

CIAU championships at Metro Centre

The top four men's basketball teams in the nation will arrive in Halifax this week to wage the war for the C.I.A.U. crown.

Leading the pack are the University of Victoria Vikings who arrive well prepared to defend the C.I.A.U. Championship which they have won for the past four years. Heading into playoff action this year, the Vikings boasted a 10-0 conference record and a 29-5 record overall. The five losses which the Vikings incurred were all, except one, against schools from the United States. Their only loss in Canadian competition came at the hands of the Team Canada Selects last November. The Vikings did, however, avenge their defeat with an 89-88 victory over the Selects in December.

The powerful Victoria team has been just as successful in the playoffs, with an undefeated record thus far. In the C.I.A.U. Regionals, they amassed 195 points in two games. Their opening match, against the Dalhousie Tigers, resulted in a 95-58 victory for Victoria. In the championship game, the Vikings downed number nine ranked Winnipeg, 100-62.

The Vikings are led by 6' guard Eli Pasquale. Generally considered to be the quickest player in Canadian University basketball, Pasquale averaged 16.1 points per game this year and averaged a team high 30 minutes per game. Pasquale is a former All-Canadian, CWUAA All-Star and CIAU Tournament All Star and MVP.

In addition to Pasquale, the Vikings put fear into the hearts of opponents with 6'11" centre Greg Wiltjer. Wiltjer led the Vikings in scoring this year with an impressive 20.3 points per game average. He also hauled down an average of 10 rebounds a game for the Victoria basketball machine.

Wiltjer is not the only tower of power that the Vikings have in their arsenal. The team is blessed with no less than five players who stand 6'6" or taller. The largest of the large is 7' centre Cord Clemens.

Since 1976-77, the Vikings have posted a conference record of 110-10, including three undefeated seasons. The men from Victoria will face the University of Lethbridge Pronghorns in the 9 p.m. game of the CIAU Final Four's March 15 opening. When the Vikings and the Pronghorns tangled in January, it was a close one, with the Vikings just getting by the Lethbridge team, 78-74. In a February matchup, it was Victoria 65, Lethbridge 55.

In their final meeting in the C.W.U.A.A. conference championship match to decide regional placings, Victoria sank a shot at the buzzer to squeak out a 76-74 victory over the Pronghorns.

Due to their seventh-place ranking, the Pronghorns might be considered the underdogs of the CIAU Final Four. But a second look reveals that the Alberta squad, by virtue of their near-misses at the hands of the Vikings, could have what it takes to dethrone the Victoria team.

At the regional in Fredericton, the Pronghorns received a bye into the championship match where they disposed of Brock 80-66. Their 24-17 overall record is impressive and is the result of a solid team effort under the guidance of head coach Ken Olynyk. The club showed great determination and spirit in the Brock contest, coming back from a 10-point deficit to clinch the victory.

The Pronghorns are led by Ken McMurray of Cardston, Alberta. McMurray averaged 16.2 points per game this year. In addition to the 6'1" McMurray, other Pronghorn starters who put

points on the board with consistency were Bob Arnett (13.3 points per game, 6'7") and Jerome Ell (10.8 points per outing, 6'6"). Ell's soft touch from the outside should continue to be an asset for the Pronghorns and provide Metro fans with plenty of excitement.

Ell, a native of Lethbridge, was selected the MVP of the CIAU regional.

Ell's outside shooting, when combined with Arnett's ability under the basket, could make the Pronghorns a successful underdog team.

The 7 p.m. game on March 15 will see the University of Waterloo Warriors face the University of Brandon Bobcats. The two adversaries met in Guelph in November, with Waterloo narrowly topping the Bobcats 88-82 in overtime for the tournament championship. If that game is any indication, their match on Thursday should be an exciting one.

The Warriors, with 12-year veteran coach Don McRae at the helm, stormed to the fourth place ranking in the nation this year.

The Waterloo team accumulated a 27-9 record overall, with a 22-5 record over CIAU teams.

In regional play, Waterloo dumped McGill 83-55, going on to defeat the University of Prince Edward Island Panthers 82-64 for the right to advance to the Final Four.

Leading the attack was the 6'4" guard Peter Savich. The Cambridge native averaged 20.7 points per outing this year for an outstanding season.

Also figuring prominently in the Warriors' fortunes was Steve Atkin, the 6'9" forward from Oakville. With 13.3 points per game to his credit, Atkins led his team in rebounding with 246 points for an 8.2% average.

The crowds can look for some exciting moves from the 7' centre Randy Norris. The Warrior from Sarnia recorded an impressive 64.9% average in field goal attempts, while scoring a solid ten points per outing.

In the words of Head Coach McRae, the Warriors have "size, experience and more quickness than last year" - the components to add a great deal of excitement to Dalhousie's Final Four.

The fast moving Brandon Bobcats have also made the long run to Halifax, courtesy of their 79-78 win over the St. Francis Xavier X-Men in the Ottawa regional. The Bobcats advanced to the final round of the regional event with a 94-78 victory over Ottawa.

The men from Brandon placed fifth in the nation this year. With ten veterans on the team, along with three impressive rookies, the Bobcats will figure prominently in the CIAU finals.

The Bobcats have won first

place in GPAC for five straight seasons, beginning with the 1979-80 season. Their conference record is 13-3; their Canadian record, 25-6; their overall record, 29-11.

The Bobcats boast one of the nation's deepest and most experienced backcourts, with Earl Roberts (6'), Ken Fields (6'), Don Thompson (6') and Butch Gayton (6'2") providing the Cats with the power they need at the guard position.

Spectators can watch for an outstanding performance by power forward John Carson. The 6'4" Carson is averaging 21 points and 11 rebounds per outing in only his second year. A native of

North Carolina, Carson was first team All-Canadian last season and continues to be the type of player to whom adversaries must pay particular attention.

Fourth year player Grant Coulter from Brandon is another force with which to be reckoned. Averaging 17 points per game, the 6'1" Coulter is touted as being probably the finest basketball player to come out of the Brandon High School system.

The winners of Thursday's Final Four matchup will meet at the Metro Centre at 3 p.m. March 17 for the C.I.A.U. men's basketball Championship Game. The losers will meet at 12:30 p.m. on the 17th for consolation honours.



Happenings at the Dalplex

There are still openings in Dalplex Spring Leisure and Fitness classes. Leisure classes include golf, squash and racquetball lessons for all ages. Jazz dance, break dancing, slim trim and swim, tai chi and an athletic trainer clinic are also offered.

For fitness buffs, try the strength and stretch clinic, prenatal fitness, kids' fitness classes,

running and jogging clinics or the flexible fitness package.

Registration continues for Dalplex aquatics classes. There are still openings in all classes, including Scuba, Ladies Swim and Sauna, Noon Swim and Sauna, Pre-Natal Aquacises, Senior Aquacises, Kayaking and the Junior Leader Corps.



© 1984 Hayes/Dal Photo