

SPORTS

Battle of Toronto

Blitz 82 decides bragging rights

Eric Meslin

At virtually every level of sport where teams have a history of enjoying little success, coaches and critics alike often find comfort in their conviction that they can field a "competitive" team who can "execute" and who can "play with consistency".

Often, the antithesis of these qualities is used as a rationalization in the event of a loss: either the team "wasn't competitive", or a combination of "lack of execution" and "inconsistency" plagued them. In the event of such occurrences, coaches can always fall back on that old standby: character.

Such was the fate of the Yeomen Football team as they played their way both out of and into a 21-14 loss to the U of T Blues at Varsity Stadium. With pre-game hysteria approaching the ridiculous (and this was only a hint of what was to come), there was hope the energy would translate into equally enthusiastic play. However, prior to Varsity Blue Trevor Miller's jaunt down the right sideline for the first Toronto score, the opening quarter had been characterized by fumbles and sloppy play.

It did not take long for the Blues to assert themselves on the ground as the Yeomen were intimidated and outmuscled in every position. They gained all of their 175 first half yards on the ground, with Miller gaining 154 of those 175 yards on only 15 carries in the first half. His darting and slanting running style left many a Yeomen defender lying helpless in Miller's wake.

The Yeomen, by contrast, could not begin to mount a reply to the "double Trevor system" (running backs Miller and Trevor Williams) largely because of the difficulty York kick returners had fielding ball. These mental errors, coupled with the occasional penalty and dropped pass, effectively wiped out any drives before they began. The first half ended with York down 14-0 on the scoreboard and an unspecified amount in the confidence department.

Fortunately for the boisterous York fans, they did not have to rely on the teams to provide excitement, as clearly, the most celebrated aerial display was in the stands: everyone was kept alert and amused with the anticipation of being hit by any number of different projectiles.

Undaunted, the Yeomen appeared for the second half, fortunate to be down by only 14 points. With stomach butterflies replaced by the sick feeling of embarrassment, the Yeomen looked like a new team. Running back George Gannas almost single-handedly put the Yeomen on track. He took the second half kick-off up the middle to the York 32, and followed that with a circus catch to put the ball on the Blues' 37--the first time in the game that York had penetrated so far downfield. Then a combination of a 12-yard Iacono-to-Gifford reception and a double Toronto roughing penalty put the ball on the Blues' 14. No one had to hand Tino Iacono a formal invitation as he promptly engineered perfect flanker reverse to wide receiver Neil Dalgarno who raced his way around the right side for the first York major from 22

yards out.

The flurry of excitement seemed to wake U of T QB John Finlayson who realized that one of the country's outstanding receivers, John Mullins, had been open for most of the night and might now have to be used on a more frequent basis. While this duo did manage to work a little magic, the Blues' modest drives were halted by York's increasingly stingy defence. Both Trevor Williams and Donovan Brown played impressively in the Yeomen defensive backfield, with Brown making a particularly impressive interception of a Finlayson pass to a potential long gainer as the 3rd quarter ended 14-7 for U of T.

This set up one of the most exciting final quarters of football that anyone could hope to see: the waterbombs proliferated with increasing regularity, and both teams picked up the level of play to a feverish pitch. The quarter began un auspiciously for Iacono, who blindsided in the tradition of the New York Jets' 'sack exchange,' Mark Gastineau. The York drive was halted before it began. U of T pushed on relentlessly, racking up yards on the strength of Miller's running (he finished with 181 yards on 22 carries) and Mullins' ability to hang onto the ball after a bone-wrenching hit at the York 13. Miller's attempted run for glory was cut short by injury, but his replacement, Sean Allen, restored the 14-point lead with a three-yard jaunt.

Iacono came back in and quickly led the Yeomen down the field on their finest drive of the night, capping it off with a perfect strike to a leaping Brian Gifford in the end

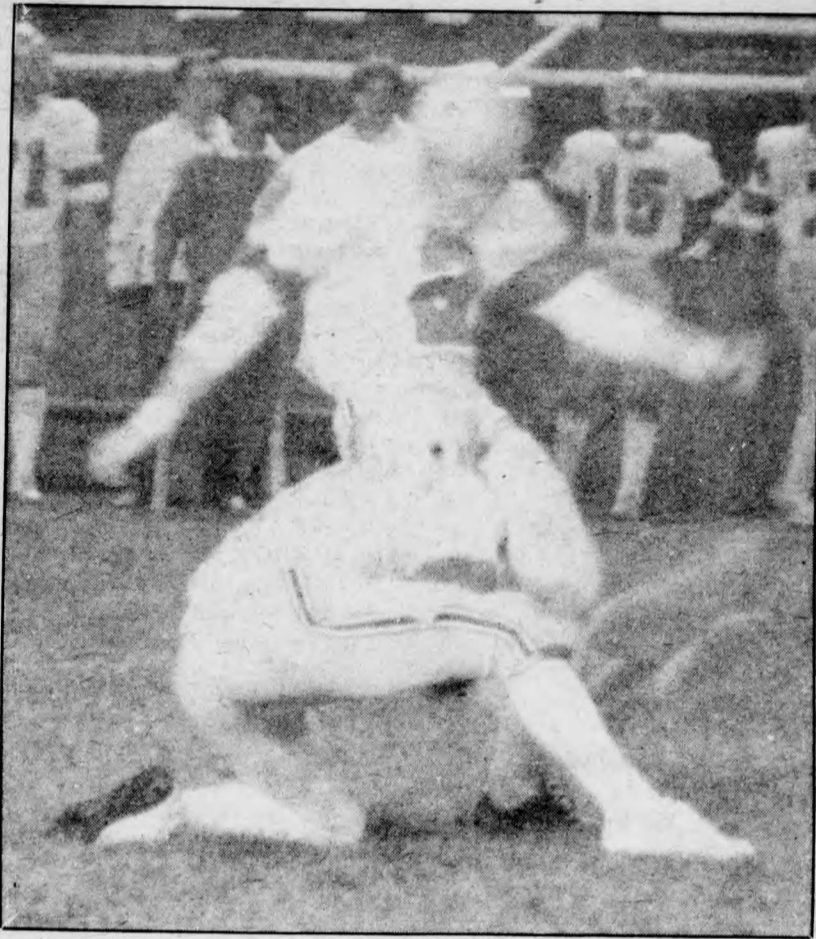


Photo: Marina Van de Merwe

Sergio Copobianco converts a Yeomen touchdown.

zone, narrowing the gap to 21-14, after a Sergio Copobianco convert. York's defense forced Toronto to turn the ball over with 2:10 left on the clock as the adrenalin started to pump. The two-minute offense swung into gear.

A good throw by Gifford put the ball on the Toronto 40 as Iacono showed plenty of poise in staying in the pocket. The next two plays are ones that York's armchair quarterbacks will talk about when they are considering contributions to the "what if?" library. With 41 seconds on the clock, Iacono scrambled and hit wide receiver Rick Kaleta who, at the Toronto 40, merely had to stay on his feet and pick up a block to hit pay dirt. His over-excitement at the

possibility of becoming a hero caused him to lose his footing and it appeared as if the crowd's optimism hit the bottom at precisely the same time that Kaleta did. But there was more to come. The next play was reminiscent of the time when George Plimpton ran a few plays with the Detroit Lions. Iacono stepped up to the centre with three seconds left and from then on everything appeared to be in agonizingly slow motion. He scrambled, *a la* Fran Tarkenton, and then heaved a desperation pass downfield in the direction of two York receivers who the ball somehow miraculously avoided, falling harmlessly to the ground. Oh, building character can be a tough, tough job, eh Pick?

Big shoes to fill

Yeowomen on road to improvement in OWIAA meet

Elissa Freeman

Determined, articulate and fearless. Those three adjectives best describe Yeowomen field hockey Coach, Marina Van Der Merwe. She's led the Yeowomen to two consecutive OWIAA Field Hockey Championships and as coach for the Canadian National team, she propelled 'The Red Machine' from 16th place in 1976 to 6th place in 1982.

Van der Merwe came to York in 1971 after coaching field hockey for nine years at U of T. During her U of T years, the team won nine consecutive OWIAA championships. After eight years of hard work with York, she turned a team that was "at the bottom of the barrel" into highly respected Ontario champions. Why did the transformation take so long? Van der Merwe explains: "To build a championship team from scratch takes 7-10 years."

Van der Merwe finds that the team is "really struggling" in the 1982 season. This is because two outstanding players, Sheila Forshaw and Lynda Lippett, have graduated. Forshaw, who is the top scorer in the nation and an exceptional Provincial and International player, will be sorely missed. To replace a scorer of this calibre is "virtually in the hands of God!" she exclaims. Van der Merwe and assistant Kathy Broderick, must now combine efforts to produce a new scoring



Photo: Debbie Kirkwood

combination.

Nevertheless, they will have 14 women to work with. The team consists of six returning veterans, six rookies and two "rank beginners" who are fairly recent to the game. With a somewhat uneven ratio of experience vs. non-experience, Van der Merwe certainly has her work cut out. "We will be working with a group of individuals who will be stretched to the maximum. Each will have to pull every grain of potential for every game," she says. The tougher the odds, however, the more determined she becomes. Van der Merwe seems to excel in the face of adversity.

"This is nothing new, it was the same situation with the Canadian players. It will be a tremendous challenge, nothing to be fearful of."

Although the veteran players are small in number, they are big on experience. The offensive power will be led by Laura Branchaud, Kim Taylor, Laurie Lambert and Sue Miller. Branchaud, who is a member of the National Team, Taylor, who has Jr. Provincial experience, coupled with Lambert, a versatile offensive and defensive player, have all been with the team for four years. Taylor, who had a total of four goals in the Michigan tournament, "will have to step up the pace for scoring."

says Van der Merwe. The rest of the offensive line-up is rounded off with Laurel McCloughlin and Beth Macaskill, two rookies, who have already displayed their marksmanship.

On the defensive side, four-year-veteran Mary Cicnelli will 'captain' a talented group of rookie defenders, including Brenda Garel, Cornelia

Rodriguez, Sandy Weston, Kim Cauchon and Fiona Reid, a strong defender who is also a member of the Canadian Under-21 field hockey team. Goaltending duties are usually shared by three-year player Debbie Lamb and rookie Liz Kunkle. However, Kunkle is out with an injury, which has made Lamb a full-time starter.

Yeomen uphold maple leaf

Elissa Freeman

Two of York's top gymnasts, Frank Nutzenberger and Dan Gaudet, and Yeomen Coach, Maasaki Naosaki, were part of the Canadian delegation sent to compete in the Pacific Alliance gymnastic meet in Canberra, Australia and the Commonwealth Games Invitational held in Brisbane.

In the Pacific Alliance competition, Canada placed fourth amongst several countries including gymnastic powerhouses such as China, Japan and the United States. In the overall competition, Nutzenberger placed 11th, followed by Gaudet, who finished 12th.

Since gymnastics was not on the regular schedule for the Commonwealth Games, the Invitational was held prior to the actual event. Nevertheless, Canada

won the team competition as well as clinching the top three placings. Gaudet won the meet with a score of 55.60 and Nutzenberger placed a close second (55.40). Mitchell Garfield of Montreal completed the Canadian sweep by capturing the bronze.

York seems to have an excellent chance of becoming champions again at the 1983 CIAU Meet, because six team members are from the Canadian Team. Team members will include Nutzenberger, Gaudet, Brad Peters, Allan Reddon, Rob Wild and Dave Arnold. Also competing this year will be members of the 1982 CIAU Championship team: Gary Chessman, Rob Dixon, Tony Worth and Canadian Junior National Team members Scott Hill, Pat Rogars and Walter Quigley.