

# Journey Through the World of UPEI Sports

## Part I: The Fall

by Alex FIELD



**Work hard, play harder: Alex needs to cool down**

After a few weekends of watching the UPEI sports teams battle it out on the field, I thought to myself, "Self, I think you should find out what those sports are really like." So with that half-crazed idea in my mind, I decide to practice some soccer, rugby, and field hockey, and see what goes on at a daily practice.

I started by joining the men's soccer team for a little bit of "Football." For the most part I had all the essentials skills mastered, I could drink water, curse, and spit on the field. Then the practice started, and things got more difficult from there. While I was out of breath, and getting extremely tired, the team was just warming up. However, after a water break, I began to feel better and began to enjoy myself. The practice was intense and competitive from the beginning. We formed groups of six, for passing drills. The first team to complete a certain task won the right to taunt the other players, while the losing groups enjoyed the wonderful world of push-ups and sit-ups. After this I was part of a drill that incorporated all the fundamental skills of soccer; layoffs, short passes, crosses, and

finishing. It was a fun drill, though it resulted in me landing on my ass a few times. (The field conditions were very slippery. Honest.)

To end off my experience, I got to scrimmage with the team. I started well, making some good plays, but then I started to tire again, and I couldn't do much after that. The team went off to do some crossing drills, but I had to head off to a class. I didn't realize how sore I was until I had stopped running around, and my muscles seized up, but after a quick stretch, I realized I was going to be O.K.

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Next I took my journey through the mud-filled trench that is women's rugby. I began by running a few laps around the rugby field with the injured players, while the rest of the team ran around campus. I thought that by being with the injured players I would be able to build-up my confidence. It worked. The first drill we did were suicides, where partners would



**As close to the action as Alex cares to be.**

alternate turns sprinting to the five yard line and back, then to the fifteen-yard line and back, which was done ten times each. Well, with my sprinting teammate, Laura Grant, we were able to finish before everyone else. In fact at one point Mike Lloyd, the team's coach, challenged his players by saying that they better not lose to a boy. I was high off the fact that I did a good job, but was even more happy I didn't get sick.

We did the same drills again. However, this time at the fifteen-yard line, we had to do ten sit-ups, pushups, burpies, star jumps, or v-sits (if you don't know what the last three things are, then trust me you're lucky). After this there was a controlled scrimmage that was friendly to begin with, but as the scrimmage went on the competitive side came out in these women. It was almost like a real game, cursing was heard, faces were pushed into the ground, and newly formed bruises and scrapes were shown with pride. I have to admit at points I was scared, and wasn't very effective in tackling any players. On a whole it was a fun practice, which showed me that while the sport is tough and physical, there are

many strategies involved. I could best describe rugby, as full-contact version of chess.

I was all ready to practice with the women's field hockey team, but then I found out that they practice at 6:00 in THE MORNING. Yes, that's right, the women's field hockey team practices Tuesday and Friday at 6 freakin' o'clock in the freakin' morning. Well, it's needless to say that I didn't want to experience the fullness of their practice that badly. However, the women's field hockey goalie, Ambyr Gallant, was willing to recruit a few players, and take me out Friday afternoon for a little practice. After all the running I had done in the other two practices I thought I would cut down on my running, by playing goal. So I put on the goalie gear, and got into the net. The first thing I noticed was that the field hockey balls weren't your basic orange street hockey balls. These balls could be better described as a small bowling ball that hurt when they hit any part of my body that wasn't covered with goalie gear. The players started with little flip shots that were no problem for me to handle. Then they started shooting harder, and while