

Tigers kiss '79-80 goodbye

by Greg Dennis

The Canadian University hockey scene came to a close last weekend when the U. of Alberta Golden Bears dropped the Regina Cougars 7-3 to capture their 3rd straight CIAU title. Here at Dalhousie the Tigers are licking their wounds from the past season and looking to the next.

"It was a year of rebuilding, although we didn't think it would be," said Tiger coach Pierre Page. "We felt we had enough experience returning but in the long run it proved we didn't."

"It was satisfying to put it all together at the end. I thought we had found our touch when we won 7 or 8 games in a row but then we woke up one day after the semi-finals against St. F.X. and found we had four guys injured and two sick with the flu. Moncton played well against us in the finals but I don't think we really tested them. The uncontrollable things like injuries are really disappointing."

A graph of the Tigers season would resemble a V with peaks at both ends sandwiching a low. After splitting the first five games of the year, the Tigers took advantage of easy scheduling and ripped off a six game winning streak. Riding that burst, they topped the competitive East Division of the AUHC with a record of 9-4-1 at the Christmas break.

The post-Christmas blahs afflicted the Tigers in January. Some players had more than their share of holiday stuffings or figured the second half would be as easy as the first and the team suffered. Therefore while the St. Marys Huskies and the St. Francis Xavier X-Men were winning most of their games, the Tigers went into a skid, dropping eight of a possible 12 points. The East Division title was up for grabs with the season rounding third and heading for home.

However, a 4-2 win on the road against Acadia snapped the team out of their doldrums and the players began to gel as a unit. Maintaining intensity and discipline, the Tigers won their last seven games of the regular season—including large victories over SMU and

X—to capture their unprecedented 1st place finish owning a record of 20-8-1. Looking like world-beaters, the Tigers roared into the playoffs hoping to better their feat of a year ago when they were the second best team in the nation. However after defeating the X-Men in a tough three game series, the undermanned Tigers were outgunned by the U. de M. Blue Eagles, the No. 1 team in college hockey at that time.

Page was not completely satisfied with the season. "When you set your sights as high as we did there is little room for mistakes. I'd say we were outplayed 75% of the time, probably due to our lack of speed. The best teams apply pressure through forechecking and we didn't do that enough. Too often we had to rely on our goalie (Ken Bickerton) to keep us in the game until the end. We can't do that next year."

The Tigers will not be able to rely on Bickerton next year as the little man with the incredible reflexes graduates this spring. He is interested in playing pro hockey or perhaps joining the Olympic team. Unlike the U.S. team, the Canadians program is virtually intact and will compete in various tournaments and exhibitions in preparation for the 1984 Winter Games in Yugoslavia.

Other Tigers graduating this year are captain Jim Bottomley, Adrian Facca and Dwight Houser.

"I've talked to some people and made a few phone calls," said Page in reference to replacements. "We've got a good nucleus returning and hopefully the returning players will know what has to be done. The number one thing is intensity in terms of forechecking."

Three players coming off great seasons and key to Tiger fortunes next year are forwards Rick McCallum, Brian Gualazzi and defenceman Louis Lavoie. Gualazzi and Lavoie, along with Bickerton were picked to the AUAA all-star team.

Gualazzi, a native of Sault Ste. Marie and the possessor of a wicked wristshot came to the Tigers last fall after scoring 74 goals in the Ontario Ma-

jeor Junior League in 1978-79. He finished his first University hockey season as the Tiger's leading goal scorer but said the adjustment was not easy. "I didn't know what to expect. This league is more defensive than Junior, not as many scoring chances. I was pleased with the season. I came to Dal because I had heard Pierre was a good coach and because schooling was a top priority. I'm looking forward to next year. We have a good program, a good team and we'll be better."

Lavoie is the sparkplug on the Tigers and anchors the blueline corps. He led the team in plus-minus percentage being on the ice for 34 more goals scored for than allowed. He credits improved defensive play to a summer session with the Olympic team. "It was a good year," said the 2nd year performer. "But a shitty end. Can't blame the loss to Moncton on injuries, 'cause they were good but they all came at the same time. With help at centre and maybe one more defenceman, we're gonna be a better team next year."

McCallum, like his two teammates is looking forward to the 1980-81 season. A tireless skater and deft stick-handler, McCallum enjoyed his finest season ever finishing second on the team in scoring behind Gualazzi. "It was a roller-coaster season for us, I guess. I'm disappointed we lost but Moncton played pretty well against us. Everyone thought we would win everything hands down but we had 10 rookies and had to make lots of adjustments. Personally I had my best season and I think it's because I started to fill out a little and put on more weight. I'll be working out over the summer to build up my strength. I'm looking forward to next year; Pierre's a good recruiter and he'll be able to fill in the gaps."

Gualazzi is currently competing in the OMJHA playoffs for the Toronto Marlies flying back and forth for games and will soon join McCallum, Lavoie and the rest of the Tigers on the sidelines, buried in the books as the academic year enters the last minute of play.

Final Regular Season Totals

GOALIE AVERAGES

Name	G	Time	Saves	Goals	Avg.
Ken Bickerton	28.0	1665	906	92	3.28
Darcy Stevens	1.0	58	24	0	0.00
Darrell Young	.67	40	23	0	0.00
Empty Net Goals				6	
TOTALS					3.30

TIGER SCORING

Name	Goals	Assts	Pts	PIM
Brian Gualazzi	22	23	45	28
Rick McCallum	19	22	41	20
Louis Lavoie	7	27	34	43
Kevin Zimmel	11	18	29	47
Jim Bottomley	8	13	21	65
Barkley Haddad	10	10	20	38
Adrian Facca	11	8	19	46
Peter Aldrich	4	14	18	24
Ken Johnston	8	9	17	71
Don Matheson	5	11	16	27
Chuck Tuplin	6	10	16	67
Glen O'Byrne	2	12	14	90
Gary Ryan	0	13	13	26
Dwight Houser	8	3	11	56
Others	6	5	11	25
Don Woodworth	0	8	8	40
Paul Jeffrey	4	2	6	6
Dan Cyr	2	3	5	16
Mike Brennan	0	2	2	2
Ken Bickerton	0	1	1	8


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Spring programs at Plex

The Dalplex Spring term programs will get underway the first week of April.

The aquatic, dance and gymnastics programs have been very popular with the participants and are in great demand. Children's programs in gymnastics and aquatic classes are structured to provide a safe and enjoyable experience in a relaxing environment where they may progress at their own rate.

A new focus on gymnastics was added to the program namely Movement Education for Pre-Schoolers. Children participating in this class are

encouraged to become aware of their physical abilities and to use them effectively. Through the medium of gymnastics small equipment, hoops, ropes as well as movement to music and instrumental interpretation, the child becomes more familiar with his own body and will be able to move in self expressive situations. This class is offered to 2 and 3 year olds only.

Pre-Competitive Gymnastics will be offered on Saturday mornings for students 6-12 years of age where they will receive basic training for all sports. The classes provide

logical progressions of skills with students placed in homogeneous units with the possibility of advanced groups in the future. Pre-School Gymnastics classes will continue at the Dalplex for children 3-6 years of age.

The program also includes adult programs in jazz dancing, adult learn-to-swim courses aquatic leadership course, aquatic fitness and adventure aquatics. Tennis and squash lessons are also available upon request.

Why not join us at the Dalplex for an enjoyable leisure experience?