

SPORTS

Bisons number one overall

Yeomen settle for Bronze in tourney

Mark Zwol

The fourth annual Excalibur Volleyball Classic is history now, and the outcome has taught the bronze medalist York Yeomen one thing: you have to play intense ball for the full 15 points in every game if you want to wear gold.

The tournament--won by the University of Manitoba Bisons, who put on a convincing display of why they are Canada's number one ranked team--attracted some of the top volleyball schools from both north and south of the border.

The University of Pittsburgh Panthers, bronze medal finishers a year ago, and silver medalist Ball State Cardinals--the team is from Muncie, Indiana and has its sights fixed on an NCAA mid-west region crown--headed the American entries.

Backing the Canadian contingent, along with the Bisons, were the Waterloo Warriors, Guelph Gryphons, Western Mustangs and the University of Toronto.

The Bisons, led by tournament M.V.P. Paul Paquin and ace attacker Doug Kozak, blitzed the Cardinals in the championship game by scores of 15-0, 4-15, 15-5, and 15-1.

Manitoba advanced through the preliminary rounds with no trouble, disposing of Pittsburgh, Toronto and Waterloo in round-robin play. Their only really "tense" match was the Yeomen when they came back from a two-game deficit to defeat the red and white in the championship semi-final 14-16, 12-15, 15-8, 15-3, 15-6.

The Ball State Cardinals, headed by renowned coach and author of volleyball texts, Don Schondell, advanced to the championship final with consecutive victories over Guelph, York, and Western. In the championship semi-final, they handled Waterloo 15-11, 15-6 and 15-6.

York University Athletic Coordinator Stu Robbins gave out all-star plaques to the tournament selects team which included York's Dave Lamey and Dave Chambers. Ball State's Brian Hyde and Randy Litchfield, Toronto's Ed Drakich, and Manitoba's Terry Gagnon,

rounded out the all-star selections.

In other games the U of T Blues took fifth place overall with 15-9, 10-15, 15-3, 15-7 victories over the Western Mustangs, while Pittsburgh finished seventh after defeating Guelph 8-15, 15-11, 16-14, 15-12.

Bronze no easy task

For Wally Dyba's number four ranked Yeomen, the road to the bronze was anything but easy.

"I don't think there was an easy game in any of the matches we played. We were all a bit tired Saturday and it threw our game off," Dyba explained.

York began the tournament in fine form defeating the Guelph Gryphons in three straight games. But the Ball State Cardinals gave the Yeomen a lesson in intensity in their second match as they defeated the red and white by scores of 17-15, 15-1 and 15-9.

In the opening game with the Cards, York rebounded from a 10-2 deficit when a John May 'kill' off a hanging Cardinal pass knotted the score at 13. The teams exchanged stuffs and points to carry the game into an "extra points" affair where, after the regulation 15 points are reached, the first side to score two points over their opponents' tally is awarded the match.

Play became scrumbly at that point. A wall of Cardinal blocks finally did York in when Dave Chambers, who normally wouldn't handle a kill, was stuffed by Ball State's Lee Killian and Stefan Naaf. An ensuing Steve Burtch kill just grazed past the out of bounds perimeter of the court, and iced the game for the Cards. From that game until the end of the match, the Yeomen seemed deflated, as the always opportunist Cards went on to triumph.

"They played an all around great game and especially closed off our attack with their blocking," Assistant Coach Eric Meslin said.

It was a question of poise when the Yeomen approached their championship semi-final confrontation with the Manitoba Bisons after

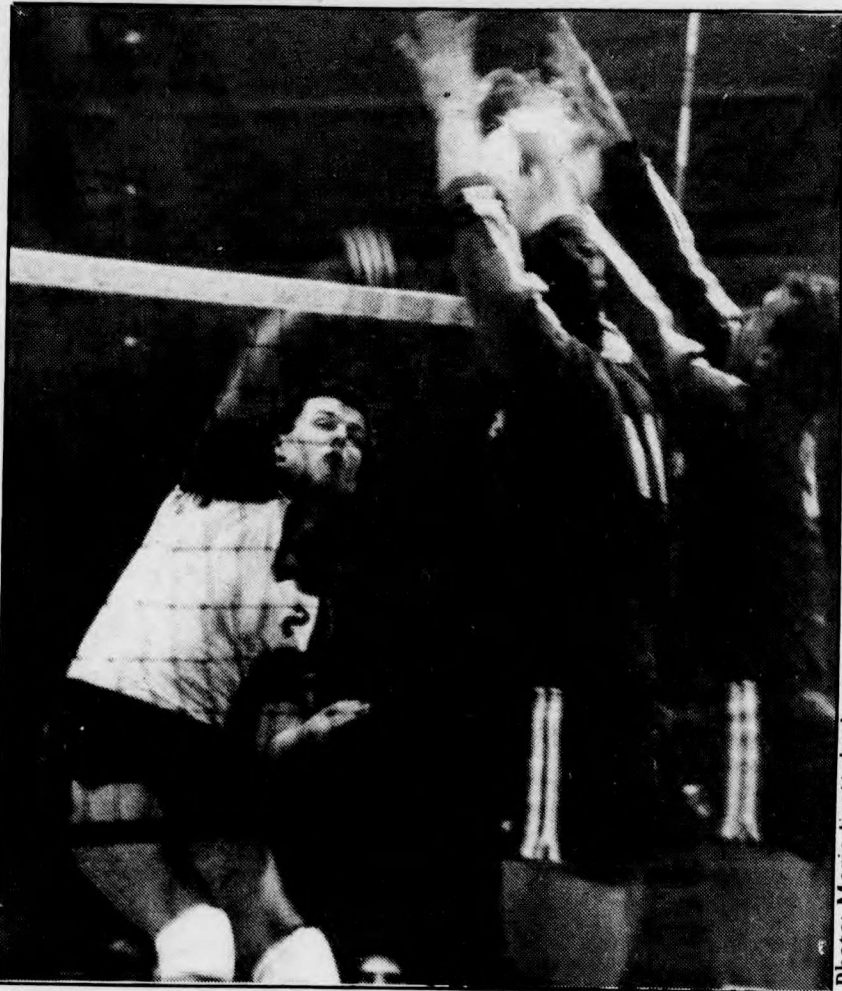


Photo: Mario Scattolon

closing out their pool play with an impressive victory over the Western Mustangs by scores of 15-10, 19-17, and 15-4.

Poise not quite there

York had knocked the Bisons out of their very own tournament in the only previous meeting of the two teams earlier this year.

The first two games saw what was perhaps some of the best volleyball in the tourney when the Yeomen stunned the Bisons 16-14, 15-12, to jump out to an early two-game lead in the best of five match. With action going from stuff, diving save, drop back for kill, smash, thudding dig, set-shoot set, and back to kill again, the Yeomen stood up with the nation's number one ranked team blow for blow.

However, Manitoba came back in

game three with some sound blocking and a deceptive attack to detract the Yeomen bid for an upset. Setter Doug McKay often took the pass of serve from the thirties position (far right of court, top of net), and ran a series of tandems and double-delayed quicks using all three of his front row attackers which provided duofold net deception not normally seen with the more conventional two attacker offense.

The play worked against the Yeomen who had trouble setting their blocks in time to defend against the Bison's attack.

"We are in a kind of progression phase, and what I mean by phase is that we are developing our poise as a team; that sort of thing takes time," Dyba said.

"A team like Manitoba possesses obvious poise and it shows in the way they win. They also play in a

"Super League" out in Alberta where the whole league is competitive. Couple that to tournament trips to California and you can't help but benefit from all that exposure, and that's something we don't have here in Ontario. But our younger players, guys like Steve Burtch and Brian Davis, will get better with experience and that should make us that much better in the long run."

Rebound for Bronze

Sunday's Bronze medal match pitted the Yeomen against OUAA league opponents Waterloo Warriors, and while it wasn't the gold medal game, the Yeomen rebounded from Saturday's loss to the Bisons to thrash the Warriors in consecutive sets, 15-6, 15-3, and 15-12.

The three time defending OUAA champions looked more like the team that boasts a 29-game winning streak in OUAA league play (dating back to 1980). Dave Samek and Ray Lamey continually baffled Warrior blocking patterns as they combined in a series of drop set tandems and delayed quicks up the middle.

In previous games, notably the Ball State match, opposing blockers were keying in on York's open set attack. They were able to because of York's poor passing. Through four matches York averaged between five and 10 mishandled balls on both pass receiving and free ball volleying. Consequently they were unable to generate any kind of quick attack and had to opt out for the safety valve: the open set.

But in the consolation final, the Yeomen committed only four ball handling errors for the entire three-game set and were able to make their offense run much more effectively. Waterloo, on the other hand, couldn't shake the ball-handling monkey off their backs and coughed up a total of nine free balls.

"It was a much more exciting game to watch," Dyba said. "We were playing with a lot more intensity in this one. I think that when we keep up our level of intensity we can play with anyone."

A little bit of sweat

York tightens grip on playoffs

Mark Zwol

No one is going to tell Bob Hedley about Christmas time and good cheer. Sacrificing sips on his eggnog, the Yeomen hockey coach made his way to the York ice arena where he conducted workouts in preparation for the second half of the season.

For the Yeomen, that extra bit of sweat over the holidays paid off last Friday when, with a combination of hard skating and sound playing, they handed the Windsor Lancers their sixth loss of the season.

Seventh place deadlock

Led by Dave Stewart's solid performance in goal, York defeated Windsor by a score of 6-3 to pull into a seventh place deadlock with the Lancers in the OUAA.

York goals were scored by John Campbell, Scott Magder, Martin Perry, Mike McCauley, and by Ken Norris, who had a pair. Chuck Dugay, Claudio Sacco, and Don Renaude replied for Windsor.

The win evens the Yeomen record

at 5-5, while the Lancers, who play the majority of their remaining games on the road, are at 5-6. Only the top six teams get play-off positions, but the Yeomen carry a three-games-in-hand advantage over the Lancers in the fight for post-season spots.

Time keepers had a busy night at the penalty box as Referee Dave Lumley assessed a total of 44 minutes in penalties, most of those coming in the third period.

"There's definitely no love loss between us," Hedley said. "We lost 2-1 earlier on in the season in their arena, and there's no way we should have lost that one. But we played the man well tonight - the rough play is bound to happen out of frustration.

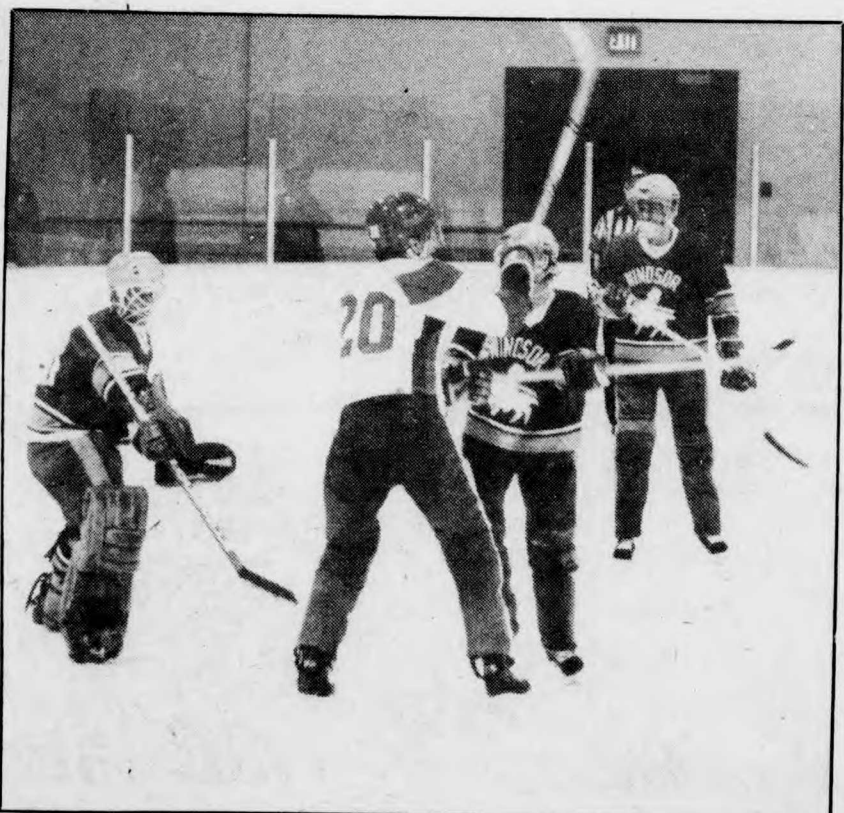
"We have to take one game at a time now. We didn't work that hard over the holidays but did manage to get some drills going that stressed the basic skills of the game and I think it was reflected in our play tonight. More importantly, though, is the fact that we have three games in hand on the front runners like Guelph and Laurentian. These

games are important but they won't be to our advantage unless we win them. But you're talking about a team that went into the Christmas break a game below 500, so to win these games is not going to be an easy task."

New Players add Strength

The Yeomen have tightened up their defensive game with the addition of defenceman, Steve Weatherbee, and left-winger, Bob Keucheran. Weatherbee was ineligible for play in a Yeomen uniform, having to take a year's sabbatical after finishing the first half of the '81 campaign as a McGill Redman. Keucheran, who is presently sidelined with a knee injury, played major junior "A" hockey with the Oshawa Generals.

"Hard work will be the key in our playoff drive. Bob and Steve will no doubt add some experience and depth to the line-up which should help us down the stretch," Hedley explained.



Right winger Scott Magder stirs things up in the Windsor goal area during a Yeomen power play York won their first game in '83 with a 6-3 victory over the Lancers. The Yeomen are on the road for their next three games but return home January 22, for a game against Laurentian: