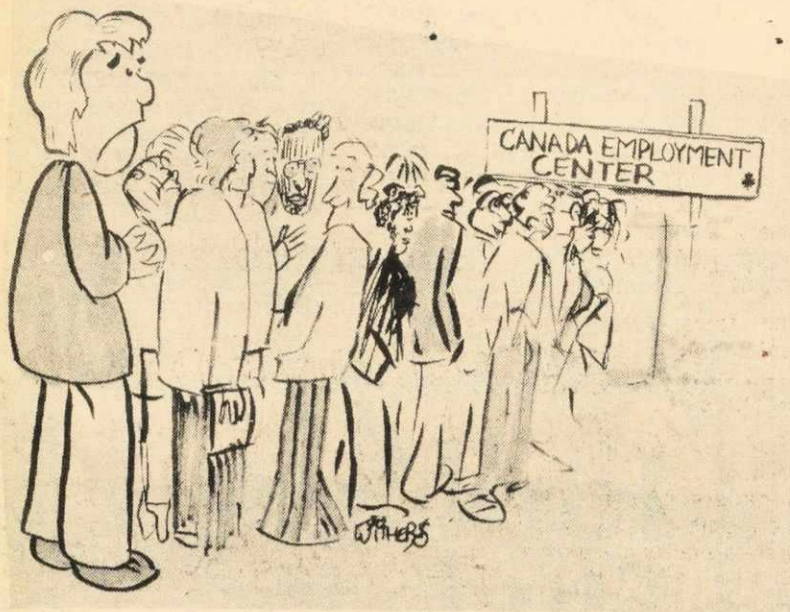


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# The fray in 1888

by John Cairns

Last week's *Gazette* reveals that rugby has returned to the campus for the first time in at least ten years. Whether or not the game is making a comeback, it was once a leading collegiate sport.

Its popularity is confirmed by the *Gazette* of November 29, 1888. That paper follows a Dalhousie team to New Glasgow. The travelling was by train, and as you may imagine, getting there was half the fun. Using the *Gazette* reporter, let's journey back.

"The morning of Friday, the 16th instance, broke amidst torrents of rain—fitting prelude to a day of mud. Nevertheless, our boys set out on their annual football trip. . . . The journey to New Glasgow was like most journeys of collegians, a huge success—that is to say it was enlivened by the gayest of songs, and brightened by the liveliest of jokes. One song was composed for the occasion by the poet par excellence of football, Martin. Our memories recoiled from the task of remembering any more than the first two verses, which we here reproduce; but we wish it distinctly to be understood, that Martin will make as many more verses as any of our readers wish.

### SONG OF THE DALHOUSIE TEAM

'Tis no wonder that we are light hearted,  
In fact quite delighted are we,  
For we have defeated the Wanderers,  
In a beautiful game of Rugbee (sic).

Chorus—Three cheers for the yellow and black.  
Three cheers for the yellow and black.  
Oh—Dalhousie College forever.

Chorus—Three cheers for the yellow and black.  
Three cheers for the yellow and black.  
Oh—Dalhousie College forever.  
Three cheers for the yellow and black.

And now we are going on to battle;  
With spirits determined to win,  
For we have gained a reputation  
Which we shall strive to maintain.  
Chorus—Three cheers etc. . .



We practiced this song at every station, much to the delight of our audiences; and when we mounted the coach at New Glasgow, to drive to the Windsor Hotel, we made the town ring with it. Quickly dispatching a light meal, doffing our civilization garb and replacing it by the orthodox football rig, we drove to the field of play. Mud, mud was everywhere. . . . On such ground football, as the term is generally understood, was out of the question."

Luckily, Dalhousie did persevere, adapting to the slime, scoring early, and clinging to the lead. Our reporter summarizes by noting the prevailing sportsmanship, "Barring the mud the game was most pleasant, the members of the opposing teams being exceedingly friendly, and losing no opportunity for cracking little jokes at one another's expense. . . ."

Returning to Halifax was also lively and tuneful. This time the songs seem both rugged and triumphant. The *Gazette* quotes:

"Whene'er there's a call for a game of football  
I am always willing to play;  
Tho' covered with mud and bespattered with blood,  
I dote on the eye blacking fray;  
It don't make me sick if I get a sharp kick  
Anywhere twixt my chin and my knee;  
Tho' weltered in gore I holler for more,  
For—it always agrees with me."

With these verses the story concludes, and so does our voyage into history. Perhaps, though, one thing is worth repeating, "Three cheers for the yellow and black".



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