

Tiger basketball action. Inset: Dal men's basketball starter Reggie Oblitey

Tigers defend tournament crown

BY SHANNON MORRISON

When faced with adversity, the Tigers take it in stride and use it to their advantage.

Entering last weekend's Rod Shoveller Memorial tournament, Dalhousie's men's basketball team needed to regain their pre-Christmas form and overcome the absences of veteran starters Shawn Plancke and Jeff Mayo.

"The game plan stays the same," commented Tigers' coach Tim McGarrigle. "It is just different players doing the same job that Shawn and Jeff did in a little different way."

Dalhousie's depth has been improved because of the floor time being allotted to the bench players.

"There are guys getting minutes they wouldn't normally get and they are making solid contributions," said McGarrigle. "Therefore, if we get into foul trouble [later in the season], they'll be ready."

In Sunday's tournament finale, Dalhousie withstood a stiff challenge from the Concordia Stingers, who have reached the national championships for the past eight years, to successfully defend their title. The Tigers pulled away in the second half en route to an 83-61 victory.

McGarrigle adjusted his starting line-up for the final to match the talents of Concordia. Dallas Shannon, a 6'10" centre, was inserted to add more height in the post.

"Dallas played well against Memorial [on Saturday] and he's healthy for the first time all year," noted McGarrigle. "My biggest fear was their offensive rebounding and by starting Dallas, Christian (Currie) and Reggie (Oblitey), we felt they could do the job."

While the trio was fighting for offensive and defensive boards, Brian Parker was creating his own magic from the point. The Tigers got off to a sluggish start, shooting one for five from the field during the first three minutes, but the duo of Parker and Oblitey ignited

the team and the crowd.

The 5'10" guard fired a no-look pass to Oblitey, who was fouled hard on an attempted dunk. After Oblitey hit one of his foul shots, Dalhousie rattled off six unanswered points before Concordia was forced to take a timeout with 16:07 left in the first half.

Parker used crisp passes on offence combined with great anticipation and reflexes on defence to put his team ahead.

"In every championship game he's proved to be a great contributor," complimented Dal's coach. "He jump-started us against Bishops and it was the same thing in the final. Everyone kind of picked up off his game."

Dalhousie had trouble from the three-point line while perimeter shooting kept Concordia in the game. Oblitey lifted his game to compensate for their outside shooting troubles with 13 points in the first half. The Tigers led by a slim three-point margin after 20 minutes of play.

The depth of the home team showed in the second half as everyone became involved in the action. Dal tightened up their game from the opening throw-in.

"We had to keep control," noted McGarrigle. "We were giving them a little too much respect and we had to take care of the basketball."

Parker initiated the scoring run with a spin move that left a Stinger defender on the floor and finished the play with a three-pointer. Currie came to life as he turned away two Concordia shots and seconds later connected on a three-pointer at the offensive end.

Finding themselves down by 12 points, the Stingers took a timeout to try and regain their composure. Concordia switched to a zone defence in an attempt to change the momentum, but the Tigers weren't about to be stopped.

Dalhousie connected on nine three-pointers in the second half, with Kevin Bellamy and Parker each contributing three from the perimeter.

Parker led the team with 26 points in the championship and his efforts over the weekend resulted in him being named tournament MVP. Oblitey finished with 21 points and a position on the all-star team.

Currie and Bellamy each contributed nine points and shared player of the game honours. Clive Henry added eight points for Dal.

The men's team returns to the court on Saturday at 8 p.m. against the University of New Brunswick at the Dalplex. Mayo is scheduled to return this weekend while Plancke is still recovering from his knee injury.

Dalhousie's women's team also put their undefeated league record on the line Saturday when they face UNB at 6 p.m.

varsity sports roundup

Women's Basketball

Extending their unbeaten streak to six games is a tough task but the Tigers will be up for the challenge when they face the University of New Brunswick on their home court Saturday night at 6 p.m. On Sunday the University of Prince Edward Island comes to town to meet Dalhousie at 1 p.m.

After four games Carolyn Wares was third in the conference's scoring race with 23 points per game and led all rebounders with 11.3 per game. She also connected on 76.9 percent of her free throws, which put her fourth in the league.

Kathy Sanderson tied Wares in the rebounding department after pulling in 11.3 rebounds each game. Sanderson ranked tenth in scoring with 12 points per game.

Men's Basketball

The Tigers are on a high after their victory in the Rod Shoveller Memorial tournament and are hoping the success will continue as league action resumes this weekend at the Dalplex.

Dalhousie takes to the floor against UNB on Saturday night at 8 p.m. and faces UPEI in an afternoon matchup at 3 p.m. on Sunday.

Men's Volleyball

The Tigers are on top of the standings with three wins and one loss. Dal attempts to improve their league record this weekend when they face Memorial University at the Dalplex. On Saturday, the men's team takes to the court at 4 p.m. and finishes their weekend doubleheader on Sunday at 12 noon.

Women's Volleyball

Dalhousie is leading the Atlantic Universities volleyball conference with a perfect 8-0 record. The Tigers are on the road this weekend with two matches scheduled against UNB.

Hockey

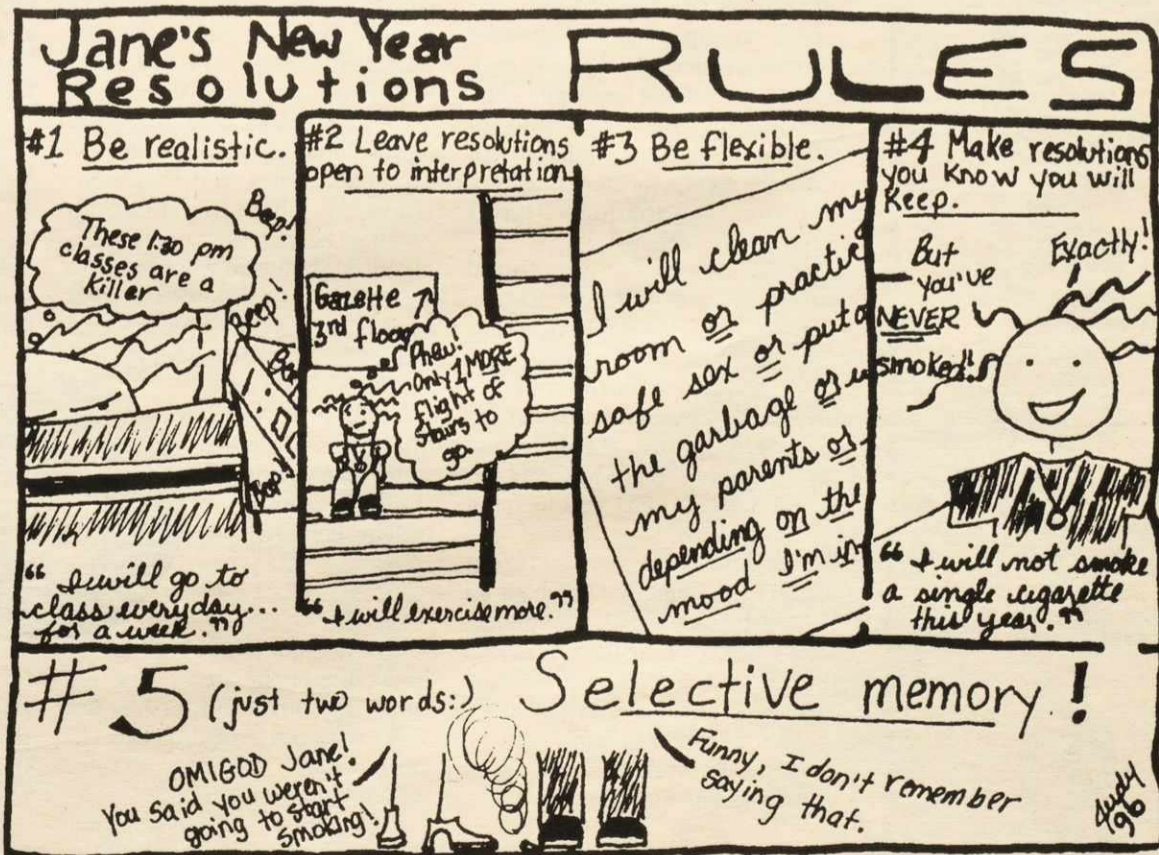
The team is looking to improve on their 6-7-2 record in the Kelly Division when they match up against our cross town rivals from St. Marys Thursday night at 7:35 p.m. in the Huskies' rink.

Dalhousie is scheduled for a busy weekend at home against Cape Breton on Saturday at 4 p.m. and then Sunday at 7 p.m. against the second-ranked team in the country, the Acadia Axemen.

Swimming

After a lengthy layoff from AUSA competition the swimming team travels to the University of New Brunswick on Saturday and competes at Mount Allison on Sunday.

The Tigers are primed for success in the new year after the women's team ranked sixth in the nation in this week's voting.



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