

SPORTS

Men's soccer takes a beating

BY KATHLEEN MATTHEWS

Dal started off weekend action ranked fifth in the country only to lose Saturday's home opener 2-1 to sixth-ranked St. Francis-Xavier. Sunday saw the first rematch between Dal and Acadia since the soccer championships last year. Dal lost a close game 1-0.

The Tigers are already bearing the brunt of injuries without veterans Mike Hudson and Dave McFarlane, as well as Richie Tobin who took a hit in last week's practice. There was also the noticeable absence of All-Star forward Paul English who didn't suit up for Saturday's game.

Both teams came out flying, each getting yellow cards early in the half. Dal battled against high winds but still managed a few shots on goal. In the 29th minute, Tiger Joey Fraelic took a pass off a free kick and blasted a shot past the St. FX goalie, putting Dal ahead 1-0. The pressure was on, and in the 37th minute St. FX's Steve Rhodeniger pushed past Dal's defence, took a pass from 25 yards out and chipped it over rookie keeper Grant Spence to tie it up 1-1. The first half ended with St. FX continuing pressure in Dal's end.

Second-half scoring opened when St. FX's Fadi Kamel put a weak shot past Spence to go ahead 2-1. Dal immediately responded with consecutive shots on goal, including an open-netter missed in the 6th minute. The Tigers continued to be frustrated as St. FX shot towards an empty net in the 26th minute, but defender Marc Rainford got there on time, kicking it out of the box. Three minutes later, Tiger Tim Maloney went down with a serious ankle injury that is expected to keep him out for six to eight weeks.

Dal kept the pressure on but were unable to capitalize on several corner kicks in the dying minutes of the game and St. FX won 2-1. Player of the Game honours went to Tomas Ernst of Dal and Kamel of St. FX.

"It was a well fought battle," commented assistant coach Darrell Cormier after the game. "I thought we played well, there were just a few lapses in our defence."

Coaching staff had little to say on why English wasn't suited up for the game.

"It was a team situation," said Cormier while head coach Ian Kent had no comment.

Sunday saw Dal battle Acadia in the first match between the two teams since the 1996 playoffs. English was back, while Ernst sat out of the game after getting three consecutive yellow cards. Dal got some early chances putting pressure up front with a couple of shots but Acadia's Nik Cooper put one past Spence in the 16th minute to go up 1-0.

Dal continued to be aggressive as Danny Burns was carded for an illegal slide-tackle in the 31st minute. Three minutes later, Sam

Ramsden went off with an unspecified injury. Dal was unable to get anything going offensively as Acadia's defence marked closely while the keeper made some great saves. The remainder of the half saw end-to-end play with only a few shots taken by either team.

Dal opened the second half with a nice shot, just wide by rookie Paul MacInnis. Chad Denny went off in the 13th minute as Dal's third injured player of the weekend. The half continued with several wasted opportunities for both sides. Dal upped the intensity in the last few minutes of the game with a nice half-volley just over the net by Stuart Cochran, followed by another shot just wide of an open net. Acadia held their ground and took the game 1-0.

Player of the Game honours went to Cochran and Acadia's keeper Glen Sullivan. Dal falls to third place in the East with a 2-2-0 record, while Acadia improves to 2-0-1 and is tied at first with St. FX.

Dal took a beating this weekend,

losing several key players to injuries: Maloney, Ramsden, Denny, as well as Danny Burns who broke an ankle on Sunday and will be out for the season.

"I guess the thing about the game is that I lost a lot of players," commented Kent. "We have a lot of work to do. I knew that before the game and playing the game didn't change that. The guys have to do the work."

"Too many injuries", said Fraelic, Dal's lone goal-scorer of the weekend. "We're a good team, we just have too many injuries."

There is no question that talent fills Dal's roster, but until the injuries have healed, the gaps will be filled by rookies.

"We had a lot of young players in [on Sunday]," said Kent positively, "and they did well for themselves for sure."

Honourable mention must go out to Denny who was awarded AUAA Athlete of the Week, ending September 14.

Win some, lose some... Women's soccer team remains optimistic

BY RACHEL JONES

Once again it was a bittersweet weekend for the women's soccer Tigers. The Tigers played a well-composed passing game to come up with a 2-0 win against previously undefeated St. FX on Saturday, only to suffer a disappointing 1-0 loss to the Acadia Axettes on Sunday afternoon.

Saturday's home opener was a pleasure to watch and, according to coach Dara Moore, a week of practice devoted to offensive play resulted in a much more cohesive team effort than the previous weekend's games at Memorial.

"Last weekend was a bit chaotic in terms of what we did when we had possession. I have seen an improvement in that area," she noted.

The St. FX game saw the players composed and confident, comfortable with carrying the ball forward and calmly knocking it back when up against pressure. Anchored by solid play from both Tara MacNeil and Kelly Larkin in the centre-midfield positions, the Tigers maintained possession throughout much of the game, turning up the intensity in the second half to produce an exciting number of chances for Dalhousie and, ultimately, two goals from rookie Mary-Beth Bowie, her third and fourth of the season.

The first goal came just 10 minutes into the second half when Bowie, on the run by herself, lofted the ball over the oncoming St. FX keeper. The second came 25 minutes later when the persistent efforts of Petra deWaard at outside midfield brought her inside the six-yard box and, with amazing presence of mind, she passed up to an unmarked Bowie in front of the net, who scored easily.

As Bowie herself is quick to point out, "The girls do the real hard work to get the ball up there. Unfortunately that sometimes goes unrecognized. It's nice to get the glory for putting the ball in, but they really do a great job of getting it up there."

Even so, the Tigers are happy to have the 17-year old Dartmouth native on the team, and her own contribution to the team does not go unrecognized by either the fans or by Moore.

"[Mary-Beth] has provided most of our scoring — in fact all of our scoring — which is good to see," says Moore, "and hopefully some other players can pick that up as well, but she certainly brings a great work ethic and a lot of experience to the squad."

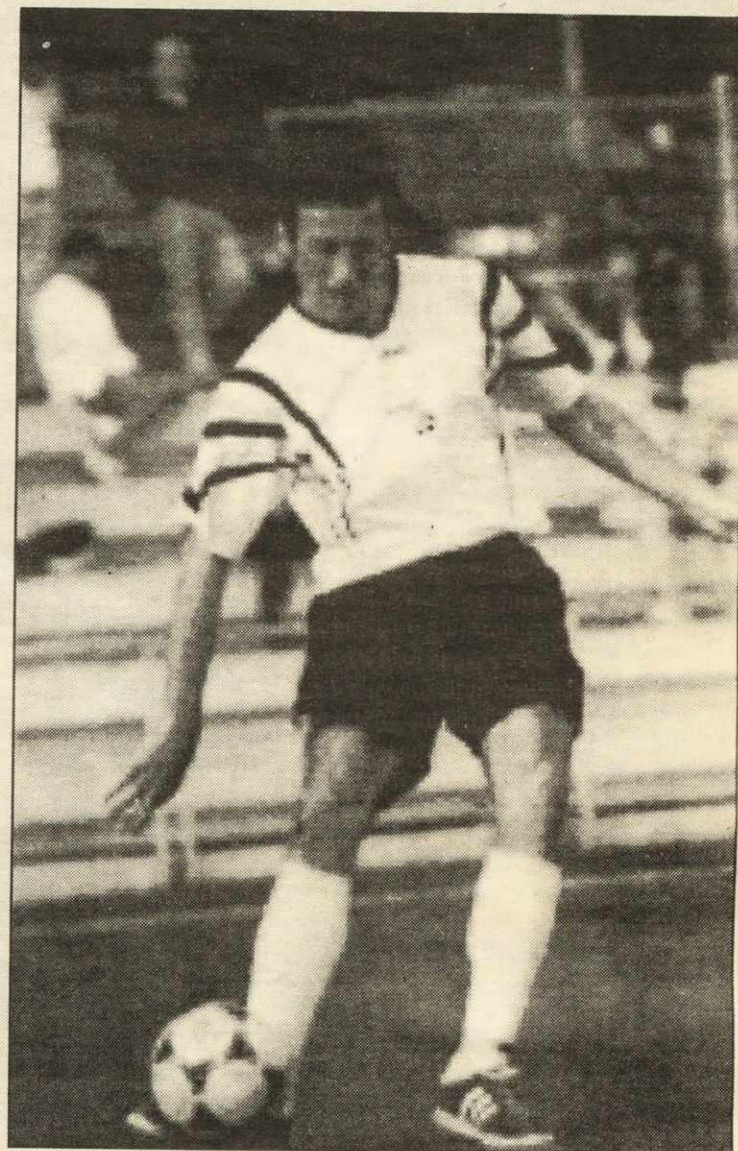
With the absence of previous leading goal-scorer Kate Gillespie, last year's Tigers were a little short in the "goals for" column, scoring only 11 goals in regular season play. Bowie is a welcome addition indeed. Yet she says that she does not feel any special pressure to be the goal scorer, that it is simply her job.

"Playing striker, I am the one who is supposed to get the finishing touches," she comments. "I know that's what I have to do. I enjoy the challenge of doing that, and I feel bad when I don't convert, like [Sunday]."

Sunday's game saw the very same players take the field but it seemed a much different team. The play was considerably more unsettled and uncontrolled, as Acadia effectively disrupted the Tigers passing game.

"I think it was hard for the players to come back and re-focus after yesterday," said Moore after the game. "Acadia came to play and put us under a lot of pressure that we haven't had to deal with in the previous games."

It was a brief defensive lapse mid-



Competitive spirit

BY KATHLEEN MATTHEWS

Once in a while an athlete will come along who catches everyone's spirit. This year, and for the last two, the men's soccer team has been lucky enough to have such an athlete on its roster.

Paul English has been instrumental in the success of the Tigers over the last three seasons and, according to fans, coaches, teammates and opponents alike, he is someone worth paying attention to. He is a definite role model for young kids who gather around him during pre-game warm-ups and mimic his every

move, and he has elevated the standard to strive for in varsity athletics. In 1995 he was named to the AUAA and CIAU All-Star teams, was CIAU tournament MVP and was a member of Dal's gold-medal team. In 1996, he was the AUAA's second-top goal-scorer (after then-Tiger Jeff Hibberts) and MVP, while he also won the prestigious Joe Johnson Memorial Trophy for CIAU soccer Player of the Year.

Paul English is a twenty-six year old Middlesborough, England native currently studying in his third year of an

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way through the second half that sealed Dal's fate. Some loose defending left Acadia's Michelle Abbott open inside the Tigers' 18-yard box for an open knock into the back of the net. Moore's words from the day before seem almost prophetic:

"We had a number of opportunities we didn't put away and we certainly need to improve that. Defensively, we are not going to be able to afford that down the road... we need to be more solid at the back."

Despite a burst of energy from the Tigers in the final 10 minutes of the game that kept the ball confined to Acadia's defending half of the field, and yielded several free kicks and some long range shots from Dalhousie's Amy Harding — one of which soared just high of its mark to ricochet off the cross-bar — Dalhousie failed to notch the one needed goal to tie up the score.

Nevertheless, both players and Moore remain optimistic after this weekend's two-game split.

"I'm learning things already," noted Bowie. "The team is coming together and the coaching is really open to listening to what the players have to say. We adjust really well. The team looks like it will be very successful and I am looking forward to what the program has to offer. I am already getting a lot out of it."

And as Moore takes the team back to the practice pitch to prepare for next weekend's away games in New Brunswick, she once again adjusts her plans to incorporate the past weekend's play.

"It's a matter of raising the level of intensity in training, putting your teammates under as much pressure as your opponents would. I think that's the change we need to make — in the past it hasn't been that way — and hopefully that will carry into the games."