

the Gazette

Volume 126 Number 10

Dalhousie University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

November 11, 1993



The Dalhousie Tigers captured their first-ever AUAA women's soccer title with a thrilling 1-0 victory over Acadia last Sunday. The women are in Montreal to bring back a CIAU banner to Dalhousie.

Women grab soccer crown

by Sam McCaig

Thank goodness Carla Perry can use both feet because it booted Dalhousie into the CIAU championships this weekend.

Perry scored the only goal with her left foot as the Dalhousie Tigers defeated Acadia 1-0 Sunday to capture their first AUAA soccer championship.

A natural right-footed kicker, Perry snapped a pass from striker Katie Gillespie into the Acadia net in the 67th minute. She said Gillespie's pass was just where she wanted it.

"I knew it was a great pass. [I] just connected with it and I knew it would go in the net."

The approximately 300 fans in attendance at Husky Stadium joined in the celebrations as the players hugged one another and revelled in the win.

The often-injured Gillespie set up the goal with a beautiful effort. She came down the side and turned the Acadia defender inside out before centering the ball to Perry.

"It was a ball down the wing and I beat my man and just laid it at the top of the box," she said after the game. "I didn't even see when Carla shot."

The team earned its trip to the finals with a convincing 2-0 win over Memorial on Saturday.

Scoring for the Tigers was Nicole Webb at the 14th minute, and Dana Holmes added an insurance marker late in the game. The Dalhousie commitment to defense was aptly illustrated as Memorial failed to register a

shot on goal, enabling keeper Leahanne Turner to collect another shutout.

Turner had more excitement on Sunday night as she was forced to handle a few balls, but the strong Tiger defense allowed little penetration and held Acadia to perimeter shots.

Turner said she was confident the Tigers would win.

"I could feel the win even before we started. I knew I had to stay focused and play minute by minute."

The Acadia defence frustrated the Tigers in the first half. Coach Neil Turnbull used the half-time to get his players to calm down and concentrate. The talk worked as the Tigers played much better offensively in the second half.

The break came when Stephanie Johnson fed Gillespie deep in Acadia territory. Gillespie beat the fullback with a quick move and fired a pass through the box to Perry who wasted no time as she buried it into the open goal at the 67th minute.

Acadia didn't give in and applied pressure until the final whistle. The Axettes came close to tying the game in the final minute, as a failed clearing attempt gave them an opportunity for a clear shot on goal, but a solid connection was not made and the Tigers hoofed the ball downfield, simultaneously ending Acadia's scoring chance and championship hopes.

Turnbull, in his first year at the helm of the program, was pleased with the result but hinted that greater heights were attainable. "I'm satisfied with the

way the girls played but I think that we can play even better. Full credit goes to Acadia as it was their high calibre of play that forced us to lift our game to another level."

Dalhousie players who responded especially well were Gillespie, who seemed to be on the verge of breaking through the Acadia defense throughout the match, Nicole Webb, whose tenacity in the midfield often led to Tiger scoring chances, Stephanie Johnson, who was again instrumental

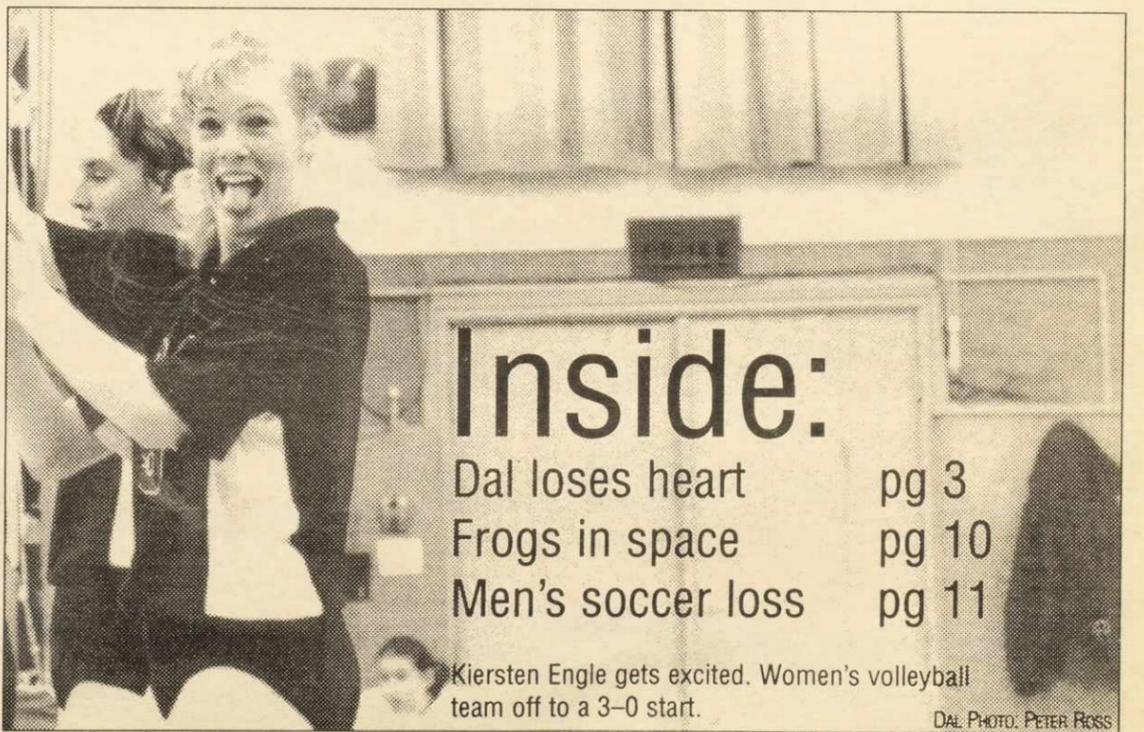
in starting up the Tiger attack, and Lynne Robertson, whose commitment to defense was vital in keeping the attacking Axettes at bay.

Obviously, a return to Halifax as the CIAU champion is now the goal, a goal that coach Turnbull feels is very much within the team's grasp.

"I'm confident of our chances. I feel that we are as good as any team there. It is just a matter of keeping focused throughout the four or five days that we are in Montreal. There will be many

distractions but I think if we can keep things together on the field, we have a very good chance."

The Tigers' schedule is not a kind one. Dalhousie is in a three-team pool with McMaster and the defending national champions from Wilfred Laurier. They play Laurier on Thursday and McMaster on Saturday. The other pool consists of McGill, Sherbrooke and the University of British Columbia. The winners of each pool face off in the championship game on Sunday.



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Kiersten Engle gets excited. Women's volleyball team off to a 3-0 start.

DAL PHOTO: PETER ROSS