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Playoff hopes remain alive

By MARIO PIETRANGELO

The York Waterpolo team improved their playoff chances, by winning two out of their three games last week. The Yeomen defeated Western and U of T, but lost to McMaster.

York's first opponent was heavily favoured U of T. But the Yeomen were optimistic due to a remarkable come from behind victory over Waterloo earlier in the week which had instilled new confidence in the team.

Although all games between U of T and York have a special significance, because of their Metro rivalry, this game had an added dimension regarding the controversy of OUA A eligibility rules. York has protested against U of T, because they feel that they are using ineligible players. Details of the dispute are not being disclosed until league officials have ruled on the case.

From the opening whistle, U of T quickly realized that this was a much improved York team, which they had humiliated by a score of 16-3, earlier in the season.

The outcome of the game was in doubt right up till the final buzzer, but two spectacular saves by goaltender John Dawson in the final 30 seconds of the game enabled the Yeomen to hang on to a 7-6 victory.

"It's always nice to beat U of T," said Yeomen coach Bryan Robertson. "This is a big win for us, and this should give us some momentum heading into the weekend."

U of T coach George Gross was disappointed with his team's effort. "We deserved to lose," said Gross. "York seized the opportunity presented to them by our lacklustre play. I'm going to give my team a good talking to, because when you lose games like this, you can't expect to go away laughing and singing," Gross added.

On Saturday morning, York's luck changed for the worst, as the McMaster Marauders destroyed the



BABAK AMIRFEZ

THE BIG SAVE: York goalie John Dawson comes up with some big saves as York won two out of their three games, thereby keeping their playoff hopes alive.

helpless Yeomen by a score of 16-0. The loss was taken in stride by the Yeomen, for two reasons. First of all, the Marauders are an extremely strong team who have won 15 out of the last 17 OUA A waterpolo championships. Secondly, the Yeomen felt that they should concentrate more on the game against Western, and therefore they rested a few of their key players during the match.

Later in the afternoon, York played Western in a game both teams desperately needed to win. York came up with an excellent effort and defeated Western in a hard-fought struggle. York captain John Lissus said, "We really played well, and the key to our victory was never having to play catch-up. We were able to control the game and

dictate the style of play."

Strong performances on the Yeoman squad came from players such as Ross MacDonald, Richard Wells, Stephane Collin, John Lissus, and John Dawson. Dawson played exceptionally well in net, especially against U of T and Western, making these victories possible. Meanwhile, the rest of the players mentioned were responsible for almost all of the Yeomen goals.

The Yeomen have now won three out of their last four games, and are in a battle for second place with U of T and Western. Coach Bryan Robertson summed up the week's action by noting, "Our playoff hopes are still alive, and we can control our own destiny, if we can beat U of T and Western in the remaining games.

Michell's crying of the Blues is just a case of sour grapes

By LORNE MANLY

The York Yeomen weren't the only football team to experience problems this year. One only has to look southwards towards U of T where a once proud football programme is in a shambles after four straight losing seasons.

With his job in jeopardy, an embattled Doug Mitchell, the U of T head coach, launched a pre-emptive attack last week, lashing out at the school's administration for the poor support it has given athletics. Mitchell, whose team closed out their 2-5 season Saturday with a loss to McMaster, claimed that administrative apathy towards the plight of student athletes and athletics has crippled the school's football programme. According to Mitchell, exorbitant housing costs and living expenses, small bursaries, and lack of recruiting assistance have cost the football team 10-15 players the past few years, preventing U of T from fielding a winning squad.

But Mitchell's complaints do not obscure the lack of success the Blues have had or the responsibility Mitchell bears for it. Blaming the administration for the team's woes is a classic case of sour grapes—Mitchell just hasn't been able to do the job.

Since he took over the job in 1983, Mitchell has guided U of T to the playoffs just once, and that was in his first season, with a team mainly consisting of players from predecessor Ron Murphy's era. Mitchell's teams in the last four years have finished the season 2-5 three times and 3-4 once. Murphy, in his 1966-82 stint as

head coach, led the team to two championships and compiled an 83-44-5 regular season record. Under Mitchell, the '83 team won the OUA A championship after going 6-1, but their regular season record since has been a pathetic 9-19.

THE SPORTING LIFE



It wasn't supposed to be like this, especially this year. Big things were expected from the Blues in a league where parity had seemingly taken root. Making the playoffs was considered a shoo-in and the Ontario championship was not an unrealistic goal.

The Blues had two former All-Canadian receivers returning in Paul Shorten (1986) and Rob Crifo (1985) while quarterback Rod Moors, who led the nation in passing last year (131 of 218 passes for 10 touchdowns), would be back to anchor what many considered the most explosive offence in the country.

U of T's hopes crumbled as the season progressed as the Blues could only manage to beat York and lowly Waterloo—who hadn't won since 1984. The rest of the time the Blues engineered new ways to lose, usually by collapsing in the second half. Against Guelph two weeks ago, U of T led 21-0 at the half but lost 26-23 on a field goal with 13 seconds remaining. Saturday's 24-21 defeat at

the hands of the McMaster Marauders would have made the Toronto Argonauts of the early '70s proud. Leading 21-17 with just over a minute to go, running back Paul Binnendyck fumbled at his own 15 yard line and the Marauders took advantage of the miscue, scoring with eight seconds left in the game.

Rumbles about Mitchell's dismissal began in earnest last year when the Blues closed out their season with three consecutive last minute defeats against York, Guelph and McMaster. The rumbles evolved into a roar this season with every embarrassing loss.

A 44-17 loss to Laurier and a 75-7 humiliation at the hands of Western—U of T's worst loss in 89 years of football—showed just how overmatched Mitchell's Blues were.

In this context, last week's tirade looks suspiciously like a diversionary tactic as Mitchell scrambles to save his job. Worse, his solutions—for example, he wants more bursary money for student athletes—favour athletes over the rest of the student body, a policy that the administration will not and should not condone. With university funding limited, any extra money available to help cover high Toronto living expenses should go towards the general bursary programme and not to a special athletic fund.

Mitchell was already on shaky ground before last week's outburst as he was unable to make do with the cards he was dealt. By questioning the rules of the game itself, Mitchell ensured that he won't be part of it next year.