

Rockets land in CSL playoffs

by Josh Rubin

The heavily-favoured North York Rockets?

Though the concept might seem strange to some, that's exactly where North York's Canadian Soccer League (CSL) team stands. The Rockets are heading into their first-round CSL playoff action with the Nova Scotia Clippers tonight.

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The Rockets, owners of third place overall, travel to Halifax sporting two wins and a pair of draws against the Clippers during their season series against the maritime squad.

In those four games, the Rockets outscored Nova Scotia by a margin of 10-4.

Still, North York coach Fioriggi Pagliuso is wary of an all-too-common athletic ailment — overconfidence.

"In the playoffs, it's really a whole different ballgame," said Pagliuso, who added that he isn't entirely enamoured with the North American method of finding a league champion.

"If you judge a team over five or six months, it's much more accurate than looking at only two weeks," Pagliuso continued.

Still, being stuck with the format, Pagliuso acknowledges "if those are the rules, that's the way you've got to play."

Pagliuso's apparent nervousness

about the playoff format is understandable.

Though the Rockets put together a 17-game undefeated streak at one point this season, they followed it up with three straight losses, then had another flip-flop and rounded out their season with a trio of wins.

To beat the Clippers, North York will have to rely on a strong effort from strikers Marek Grabowski and Eddie Berdusco.

Berdusco, one of the more successful Canadian forwards in the league during the '91 season, led the Rockets with 14 goals this year.

Another key player for North York is midfielder Cosimo Comisso, who faces the daunting task of mark-

ing Nova Scotia player/coach Gordon Hill.

Though the role of shadow is nothing new for Comisso, he will have his hands full against the wily 37-year old veteran.

Pagliuso doesn't seem to be too concerned about Comisso's ability to get back into the North York attack, where he has been responsible for some of the prettier crosses seen in Rockets' action this year.

"He's done it before, so he's the best man for the job," explained Pagliuso.

In addition to Hill, Pagliuso's players will also have to watch out for import Dennis Larsen and Kevin Wasden.

Wasden, ironically, was loaned to Nova Scotia by the Rockets before the start of the '91 season.

Tonight's matchup is the first of a two-game series against the Clippers for North York, with the second game kicking off at 7:30 pm Sunday night at Esther Shiner Stadium.



LAND OF CONFUSION? Yeoman football coach Tom Arnott will be trying to erase the memory of three 0-7 seasons in a row when his squad opens up the regular season this Saturday against Western in London.

York edged 22-21

Football heartbreaker

by Riccardo Sala

Last year the football Yeomen won their first game of the season, defeating McMaster 16-11 in exhibition play. From that point on the team slid downhill for the rest of the season.

This year the slate is almost entirely new for coach Tom Arnott and his crew. One thing stayed the same about the season's first game, though: the opponent was the McMaster Marauders.

But the result was different this time at the Yeomen's Esther Shiner Stadium, with the Marauders winning 22-21 in a matchup last Thursday.

Despite the score, many of those who watched felt the Yeomen had accomplished the Herculean task of getting people to take them seriously.

In the second half, the Yeomen pulled together and salvaged a game that was starting to look like

a familiar York football disaster.

With McMaster up 22-1 at the half, there was little indication this game was going to be anything but a romp for the Marauders, but a disciplined defensive effort held the visitors scoreless during the second half.

In what is surely one of the major understatement of this young season, Arnott acknowledged, "We played better in the second half."

The major culprit of the first half was Marauder running back Tony D'Agostino, who scored two of his team's three second quarter touchdowns, including a seemingly effortless 22-yard carry straight up the middle for his first TD of the night.

The Yeomen started their recovery in the early minutes of the third quarter with the beginnings of an aerial assault that was destined to fall just one point short of McMaster. Quarterback Adam

Karlsson connected again and again with receivers Sal Natale and Dwayne Paul to make a game out of this one, something the crowd at Esther Shiner would have never guessed at in the first half.

After a Paul TD and a field goal cut the McMaster lead to eight points, the Yeomen opened up the fourth quarter with another TD pass from Karlsson, rounding out the scoring for both sides.

Despite the strong second-half showing, Arnott acknowledged afterwards that his team still has many kinks to be worked out, especially the lack of balance in the Yeomen attack.

"We have to work a lot on our special teams," Arnott added, "and try to expand our offense."

Arnott's young squad won't have too much time to improve — they take on perennial powerhouse Western in London this Saturday in the season opener for both clubs.

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