

Blazers host tournament

by TERRY SLOANE

The UNB Red Blazer Women's Hockey team will be hosting their 9th Annual Invitational Tournament this weekend at the Aitken Center.

This year the event will have five teams (six were scheduled but Acadia University dropped out late last week). The smaller field made a format change necessary. Instead of the two division alignment with finals and semi-finals, it will now be a single round-robin with no playoff round. "We got the idea from a Tournament we were in at Northeastern University," says Coach Mike Power, "it worked very well, so we took the opportunity to go with it."

UNB lost last year's final game to Concordia University, who will not be back to defend their championship, so the host has high hopes of doing well this year. "We have a rebuilt

team," says Power. "We lost a few players to graduation, and let some go elsewhere - I think the results are positive." The Red Blazers are 1-4-1 so far. Three of their losses came at North eastern's Tournament at the start of the year. The win and tie have come in the last two games so the team feels they are on a bit of a roll. "We have just started coming together, deciding on line combinations, things like that," according to the UNB Coach, "we have some strong rookies that are starting to gain confidence."

The team that unseated UNB as NB Provincial Senior A champions will also be attending. The Moncton Jaguars will bring a strong experienced lineup to the Aitken Center. Power thinks they may be the team to beat. "You always have to respect a champion, and of the teams we know about, I think the Jaguars will be toughest."

Prince Edward Island will be represented by the O'Leary Mixers. It is expected that a typical PEI team will be in uniform. "They will be tough and very determined. I expect they might have the best goaltending in the Tournament," Power says, "the Island will also have a blend of youth and experience."

The State of Maine will provide the 4th team, Colby College from the Southern part of the State, who will be making their first visit to Fredericton. Colby plays most of their games against teams in the Ivy League. The Red Blazers have no yardstick to compare the American team to, so they come in as an unknown quantity.

The last entry is one of Canada's most famous female hockey teams - the Brampton Ontario Canadettes, who are former National Champions. They play in the Southern Ontario Senior League; that loop

is generally recognized as the toughest in country.

All games will be played at the Aitken Center and admission is free. "We hope for a good turn out," says Power, "it's a chance for local people to see good women's hockey." The UNB Tournament is the top event for Senior Women's Hockey, east of Montreal.

Schedule

Friday, 15th Jan.	
5:00	Moncton vs PEI
6:30	Opening Ceremonies
6:35	UNB vs Colby
8:10	Brampton vs PEI
9:45	Moncton vs. Colby
Saturday, 16th Jan.	
12:15	Brampton vs UNB
1:15	PEI vs Colby
3:40	Moncton vs Brampton
Sunday, 17th Jan.	
11:30	UNB vs PEI
1:30	Colby vs Brampton
4:45	UNB vs Moncton

Axemen take classic

by TIM LYNCH

The Acadia Axemen came to the Aitken Center last weekend and captured the nineteenth annual UNB Holiday Classic. The Axemen outscored the host UNB Red Raiders 24-4 over the last eight minutes of the final and cruised to an 82-56 victory.

The Axemen got 19 points a piece from tournament most valuable player Kevin Veinot and tournament all-star Grant McDonald. Andy Hayward, UNB's only player to earn all-star honours, paced the Raiders' attack with 15 first-half points and 29 for the game. Paul Watts chipped in eight for UNB who played most of the game without point guard Richard McKay. He left the game early in the first half after reinjuring his foot.

According to UNB head coach Don Nelson, the Raiders' strategy was to stay as close as possible to the Axemen and to be within shooting distance in the last five minutes. At the half the Raiders had done just that and were trailing 38-32. UNB was still in the game with 8:17 left to play as they were only behind by a 58-52 count. However, a combination of events spelled UNB's downfall. Acadia's Veinot exploded for four steals, converting three of them into a quick six points,

and the tandem of poor outside shooting and early foul trouble on the Raiders' behalf led to the team's defeat. Coach Nelson was fully aware of his team's problems.

"When Dug Rutherford and Mark Hazlett get in foul trouble, ...we can substitute for them but not with the same experience and not with the same intensity ...Dug wasn't out there very long in the second half and he had his fourth... I just tried to alternate, and I thought that probably was our biggest problem. Number two, of course, not having Richard McKay after the first five minutes or six minutes. He's our quarterback and he runs things."

The Raiders, who have won the Classic the past two years and seven times in the history of the event, were consistently outrebounded by the bigger Acadia team. The Axemen boasted a lineup that included seven players standing six-foot-five or better. As well, Acadia's Peter Morris made his return from an ankle injury and added a healthy 17 points. Morris is a member of the national team.

The Red Raiders had advanced to Saturday's final with a 68-64 come-from-behind victory over the University of Maine at Machias Clippers the night before. The Clippers

were a scrappy but determined squad, and UNB spotted them a 34-32 halftime lead. It took a pair of free throws from Richard McKay with 21 seconds left on the clock to ensure the victory. Hayward led the Raiders' scoring parade with 20 points while McKay and Dug Rutherford added 13 each.

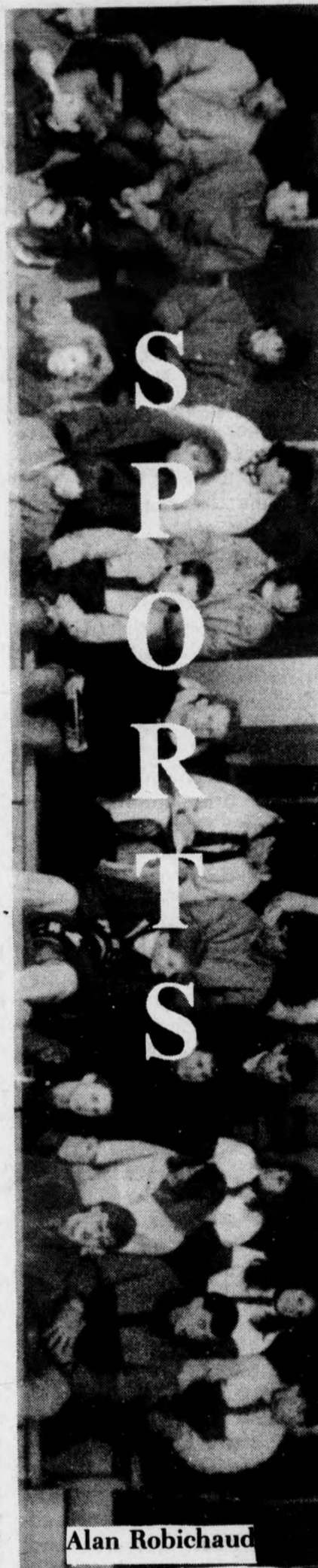
In the opening game of the tourney, the Axemen used a last second basket to squeak by the University of Southern Maine Huskies 80-79.

The Huskies won the battle of Maine in the consolation game with an 87-75 win that sent the Clippers back to Machias with a pair of losses on their record. The Huskies are a Division III team who are

currently ranked fourteenth.

If you missed the Classic, well that's too bad because it certainly was a class act. The Raiders' next home game is this Sunday at 3:00 p.m. in the L.B. Gym against St. Mary's. Coach Nelson needs a big team effort from the Raiders against SMU in order to hang onto their slim playoff chances and to improve their 2-4 Atlantic Conference record.

"We have got to come up with a big win. . . It's a four point game, a win will help us. I think we're capable St. Mary's on our own court. Our backs are against the wall, but these guys aren't quitters and they'll be digging right at it from start to finish."



UNB in Saturday tournament.

Photo by Eric Drummie