

# sports

## What a long, strange trip it's been

by Gil Korn

Yes, the day - Saturday, October 24th - had finally arrived. As relayed to me by my best-friend/roommate/two-time All-Canadian, Scott Bagnell, *nobody, ever* before, had gone on a road trip with a Dalhousie volleyball team solely for the purpose of creating a story. My chance at pioneering journalism - finally, I was off to Cape Breton, to witness the

culmination of a 3-day, three-match Collegiate Volleyball Challenge between the Dal squad and last year's CIAU silver medalist Calgary Dinosaurs.

The series, established to "expose, promote and develop volleyball throughout the Maritimes" began in Kensington, P.E.I. on Thursday. I was not at the game, but I was informed that the Calgary contingent was victorious (to the tune of 15-12,

11-15, 15-7, 15-7).

The stage was fully set for Friday night's meeting at Dalplex. A rowdy, raucous hometown crowd of over 500 witnessed a well-played, back-and-forth struggle between the two "beasts." After losing the first two games by the respective scores of 15-9 and 16-14, Dal held strong to win the following pair, 15-10 and 15-7. The tie-breaking, ping-pong-scored (every rally resulted in a point re-

gardless of who held service) game five was taken by the Dinos (15-12), extending their all-time unbeaten streak against our men's volleyball program.

As I made my way to the bus (really really) early Saturday morning, I knew it would be a special day. Coach Al Scott of the Tigers had been kind enough to offer me a seat on the bus. This led me to believe he himself knew his boys would fare

well in the surreal confines of the sparsely populated Cape Breton town of Arichat, on Isle Madame.

Once the players from both squads boarded for the 4-hour journey, the activity began. Returning players Steve Nielson and Everett Rose, captain Paul Villeneuve, and assistant coach Brian Rourke engaged in a bizarre hybrid of musical chairs and playing cards. Honestly, I have no clue what they were doing. However, most of the activity went unnoticed, for the majority had either already drifted off, and those who hadn't were engaged in a vehement discussion regarding whether to vote "Yes" or "No" in the upcoming federal referendum. After several minutes of heated deliberation, these persons were overcome by a tremendous sense of excitement, only to suddenly fall asleep. Meanwhile, physiotherapist Barbara Bialokoz and I were wondering if we would be stopping at a Tim Horton's along the way, as the frightening prospect of going caffeine-less the entire trip was something neither of us was willing to accept.

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*he knew his boys  
would do well in  
the surreal  
confines of the  
sparsely populated  
Cape Breton town*

As the painful withdrawal continued, the Calgary players were made aware of a number of sights of interest (through occasional announcements by Coach Al Scott or the bus driver), namely the St. F.X. campus, the now-infamous site of the Westray Coal Mine disaster, and the still waters of the Canso Causeway, all of which were passed along the way.

Around 11:30 we wheeled into the Ste. Ile Madame High School parking lot, where the rig was brought to a halt at the side doors. Inside, last-minute preparations were underway to customize the gymnasium for the special guests.

At this point, priority number one for the hungry, road-worn competitors was food. The on-site cafeteria was kind enough to cater to these needs, providing a choice of rice and meatballs or spaghetti & meat sauce. The latter proved to be more popular. To second year hitter Eric Villeneuve, however, the entree was of little importance, as the wide selection of chocolate squares and cookies would have been satiating enough, on its own.

See: **Trip**

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