

Hockey Tigers stumbling

BY JIM STROWBRIDGE & SCOTT HEPDITCH

Hello again, Dalhousie hockey fans! We've been away for awhile and a lot has certainly happened. Two weekends ago the boys

were on the road to face St. Francis Xavier (St. FX) and the University College of Cape Breton (UCCB). What better reason to head to Cape Breton than to see some hockey and experience some of their famous hospitality?

Plenty of locals came out to watch the match-up between their X-Men and our then 3rd-ranked Tigers — they were not disappointed. An action-filled, penalty-infested three periods resulted. Dalhousie players were

bombarded with elbows, many of which weren't called. One left Tim Hill wondering where he was, and us wondering where his teammates were! Hill, after shaking clear the cobwebs, was left to take care of the culprit who was still standing in front of the Tigers' bench. The not so invincible X-man was given a cut on the bridge of his nose for his troubles.

A 6-4 win in Antigonish had us all predicting a blow-out in Sydney and we decided to head on home. However, according to defenceman Brian King's dad, Charlie, the Capers had other plans. This set the stage for "a good game." After all was said and done, the Tigers slid out of town with a 4-4 tie. That is one five-hour bus ride we would never want to take.

This past weekend Dal took on defending national champions, the Université de Moncton (UDM) Blue Eagles. This game marked the return of defenceman Pat Russel and forward Marc Warner.

Moncton took advantage of some sloppy play and opened up the scoring. However, Moncton's lead did not last long (16 seconds) as Dal's Gord Dickie broke past a defenceman and put a low shot to the glove side past the goalie to tie the game at one.

Moncton regained the lead two minutes later on the powerplay but Dalhousie replied six minutes later when good work by Warner and Mark Alexander kept the puck in Moncton's zone. This allowed Martin Lapointe to wind up and blast a point shot past the Moncton goalie. This seemed to wake up the Tigers who played a lot better in the second half of the first period.

Dal was two men short at the 10 second mark of the second period, but excellent penalty killing kept Moncton off the scoreboard. The Tigers opened the scoring on a goal by captain Corey MacIntyre as he one-timed a cross-ice pass from Keifer House. The score after two periods was 3-3.

Moncton came out flying in the third period and this effort

paid off as Dominic Rheaume scored 54 seconds in to put Moncton up 4-3. This lead was short-lived as David Haynes collected a rebound off of Pat Russel's shot and put it into a wide open net to tie the game again.

Haynes put the Tigers up six minutes later as he again was johnny-on-the-spot to collect the rebound and put in his second of the game. The Tigers looked to have the game easily in hand as they went on the power play with 1:42 left, but Moncton's Rheaume picked off a pass and broke into the Dal zone. He beat Dreveny on a nifty play and tied the game at five.

After the disappointing result with UDM, the Tigers took the ice Sunday afternoon to take on the Tommies from St. Thomas. The Tigers seemed to shake off the memories from the day before as Haynes scored his third goal in two days off of beautiful pass from Gord Dickie.

St. Thomas tied the game on a powerplay when they collected a rebound and put it between Dreveny's legs. Dal was able to reclaim the lead on the powerplay as Lapointe scored his second in two days on a shot from the high slot. Before the end of the first period STU tied the score as a blast from the top of the face-off circle slipped through the five hole.

The second period saw only one goal as Mark Alexander scored, unassisted, on a wrap-around to put the Tigers up 3-2. Other than this goal the period was rather boring.

The third period was also an exhibition of boring hockey, although the Tommies were able to tie the game at three on another powerplay as a shot from the blue line beat a screened Dreveny.

This game went to overtime and the Tigers lost when a rebound off the back boards was put past a surprised Dreveny.

The Tigers are now second in the Kelly Division with five wins, two losses, and two ties. Dalhousie returns to the ice to face the Acadia Axemen in Wolfville on Friday at 7:30 p.m.

Shakeup needed

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After this weekend, it should be asked whether or not the Tigers are deserving of a number two national ranking. I don't think so. This team looked very disorganized and they should be happy with the one point they got.

The team does not look very motivated and it seems that the players are going to have to take this task on by themselves because the coaching staff does not seem to be doing a very good job. We hope the staff can motivate the team before Friday as the Tigers visit their longtime rivals, the Acadia Axemen.

Another thing the coaches should realize is that game-time is not when you experiment with lines. This should be done in practice so players can become used to one another. Dal coaches have enough experience to realize this, and if they do want to experiment with lines in a game, they should do it against a weaker team, not one that has just come off a road win in Acadia.

We must pose a few questions: Why are we continuing to move up in the rankings when the calibre of hockey continues to drop? How many shots will Dreveny have to stop before he gets shell-shocked? Why aren't the forwards, who are proven goal scorers, able to put the puck in the net? Most importantly, what will stop this downhill slide?

We know what will do just that — a WIN at Acadia on Friday. We will be there yelling and screaming, so if you can put off that paper or test Get to Wolfville to support the boys in their next game.

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