

Volleyball Tigers finish eighth at Nationals

BY EUGENIA BAYADA

The women's volleyball team captured the AUAA championship title on February 22, earning the right to represent the AUVC nationally for the fifth time in the last eight years. The Tigers failed to improve on their showing at CIAUs, finishing eighth overall, as they did two years ago.

"It wasn't our best tournament," said fifth-year veteran Jen Parkes of the CIAU championship, noting that the team didn't show as well as they had expected to.

In AUAA action, the Tigers, top-ranked in their league, enjoyed a bye into the semi-finals of their conference, as did the second-ranked Memorial Seahawks. The Université de Moncton Anges Bleues and the Acadia Axettes survived quarter-final action on February 20 at the Dalplex, earning their berth in the semi-finals. The third-seeded Anges Bleues spanked last year's conference champions Saint Mary's Huskies 3-0 (15-1, 15-10, 15-5) while the Axettes defeated the UNB Varsity Reds 3-1 (4-15, 15-6, 15-2, 15-6).

The third-seeded Anges Bleues posted a major upset the following evening as they took Memorial to five sets, rebounding from a 2-1 deficit to take the match by scores of 12-15, 15-2, 14-16, 15-12, and 15-13. The Tigers had no trouble eliminating fourth-ranked Acadia as they were in complete control of the match, not in doubt buoyed by the supportive crowd.

In Sunday's final, the Tigers did not let the loss of team captain Parkes early in the match deter them. Middle blocker Parkes suffered a torn ACL as Dal was trailing 13-14 in the opening game and had to be helped off court. The team bounced back to take the set 16-14. Even though the Tigers dropped the next set by a close 13-15, they were never really threatened by Moncton as both teams rallied for points.

The Anges Bleues jumped to an early lead in the second set and were leading 10-6 before Dal turned it around to 13-11. Strong defensive play from the Moncton team allowed them to rally for the final four points to take the game 15-13.

The Tigers appeared relaxed on court for the final two sets, winning them 15-5 and 15-4, largely due to MacKenzie's strong hitting. She took playoff MVP honours for a solid performance all weekend and was also named to the All-Star Team (Second Team), as was veteran setter Michelle Aucoin who was named to the First Team. Parkes was honoured as the AUVC's Most Valuable Player. MacKenzie was the Conference's nominee for the TSN Award for academic achievement, athletic excellence and community service.

"It was a huge team effort," said Parkes of the win. "Everyone stepped up [their game] at the right time and we realized that we had the potential to do it."

On Thursday, March 5, Dalhousie fell 3-0 to the top-ranked Manitoba Bisons by game scores of 2-15, 2-15, 6-15. The Tigers had to adjust to a higher standard and consistent play from the winners of the Great Plains Athletic Conference, who made few errors. Dal adjusted their game and rallied for points in the third set, but not quickly enough to be a contender for the match. MacKenzie was the Dalhousie Player of the Match with 13 kills and 6 digs.

The Tigers faced the fifth-seeded

Saskatchewan Huskies in the following day's consolation semi-final and were swept 3-15, 2-15, 10-15. Despite initial disappointment at her injury, Parkes, who plays out her eligibility this year, was back in the line-up sporting a knee brace.

"I didn't get [the brace] until we got [to the tournament]. I had no time to practise with it and get used to it," she says. "I felt helpless, especially when the team was struggling."

In spite of that, Parkes played as well as could have ever been expected of her under the circumstances, contributing both offensively and defensively to the two sets she did play.

Aucoin was named Player of the Match for Dalhousie as she set up MacKenzie for most of her 8 kills, also contributing 7 digs in the effort.

Even a strong performance from

MacKenzie couldn't help the Tigers pull past the University of Western Ontario Mustangs for seventh on Saturday. She contributed 17 kills and 9 digs to be named Player of the Match as Dal lost 10-15, 6-15, 12-15.

"A lot of rookies got to play and that's a great thing for them to build on," said Parkes, noting that the opportunity to be part of a team which finished the season in the conference's top spot despite strong competition, won the AUAA banner and then went on to Nationals will prove invaluable in the future for first year players.

"We certainly trained very hard," she added. "We realized that we had the talent but we couldn't get it together."

"We could've physically beaten all those teams but having to adjust took the mental edge off our game," said MacKenzie. "The other teams

were consistent in their play [and] we adjusted too late... Everyone's got to play at the top of their game."

The Tigers are losing their starting line-up of seniors Parkes, MacKenzie, Aucoin, Alicia MacFarlane, Denise Chapman and Melanie Hopper to graduation this year. MacKenzie expressed disappointment that the team did not show as they had expected to — Dal had been aiming for a respectable and realistic fifth place — yet does not dwell on it. She feels that her teammates shouldn't either, especially those graduating.

"How we played at CIs wasn't indicative of how we played all year and [this year's graduates] have to remember that. We had a good year," she said, adding that credit should go to head coach Lori Welsh-Hawley for

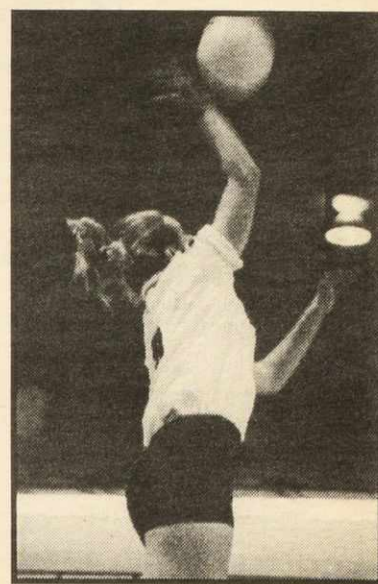


Photo courtesy Dalplex.

her coaching prowess and support throughout the season.

Parker lights up Dalplex in final home game

BY SUMANT KUMAR

On Sunday afternoon, the Dalhousie Tigers hosted the nationally ninth-ranked Saint Francis-Xavier X-Men in their final home game of the year. This marked the final regular season game in the brilliant career of the Tigers' All-Canadian guard Brian Parker. To honour Parker, head coach Tim McGarrigle made a brief presentation prior to the tip-off in this pivotal game, one which would have major ramifications in the playoff structure.

Both teams began the half playing aggressive basketball and after seven minutes the game was still even. However, from this point on, the Tigers began to play the best basketball fans at Dalplex had seen all year. They were able to open up a large lead; highlighted by the strong shooting of guards Parker and Darryl Baptiste and effective inside play by David Mullally, including a strong one-handed dunk which actually

brought a response out of the usually-effluent Dalhousie fans. With their efficient play, the Tigers went into halftime ahead by the score 51-39.

In the second half, usually a strong point for the X-men, Dalhousie continued to dominate. Parker continued his sizzling shooting while guard Tremayne Howe also started to make quick penetrations for tough lay-ups. On two separate occasions, Dalhousie was able to open a 24-point lead, one which they would not relinquish. The X-Men were able to make a couple of brief comeback attempts but they never got within 8-points, and the Tigers eventually won by a score of 95-86.

Brian Parker capped off his remarkable Dalhousie career by having one of his finest games. He scored 32 points on 12-18; shooting including 6-8 from 3-point range (5-5 in first half). He also added 7 assists, 5 rebounds, and 8 steals.

Howe was the second leading scorer with 23 points, while Baptiste added 14. Mullally turned in a strong inside performance, grabbing 12 rebounds while also netting 11 points. Rookie forward Scott Devnick, who was little used for most of the season, continued to earn increased playing time with another inspired effort, this time grabbing 8 boards and 7 points. He will be a key player off the bench in the Tigers' upcoming playoff run.

Sunday also marked the return of Paul Williscroft to regular playing action. Although rusty due to a long pneumonia-induced layoff, he showed he can play four positions and no doubt will have a major impact offensively and defensively in the playoffs.

The leading scorers for the X-men, now losers of two straight, were Fred Perry and Marc Chisholm with 14 each. With the loss, the X-Men were bumped from a possible second seed to fifth for this weekend's playoff action while also

losing any chance at a wild card bid for the nationals.

The Tigers will meet the SMU Huskies in their AUAA quarterfinal game in the Metro Centre. The Huskies have defeated the Tigers in three straight games, but only by a combined 13 points. With all of Dalhousie's key players now healthy and playing the best ball of the season, the Tigers are primed for a strong push towards their second AUAA crown in three years.

The other evening match-up on Friday will feature the UCCB Capers and the Memorial Sea Hawks at 8pm. The afternoon quarterfinals will have the Acadia Axemen meeting the UPEI Panthers at 1pm and the X-Men meeting the UNB Varsity Reds at 3pm. This will set up Saturday's semi-finals at noon and 2pm while the final will be on Sunday at 2pm.

Wrestling have best ever showing at CIAUs

BY KATHLEEN MATTHEWS

Dal Wrestling gave a best-ever performance at the National Championships at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario this past weekend. The team drove for twenty-four hours, leaving last Wednesday evening to arrive in time for the weigh-in on Thursday evening. After a grueling trip, Dal still managed to show some spark.

The tournament included fourteen teams and forty competitors from the Canada West, Ontario, and Atlantic conferences battling for supremacy in ten weight classes.

This year, Dal sent five athletes to the Canadian University Championships compared to only two last year. Competing wrestlers included Scott Aldridge and Logan Ward, AUAA champs at 90 and 52 kilograms respectively, as well as Andrew Moebus (68kg), Scott Malcolm (82kg), and Gavin Tweedie (72kg).

Aldridge thumped Memorial's Jason Delaney 10-0 in his first round only to lose 10-0 to Manitoba's Alf Wurr in his second match. In the third round, Aldridge rebounded with a 7-1 victory over Guelph's Brian Merker to move into the playoff round. Aldridge lost 6-1 in the final round to Sean Pierson of Brock to take fourth overall.

"I really wanted to win a medal," says Aldridge, "not just for me, but for the team."

Even though Aldridge failed to win a medal, he had the highest placing of any AUAA competitor and surpassed his fifth-place finish last year.

Ward started off action by trouncing Memorial's Simon Moreton 11-0. In the second round, Ward was pinned by Manitoba's Mike Elder, and lost 11-0 in the third round to Lakehead's Jon Smith to take sixth overall.

Tweedie also posted one win to finish sixth overall. He lost in the first round by a pin to Wade Elliot of Calgary, 13-3 in the second round to Manitoba's J.P. Dorgan, and won his last match by default due to injury to make it into the playoff round. He lost to UNB rival Mark Chesser to finish sixth overall.

"Tweedie had some of the toughest wrestlers," says Aldridge "He improved his performance against the UNB guy."

Andrew Moebus and Scott Malcolm both finished eighth.

This young team exceeded expectations.

"All of the guys wrestled well," says Aldridge. "This is their first Nationals so it is good for them to see the next level of wrestling competition, and to hold their own here is great experience too."

Overall, coach Aldridge is pleased with the team's performance and expects big things next year.

"Each year we have been getting bigger, stronger, and better," he says,

"and next year will be even better."

There is great interest growing in wrestling at Dal and the team will be growing in size too.

"Next year, we will be getting ten new recruits," says Aldridge "And with only one guy leaving me we will have some valuable experience as well."

Coach Aldridge has big expectations

for the team next year.

"I am looking forward to next season," he says. "We should be hosting the Atlantic University Championships [AUAA's]."

"We are hoping to fill all ten weight classes next year, and challenge for the AUAA's at home."



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**The Dalhousie Bookstore
will be CLOSED on the
following dates...**

**APRIL 1st -
APRIL 4th**

**Sorry for the
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