

Back to the drawing board

Photo by: Ken Lee

by Joel Fournier

It looked as though the Tigers were finally going to win a league game last Saturday afternoon, but as it turned out, it was just not to be. With less than three minutes to go U.N.B. unleashed a devastating passing attack that ended in a converted touchdown and a field goal to edge the Bengals 34-32.

The Tigers after coming from behind on several occasions had built up an eight point lead and looked like they had the contest locked away before things began to go sour. The outcome pretty well told the story of the whole season for the club. After getting off to a good opening win against R.M.C. in Kingston there were high hopes among the coaches and the team members that this would be the year that Dal started to turn things around. Of course, the record speaks for itself and so it's back to the old drawing board for next season.

The big question on everyone's mind though is whether the administration will stand firm in their present philosophy of no recruiting and using predominantly Maritime talent? Can we win at Dal under this philosophy? Should we be concerned with winning primarily, or should we be more concerned with exposing the maximum number of players to the game? If the latter is true, is this fair to those players who possess a great deal of ability and might wish to seek a future in the sport or in any event maximize their potential? These and other questions like them will have to be answered soon and a course set, so that coaches, players and fans will be aware of what is going on and where they are going. This writer

feels that the present policy is an excellent one; it's a policy that takes a great amount of dedication and courage to stand behind. But, and it's a big but, is it feasible in light of the policy of other schools regarding recruiting and inducement to players? It appears as though it isn't. What are the answers to all these questions that seem, at least to me, to be very relevant? The options are limited. The university could do a complete reversal, that is go in for recruiting in a big way and more or less buy a team in the manner of certain other colleges in this league. The second alternative is to drop out of football altogether and wash their hands of the whole problem. Obviously this would please

a minority element on campus, but would not find favour with most of those concerned. The third option is to become involved in a different league, a second tier, that operates in the context of using players that happen to be at that particular university, no recruiting and no inducements. Presently there is no such animal, but there could be, as many of the universities are starting to feel the financial and other hassles that go along with high pressure recruitment. The fourth and final option is to recruit on a somewhat limited scale. This has been tried at Dal before and didn't work for various reasons, whether it could work now is debatable. A program of selective recruitment to fill

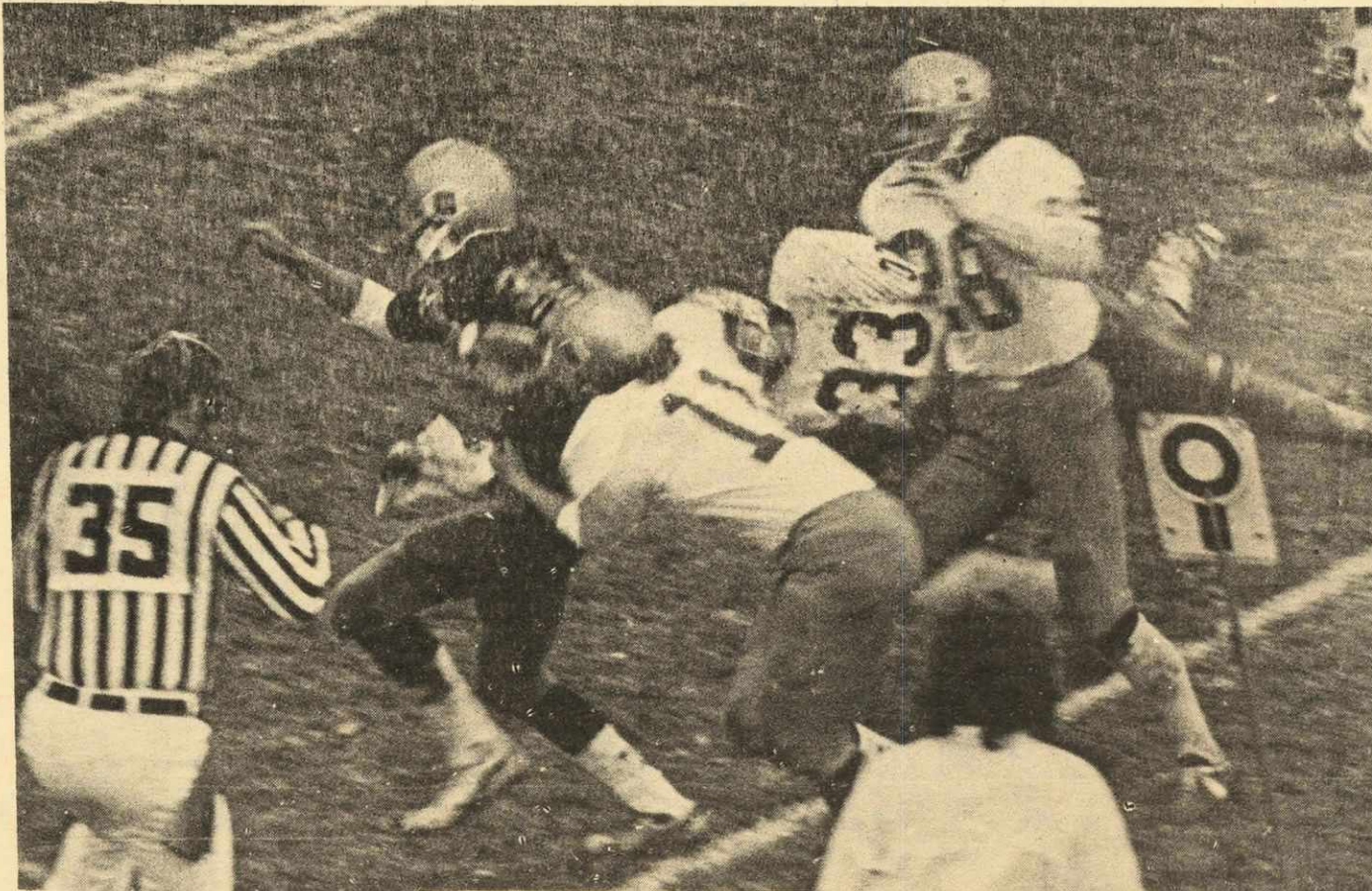
key positions could certainly solve some of the problems, but would no doubt create others, especially morale wise.

As can be seen the problem is far from simple and will require a great deal of deliberation on the part of those that make the policy. Hopefully, the answer that they come up with will be the right one in the long run.

I hadn't planned on mentioning names and talking much about individual players in Saturday's game but I would be terribly remiss if I didn't write a few words about the tremendous running of Jeff Neal. Jeff, as most of you know is a rookie, and probably the hottest prospect to hit Dal for some time in his ability to score touchdowns. On Saturday,

Jeff ran a kick-off back for 80 yards, followed that with a missed field goal return of 110 yards and topped it all with a pass and run play of 65 yards for his third touchdown of the day. A super performance in anybody's book. There are many players who played on Saturday who deserve special mention, but unfortunately time and space requirements don't allow their names to be mentioned here. They know themselves who they are, and they can take great pride in what they have accomplished.

The players and coaches would like to thank all those fans who stuck by the team throughout the year, with a special thanks going to the newly formed Tiger Fan Club.

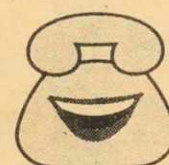


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