

HOLT ON SPORT

by Gary Holt

It was a great sight to see the basketball Tigers freewheeling their way to a convincing 82-56 thumping of the SMU Huskies at the Forum last Friday night. It certainly was a fitting way for five excellent basketball players to end their college careers. They took it to the Huskies all night long and never let up in their pressure.

Two weeks ago in this column I criticised the Tigers for being too cautious on offence. That point was not at all valid in the game against SMU. Everyone was going to the hoop and taking the shot when it was available. Pete Sprogis had one of those nights where it didn't matter how he shot the ball, it was going to go in. Pete had one of the best games I've seen him play this year, as he pumped in

24 points, with some shots in the unbelievable category.

I think the key player in the victory was Steve Bezanson. On one occasion Steve stole the ball three out of four times the Huskies brought it up court. They were not steals from any sort of press. It was one on one and Steve just took the ball away. It was not against poor ball handlers either. Once it was John Gallinaugh and the other times it was Mickey Fox. Steve was chiefly responsible for guarding Fox, the league's leading scorer, and he held him to just six points. He shut him out in the second half. When Steve wasn't on him, Mike Flinn was and he continued the fine defensive job. It's easy to see why Al Yarr says that with Mike on the team he never had to worry about the other team's

high scoring forward.

However, five players who were so instrumental in the win over SMU are not going to be with the Tigers next year: Steve Bezanson, Brian Peters, Brock Savage, John Cassidy and Mike Flinn. There is no question that the Tigers are in trouble. Especially in the front court. Let's hope that Yarr has plenty of success in recruiting this year. It looks like he will have to go outside the Maritimes for talent as there just doesn't seem to be a great amount of talent in our high schools at the present time, particularly with regard to big men.

Much was made of the quote by Yarr early in the year about "the best team ever". Despite not winning the league title, it is the best record any Dal basketball team coached by Al Yarr has had in league play. So there is substance behind the

quote.

* * *

Turning to hockey, the Tigers sewed up third place with a very sloppy 11-6 win over the St. F.X. X-Men at the rink Saturday night. Apart from the performance of Greg McCullough (who fired six goals) the Tigers certainly have nothing to be proud of in their performance.

However, it is certainly a nice sight to see Greg skating and shooting the way he was doing nearly every game last year. Let's hope the good work carries over into the play-offs.

One sad note is the game misconduct received by Ron Naud. It is the second of the year for the Tiger captain and means that he will not be permitted to play in the Tigers play-off game against UPEI. Two game misconducts mean an automatic one game suspension. Should the Tigers

get past the Panthers without him he will be permitted to play in the final.

A number of excuses can be made for the man but under close scrutiny none of them really stand up. It can be said that it was in the heat of the game, but that is no justification. It can be said that the referee should only have assessed a ten-minute misconduct. That point is probably quite true, but the fact remains that Naud should never have been in the position of having a game misconduct called against him.

You may well say that I am, in a sense, backtracking on the point I made about the basketball players in that we expect too much. I don't believe that applies in this situation. It is not too much to expect a man to keep his cool.

One cannot expect any person to change overnight. It is part of Ron Naud that he is quick-tempered and that may well be one of the reasons that he is the good hockey player we see on the ice. It could be that if he did quiet down he would not be nearly as effective.

I present this as a reflection of the fans' viewpoint as conveyed to me. Take it for what you will.

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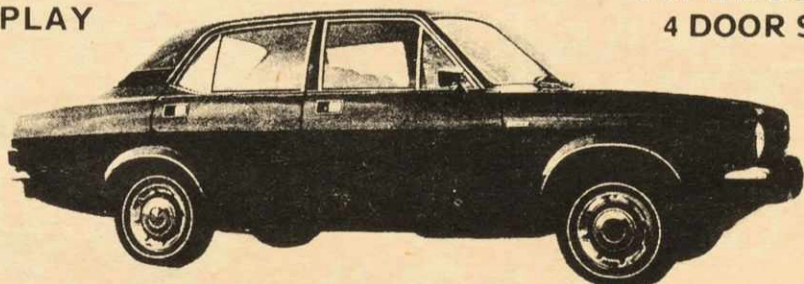
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