

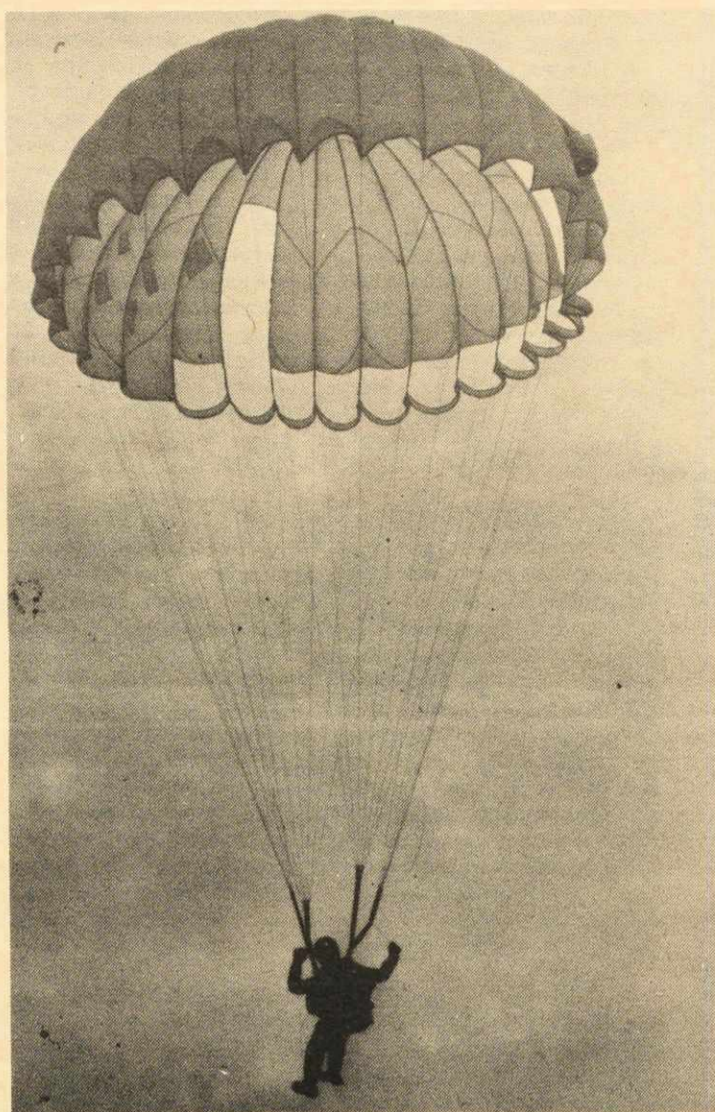
Parachuting — a unique thrill

Many people have the erroneous impression that sport parachutists are army paratroopers who just can't stop jumping out of airplanes, even on their days off. It's probably true that sport parachutists just can't stop jumping out of planes but, instead of off-duty paratroopers, they are more likely to be anyone from college girls to grandfathers, or even your next door neighbour.

You may wonder "Why do they do it — for adventure and a challenge?" Both are partly true, but sports parachutists do it mostly for fun and the unique thrill of having the sky completely to themselves.

Training in this fast-growing sport is given by a licenced Canadian Sport Parachuting Association (C.S.P.A.) instructor and includes lectures, as well as practice in everything from packing to landing. Although skydiving is not an overly dangerous sport, students are given careful instruction in safety procedures, such as how to cope with water landings and obstacles such as wires and fences.

Once the initial training



procedure has been completed the student is ready to make his or her first "static-line" descent. A static-line is a device which ensures proper opening of the parachute, regardless of the actions of the jumper.

As soon as the student is able to demonstrate competence in deploying the canopy on his own the static-line is removed and he attempts a "freefall." In freefall the skydiver exits the aircraft and falls a set distance before pulling the ripcord to release his canopy. A skydiver having advanced skills may engage in "relative work", that is, joining up with others in midair, or "accuracy" — trying to land on a small disc from an altitude of 2200 feet.

This year saw the formation of the Dalhousie Sport Parachute Club, an affiliate of the Canadian Sport Parachuting Association. The club now has 30 members most of whom are student jumpers with approximately three or four jumps each. Paul Curren, formerly on the executive of Nova Parachutes, is the president of the club. Gerry Todd, the vice-president, gained experience as a parachutist in

the Canadian Armed Forces. D.S.P.C. is presently using "drop Zones" at Shearwater and in Waterville (just beyond Kentville) where they are dropped from a light aircraft, usually a Cessna 182. On clear weekends spectators are invited to view the activities at the Waterville drop zone.

This summer promises to be a memorable one for skydiving enthusiasts in Nova Scotia. Nova Parachutes have recently had their bid to host the 1973 National Skydiving Championships accepted by the C.S.P.A. Sport parachutists from across Canada will be competing at Debert, N.S. from July 21 to 29.

Little has been said in this article in answer to the oft-asked question, "What does it really feel like to be let go from an airplane at 3000 feet?" That question can't be answered here, but the Dalhousie Sport Parachute Club will welcome you if you want to find out for yourself.

Both Paul Curren and Gerry Todd are anxious to talk with anyone who might be interested in sport parachuting. They can be contacted by writing to them at P.O. Box 5031, Armdale, N.S.

A Personal View

by Joel Fournier

Recently I read an article in the sports section of the Mail-Star concerning the basketball game between Dalhousie and St. Mary's, which Dal won 64-60.

This account of the game was written by Tom Peters, a staff

writer for the Mail-Star and Chronicle Herald. This supposedly unbiased reporter began his story with a quote from a dejected fan "Everybody wants to lose, nobody wants to win this ball game." I can only assume that

this dejected fan could not have been from St. Mary's or Dal, because in all the years I have been involved in sport either as a player competing against these two universities or as a coach here at Dal, I can honestly assure you that never has there been an occasion where these two schools have wanted to lose any kind of game — especially against each other.

The impartial reporter goes on to say that this was a mild upset, apparently because of the fact that two of St. Mary's stars were injured and two others didn't play. Conceding

that Coach Heaney might want to protect his key men, is he that short of bench strength that he can't field a team capable of playing a first rate game? Don't forget: this is a nationally rated team versus a team of sophomores.

I don't want to imply that St. Mary's is the culprit here. If they can produce a team that can earn a spot in the national rankings than that's fine and I congratulate them. How they go about assembling their teams is their business, and if their philosophy differs from Dal's, then that's fine too. What's not fine is the way that this par-

ticular reporter chose to write up this game.

After the "mild upset," he plunges on with "the game was rugged and chippy from start to finish." The week previous to this, when Acadia and St. Mary's played at the forum, this same type of action was described as aggressive and highly competitive. Are we to assume then that the adjectives used to describe the calibre of play vary with the importance of the teams involved? If this is the case then the two last place teams, if they play each other, had better not be too aggressive or competitive or they will be termed brawlers and bush-leaguers.

What's the point of all this? Well as Mr. Ace Foley (ex-sports editor: Mail-Star) would say, "an even break." How about it editors and reporters, let's give credit where it's due and make the reporting factual and unbiased, with no subtle shadings and vague innuendos. We're all concerned with sport at the university level in one way or another and it's continued success at all universities is important to everyone. I know that winning teams make the news and that teams such as St. Mary's and Acadia deserve a lot of copy. What I'm asking for here is that the other universities get a fair deal when they deserve it, and in the basketball game on February 20, Dalhousie deserved it.

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