margins to take the semi-final by a score of 2-1.

After the game, coach Willis praised his team and the calibre of play exhibited. "This was proba-

bly the greatest game I have ever been involved with as a coach or a player," said Willis. Assistant coach Crandles added, "This is probably the best team the university has had in 11 years."

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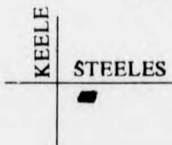
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