

SPORTS

Panthers men ousted in AUS semis

Josh Lewis  
Sports Editor

The UPEI Panthers' season ended Saturday in a 4-0 loss to host UNB in semifinal action at the AUS men's soccer championships.

Eric Cormier scored two goals to lead the third-ranked Varsity Reds over the Panthers, who had earned a bye to the semis by virtue of their second-place finish. Joe Crossland and Tieren Murphy added goals for UNB. The Panthers were outraged at the muddy field conditions at UNB's Chapman Field. Captain Matt Thomson called it "beyond extreme."

"We did the best we could with what we were dealt. You couldn't kick, couldn't run, couldn't dribble." Coach Lewis Page said the field was "all torn up" and noted that UNB had played on the field the day before against Memorial and "were used to it."

Murphy opened the scoring for the Reds in the first half, and the score

remained 1-0 until the closing minutes, when the floodgates opened for UNB.

"The score doesn't reflect how we played," said Thomson. "We were desperate and at one point we had five strikers up, which left us vulnerable on the back end and they buried three late."

"Our guys were great," added Page. "We fought to the end and tried to win right up to the last minute."

The loss closes the book on a season which saw the Panthers finish 8-3-2, good for second in the AUS, in a year when many expected them to take a step backward after the loss of CIS MVP Ryan Anstey.

It also marked the final game of Thomson's illustrious AUS career.

"I have to be proud," he said. "Nobody expected us to be in the semifinal or in second place to begin with, so I have to be proud of our effort."



Photo: File Photo

In the pic is Panthers captain Matt Thomson battling for possession....

McNeill named interim basketball coach

Josh Lewis  
Sports Editor

After the unexpected resignation of Reagh Vidito, the UPEI Panthers women's basketball team has brought back former coach Dave MacNeill on an interim basis.

MacNeill, who coached the Panthers for 10 years between 1976 and 1993, hopes his experience will help to stabilize the team.

"I don't know what happened (with Vidito), but they didn't have a coach. I thought someone who was involved before might make the transition better than someone who had n't .

Assistant coaches Chris Annett and Brian Chambers, who both resigned two weeks ago, have returned to the staff at MacNeill's request.

"I got two really old guys to come back, so that makes it easier," joked the new coach.

For Annett and Chambers, the decision was a no-brainer.

"When Dave phoned and said there was a place for me, I jumped," said Annett. "We go back to 1976 when we coached here. We enjoyed it then and we're prepared to have another enjoyable experience."

Chambers had a similar reaction.

"See those banners? We were coaching then. Dave called and it was an easy answer. We've done it before and we both liked the challenge."

UPEI athletics director Ron Annear is pleased to have MacNeill back in the program so quickly.

"With the change completed, the team will now be able to restart and hopefully make strides in a short period of time. Dave provides stability for the program and allows my focus to turn to finding a coach for next

y e a r . "

Vidito said that the resignations were mainly due to his lack of time and the resulting miscommunications with his assistants. Despite his deep involvement with the 2009 Canada Games, MacNeill says that won't be an issue because the trio go back a long w a y .

"We won't have any troubles. We communicate well and love the game." MacNeill says the sidekicks will be invaluable as he becomes accustomed to the program.

"I don't know these names, the offense, the defense. Without these guys we'd be in trouble and the season would be half over. We still have a pile of work to do. Hopefully we can get them excited and working hard. It'd be naive to think it'll be easy. But with hard work you can accomplish a lot."



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