

# Canadians neglect soccer, world's most popular sport

Perhaps my first column should have been dedicated to soccer. It seems that for years Canadians have chosen to neglect the world's most popular sport altogether. The result is that soccer remains almost in a state of anonymity at the University level. The newly formed Canadian Soccer League offered Canadian fans some homegrown talent, yet spectators failed to support their hometown players.

The most exciting soccer event to take place during the summer was the FIFA Under Sixteen world tournament which ran for two weeks in July. While fans packed the stands to see Italy and Nigeria, they also turned out to support the Canadian National Team. But after the tournament, soccer was history once again, and hometown heroes faded back into obscurity. Many will argue that the international style of soccer is what turns fans towards the game, and that exposure to this style would enhance the play of the Canadian side.

Eric Willis, head coach of the York Yeomen, felt a trip abroad would only do good for his players. "Principally I wanted to expose the players to a different type of soccer environment when we went to Britain. Soccer there is analogous to hockey here. I mean everything is tied into soccer there. I wanted to expose players to that sort of life style," Willis said.

There's no doubt that exposing young players to a high calibre of soccer can only enhance their play,

but from a fan's perspective the idea may backfire. While you may be drawing the crowds, you may be doing it for the wrong reasons, coming out to see the opposition. If the homeside doesn't play up to an equal level, then the fans are likely to be turned off. Such was the case with the North American Soccer League (NASL). In their first year of operation they had some of the best play-

## KARIM HAJEE



ers in the World playing on North American turf. That year the league was dynamic and entertaining, but after that it was all downhill. They simply could not equal the standard they had set, and after less than a decade of operation the league folded. Soccer fans were left without professional soccer, at least for the moment. More importantly, young and upcoming Canadian soccer players had nowhere to go after completing university or semi-pro soccer.

Enter the CSL. A truly Canadian soccer league, based on developing talent, that will hopefully generate more interest and be entertaining. After the first year it's difficult to say whether or not the league was successful and again young Canadians aren't too optimistic about a soccer career.

Perhaps they shouldn't be. Canada is simply not ready for soccer; it

hasn't been and probably won't be for a while. Those involved in the development of soccer should concentrate on setting a solid foundation on which they can develop Canadian players. That process begins in the high schools and Universities.

After taking five years off from coaching in order to take care of personal matters, coach Eric Willis returned to coaching the Yeomen and at the end of regular season play the Yeomen are going to the playoffs once again. Yet nobody seems to care beside the friends and relatives of the players (though it's true that at this University people just don't seem to care about sports in general). When played at it's best soccer is perhaps the most graceful and artistic of all team sports. What these young players are striving to accomplish has yet to be appreciated.

After the performance of the Under-19 team in Chile, soccer may be back on track after years of turmoil. North America's bid for the World Cup in 1992 could only help should they be successful. Willis generate interest in Canada and the United States," says Willis, "and maybe fans will catch on." In the time being striving soccer enthusiasts can only work on improving their ability and the sport in Canada by gaining as much experience and foreign exposure as possible. As for the fans, what they need is an education in soccer, a way to truly appreciate the sport. That kind of education they can only gain by attending the games.

# York field hockey squad wins silver

By PAUL CONROY

The OWIAA field hockey championships took place in Ottawa this past weekend. The Yeowomen squad made the journey confident not only that they were likely to meet up with the U of T in the final, but that they also had a good shot at a victory.

On the way to the final, however, a few hurdles had to be jumped first and number one on the list was the hosting university, Carleton. The much stronger York team ran away with this one winning by a 7-0 score. Hurdle number two was Laurentian, the top squad in the eastern division. The Yeowomen were ready for a very difficult time in this one, especially since Laurentian possessed



Coach Marina van der Merwe

superiority with easy wins against Windsor, Waterloo, and a team from Lethbridge, Alberta. In the semi-final against the U of T, York cruised to another victory.

The final match had the Yeowomen playing McMaster and it proved to be the toughest matchup. The team got off to a slow start but fought back and went on to win the final 3-0.

York's Megan Hurst received honours as the tournament's most valuable player, and Lindsey Adams and Cheryl Piper were designated as tournament all-stars. Looking ahead, the team hosts the Tait McKenzie Volleyball Classic starting this Friday, a tournament featuring seven of the top eight teams from last year's CIAU championships.

In other out-of-town action involving York athletes, the Yeomen hockey team beat Laurier 6-3, the rugby squad went to Kingston and were bounced by Queen's 35-0, and the men's volleyball team took part in the East-West challenge out at Waterloo losing to Western and Waterloo by identical 3-1 scores.

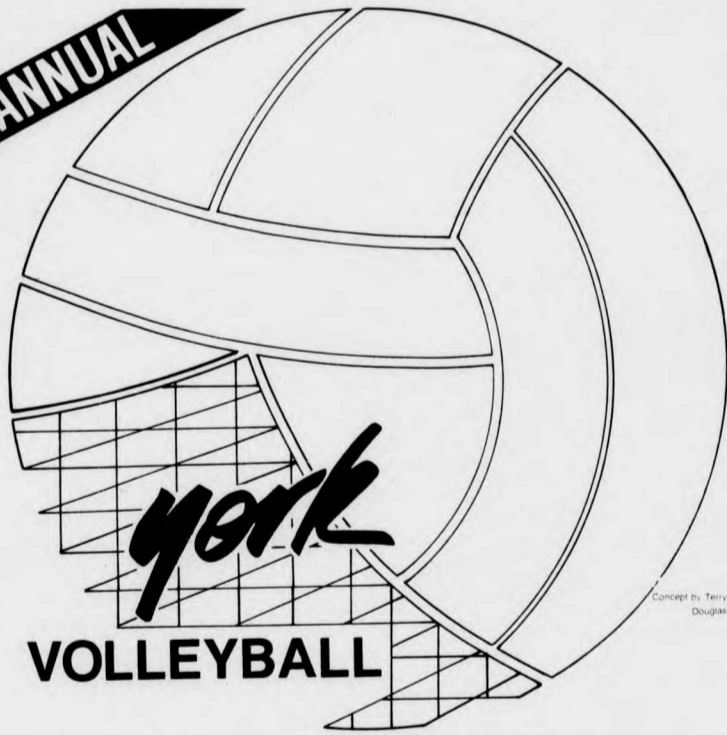
## SPORTS SHORTS

seven fifth-year players, but their fears proved to be unfounded as the Yeowomen shut them out 4-0.

The stage was now set for the final against cross-town rivals U of T. On a very cold and windy playing field both teams battled through regulation time and two overtime periods to a scoreless draw. Penalty shots were required to resolve the contest, and after each team had taken five, U of T emerged a 2-1 victor. Joel Brough scored York's only penalty goal. Next on the team's agenda is the CIAU championships which York is hosting, starting tomorrow at Lampport Stadium.

Meanwhile, the Yeowomen volleyball squad travelled to Hamilton last weekend to participate in the McMaster Invitational Tournament. The team quickly demonstrated its

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### THE SCHEDULE

Friday, October 30th

Round-Robin - Best of 3 game matches

#### COURT 1

11:00 am Ottawa vs Laval  
12:30 pm Victoria vs York  
2:00 pm Calgary vs Laval  
3:30 pm Manitoba vs York  
5:00 pm Ottawa vs Calgary  
7:00 pm Saskatchewan vs York

#### COURT 2

Calgary vs Winnipeg  
Manitoba vs Saskatchewan  
Ottawa vs Winnipeg  
Saskatchewan vs Victoria  
Winnipeg vs Laval  
Manitoba vs Victoria

Saturday, October 31st

Round-Robin - Best of 5 game matches

#### COURT 1

10:00 am 3rd Red vs 4th White  
12:00 pm 1st Red vs 2nd White  
2:00 pm 5th Place Final

#### COURT 2

3rd White vs 4th Red  
1st White vs 2nd Red  
7th Place Final

#### CENTRE COURT

9:30 pm Bronze Medal Match  
1:00 pm Gold Medal Match

Friday & Saturday, October 30 & 31, 1987

At Tait McKenzie Building

	Adults/Students
Tournament Tickets	\$5.00/2.50
Friday only tickets	\$3.00/2.00
Saturday only tickets	\$3.00/2.00

Groups of ten or more 25% discount on all advance tickets.

For more information call 736-5183



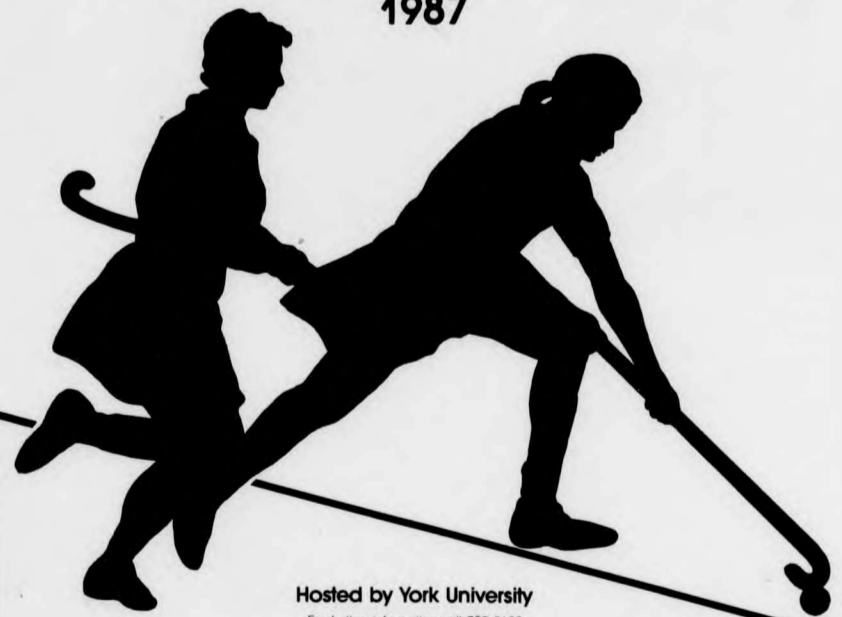
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Tournament Pass	\$5.00
Day Pass	Adults \$2.00 Students \$1.00
Medal Games (Sunday)	\$3.00

Friday, October 30

Saturday, October 31

Sunday, November 1

Games all day (8:30 to 6:30)

10:00 5th - 6th Place Game  
1:00 Semi-Final  
3:30 Semi-Final  
10:00 Bronze Medal Game  
2:00 Gold Medal Game



Lampport Stadium  
1151 King Street West