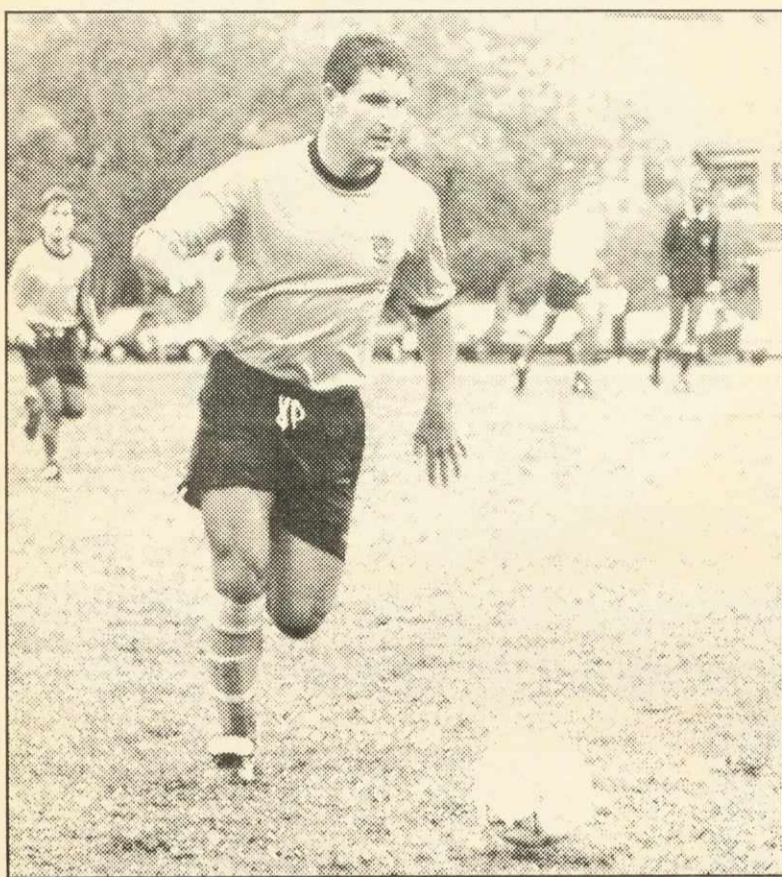


# sports

## Two wins and a loss in men's soccer



Tough-man Adrian Ibbetson was really tough.

by Angel Figueroa

Capping the mid season with two wins and a loss last week, the Dalhousie men's soccer team has begun its jockeying to put itself in contention for the Final Four. As defending AUAA champions, anxieties have been high and holy both on and off the pitch, as an uncomfortable record of 3-2-1 has left Dal in fourth place in the league. With only four weeks left in the race to playoffs, there is little room for messing around.

First on last week's agenda was Saint Francis Xavier, which Dal hosted on Wednesday, September 29. The X-Men have been this year's Cinderella team, already outdoing last season's dismal record to become one of this year's best teams. Tensions were high as the two teams prepared themselves on the pitch, both realizing this was a game that may easily decide too much in the future way of things.

With seconds to spare before the opening kickoff, Coach Ian Kent's final blessings to the team were simple and to-the-point: "It is going to be very important we dominate early; to start out strong and control the first 5 to 10 minutes of the game."

In retrospect, those words have an eerie, tragic ring to them. Seldom do the first three minutes decide a match, but it was this game's case in point, as a lightning goal by St. FX came as a punch in the face; a punch from which Dal was able to recover, but never enough to find the equalizer. It came after some miscommunication in the backfield that left an opposing striker with an early Xmas gift, picking up a loose ball in the six yard box and to put it home.

Dal had 87 minutes to get the equalizer, but it never came. Constant pressure by the Tigers was handily met by a

thick, talented defense which robbed many finishing touches for that Shangri-la goal. Frustrations mounted, but Dal persisted, and it was almost uncanny how there were so many close calls. Dal's most exemplary drive occurred in the 28th minute, when a million dollar build-up by Adrian Ibbetson, Hieu Quack and Chris Devlin collapsed into a five-cent crash.

Goalkeeper Trevor Chisolm put in some good saves, but was otherwise a spectator, as the shots-on-goal figure said it all: Dal had 16, to St. FX's 4. Fine performances were put in by every member of the Dal side yet, after 90 minutes of play, what remained was one pissed-off team. No quotes for the writer.

Entering the match against Dal on Saturday, October 2, Memorial sat at the top of the table, at 3-0-1, with a wild reputation that preceded it where ever it played. The bunch of

them were like a team of Marty McSorleys or Dave Semenkos (without pads, remember) and watching them, at times, made you wonder if their game was rugby, soccer, or roller-derby.

What it soon realized was that Dal was on a mission. As a cause of the loss to St. FX, Dal was now under .500 for the first time in four years. Ever seen a badger cornered?

The opener came off the boot of rookie Francis McKinnon, who was playing his first game in the role of striker. The guy is big, and was just what the doctor ordered for Dal's offensive woes. In the 16th minute of play, he rumbled into the penalty box, and while beating two defenders, took control of a lob from Burns, then nailed it home past the near post. The goal was significant in more ways than one: while it was Dal's first goal of the game (and a much needed one at that) it was also the product of an in-house renovation that had taken place in practice since the loss to St. FX.

What developed for the remainder of the first half was a bumpy, frenzied level of play that had no shortage of violence and foul language. Dal and Memorial went at each other like a pair of rabid dogs, but neither of the two gave up any slack, providing for a very nervous game.

Memorial's equalizer came in the 49th minute of play, from a rebound off

a corner-kick. Dal responded with a flurry of attacks, highlighted by the stellar playing of winger Rob Sawler, finally up to form after spending a dismal month limping around with an injury. Tenacity was his mark of the day, as repeated attempts on the right wing finally gave him his due. After Justin Varney was taken down in the 77th minute of play, deep in Memorial territory, Sawler rose to take the free kick. In a flash, it found its way into the net, after a well-placed ball connected with Devlin for the go-ahead goal.

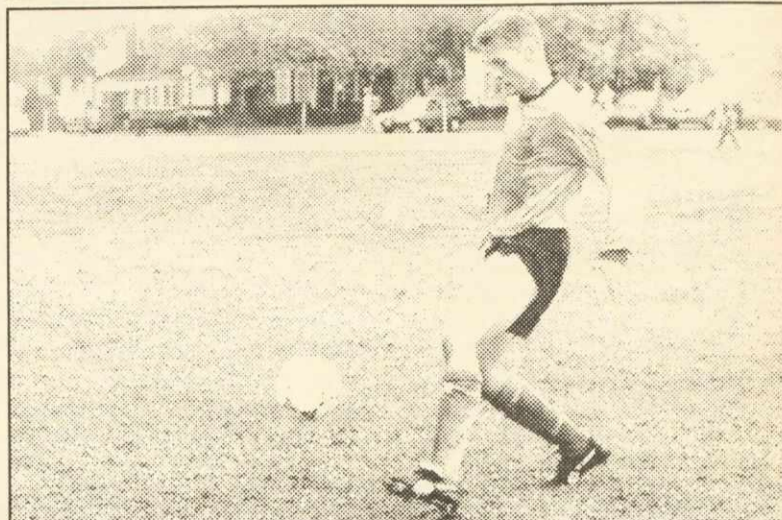
Tony Pignatiello answered with goal three in a breakaway beauty in the 83rd minute. A defensive miscue enabled him to win a runaway ball in the backfield, and while chased by a defender breathing down his neck, he paused to look up, take aim and fire, scoring the insurance goal that settled the game. It was calculated, crisp and showy.

"I had four chances in the first half, where I just kept my head down and shot the ball," he explained. "I decided that if I'm going to [score], I'd do it right this time and get my head up to find a spot to put it in." It was well said; Pignatiello has a tough time hitting the net, you see.

"We all worked hard," he added. "We battled real hard. I mean, we have skill but I think if we can battle like that in all our games, I don't think anyone could beat us. At times when we just rely on our skill, teams can come in and beat us or clip a tie off us."

Bruised and bloodied, Devlin earned man-of-the-match honours for his architect's role in the team's win. The young second-year player was pivotal in the development of the game, but he was modest about his laurels:

"I don't play well unless the whole team plays well. If we don't play in unison then its just not going to happen. We wanted to set the tone early and coach Kent told us that if we don't



Central midfielder Chris Devlin is a Scot, really.

DALPHOTO: ANGEL FIGUEROA

set the tone early then it'll be a tough game. We came out, fought hard, and in the first tackle I set the tone.

It was pointed out that never before has Devlin's Scottish blood pumped so wildly in his veins.

"It was all heart. We knew we had to come out with heart. When you set the tone, they get really antagonized. Its not a 1-0 itty-bitty win, that's for sure. We certainly put it to them."

The University of P.E.I. was the visiting villain for Sunday, October 3.

**DAL 2**  
**UPEI 0**

Not quite a lacklustre game, but one that could not match up to the previous day's game. Yet it was this match that was worth four points, not the usual two.

Dal took it handily with two quick goals in the first half, settling the contest which was otherwise a mud bowl on Wickwire Field. Striker Colin Audain scored first with a header in the 13th minute, after a corner kick by Geoff Axell and a supplementary cross by Devlin. Danny Burns came up with number two right after, in the 18th minute, after a free kick found him

open to deliver a grounder into the net.

Rob Sawler was again in form, proving to be very dangerous down the wing, while rookies Mathew Serieys and Justin Varney put in a very good showing as well. Morten Mooers was decisive in the midfield, as was Jamie Sawler, who was player of the game, for Dal's third win of the season.

Other games in the league left St Mary's big winners over Mount Allison at 5-0, but then SMU tied 3-3 with the University of New Brunswick. UNB lost to StFX 3-2 while StFX later drew 1-1 with MTA, and Memorial squeaked by Acadia 1-0. Out of this muddle rises two prominent teams, with 13 points each: StFX and Memorial. Dal and Moncton follow in close behind, but due to the few games Moncton has played, it is actually the league leader, with a potential yield of 30 points while Memorial and StFX follow with 29 and 27 each.

Dal has a week off before its next match up, which is a real biggie: St Mary's at Wickwire Field on October 13 at 4 pm. More than pride is at stake. Both regard the game as a must-win; Dal needs it to stay alive, SMU needs it if hopes to qualify in the end.

## Tigers split pair of games

by Frank MacEachern

Two first half goals was all that the Dalhousie Tigers needed to halt their one-game losing streak with a 2-0 win over the Acadia Axettes Wednesday at Wickwire Field.

The win was marred slightly as forward Katie Gillespie re-injured her ankle and had to be carried off the field. Gillespie missed the last game because of a sprain. Coach Neil Turnbull didn't know the extent of the injury right after the game but noted she has time to recover before the next start.

"We've got 10 days off before our next game so a little bit of rest will help her."

Dal scored both goals in the first half with Nicole Webb using her head to get the first one about 20 minutes into the game on a corner kick.

"Stephanie Johnson took the free kick, she chipped it just across the front line and I just headed it into the net," Webb said after the game.

The goal was the first of the season for the third year engineering student from Halifax.

The second goal of the game just before the half was also Carla Perry's second of the season. She downplayed her role in the goal.

"It was just a scramble in front of the net. I don't think we really even scored. I think it went off a player on the other team."

Perry and her teammates dominated the game especially in the second half when Acadia were totally frustrated in

any offensive attempt. Dal keeper Leahanne Turner recorded the shutout.

The two teams played to a scoreless draw on Sept. 25 at Acadia and Perry said they practised hard to be ready for them.

"We've been practising all week on functional play and we knew exactly what we had to do to beat them."

The win improved the Tigers record to 3-1-1.

The Tigers allowed only their first goal of the season but it was one goal too many as the St. Francis Xavier University X-ettes edged them 1-0 in action last Thursday at Wickwire Field.

The Tigers sorely missed star striker Kate Gillespie who had scored four

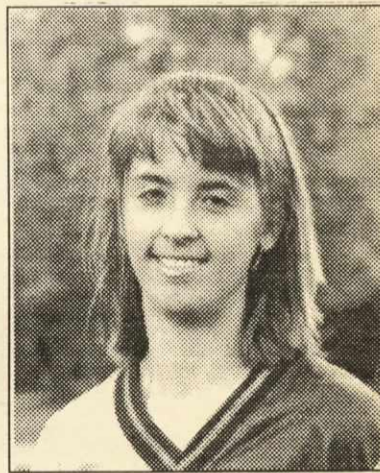
**StFX 1**  
**DAL 0**

goals in Dal's first three games as they were unable to finish off their scoring opportunities. The best chance for the Tigers came with about 15 minutes left in the game when sweeper Lynne Robertson hit the crossbar on a free kick.

"I knew that if I could get it near that corner that the goalie wasn't going to move and she didn't," Robertson said after the game. "But it didn't curve quite enough and it hit the crossbar and came straight back out."

St. Francis forward Niki Tobin scored the only goal just one minute into the game with a low shot that beat Dal keeper Leahanne Turner.

For Tiger coach Neil Turnbull the loss meant going back to the drawing board to spark the offence. "We didn't score goals and that's the name of the



Lynne Robertson

game, the team that scores the most goals wins. [It] seems to be plaguing us right now so we'll have to work on that a little bit."

The loss was Dalhousie's first in four games as well as the first goal against. Turnbull looked on the positive side of the loss. "I mean we've given up one goal in four games so that's not bad."

The Tigers next see action on Saturday, October 16, at Dalhousie.

### WOMEN SOCCER

MEN'S SOCCER							
	W	L	T	F	A	Pt	Pp*
UDM	2	0	2	6	4	8	30
MUN	4	1	1	10	6	13	29
StFX	4	1	2	13	5	13	27
DAL	3	2	1	9	4	9	27
UNB	1	1	2	12	10	5	25
SMU	3	2	2	13	9	13	23
ACA	1	4	1	2	10	4	22
MtA	1	4	1	6	14	4	18
UPEI	0	4	2	1	11	4	16

\* signifies points potential

	W	L	T	F	A	Pt
StFX	4	1	0	5	1	14
SMU	3	2	1	3	3	12
ACA	4	0	1	15	2	11
UPEI	3	1	1	10	4	8
DAL	2	1	1	9	1	7
MUN	1	4	0	4	14	2
UdM	0	3	0	2	8	0
MtA	0	4	0	0	15	0