

turn into V-ball Nationals WINNIPEG DERBY

by Riccardo Sala
 and Daniel Naccarato

Toronto has too many skyscrapers. Shoot the ball too hard in Halifax and it'll end up in the Atlantic. Saskatchewan and Calgary are too flat and the ball ends up out of bounds too often. Laval can't spike too hard or they could damage some historic monument in Quebec City. And Manitoba?

A garden of paradise for women's volleyball, judging by the fact that between them the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba have won nine of the last ten Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union championships.

This year's CIAU meet, held over the weekend at Tait McKenzie, was no different. The tournament final Saturday night saw Winnipeg and Manitoba fight out their hometown rivalry before a national television audience to decide the CIAU crown.

sports
 review • profiles • rankings • schedules

When the smoke cleared and the dust settled, Manitoba had a third straight national title by virtue of a hard-fought four-game win.

In the bronze medal match Saturday afternoon, the hosting Yeowomen were decisively defeated by the University of Calgary Dinosaurs 3-1.

In the other consolation matches, University of Toronto defeated Dalhousie 3-2 to stay out of the cellar in the eight-team tournament. Saskatchewan won over Laval 3-0 to take fifth spot.

For York, the Ontario Women's Interuniversity Athletic Association champions, the Calgary match was a hard way to end a beautiful season.

York started the match well, taking the first set 15-13.

Calgary bounced back in grand fashion in the second set, racking up a 10-0 score before York coach Merv Mosher called time-out. That woke up the Yeowomen, who racked up three points. Calgary carried through a four-point barrage, but York scored



YORK SETTER Sue Craig in action over the weekend at Tait McKenzie at the CIAU championships, hosted by the Yeowomen. Manitoba won their third straight national title with a four set win over cross-town rivals Winnipeg in the Saturday night final. The Yeowomen were shutdown 4-1 by the Calgary Dinosaurs in the bronze medal match. Dalhousie, UofT, Laval and Saskatchewan rounded out the placings in the eight team tournament
 photo by Michele Boesener

four more before the Dinosaurs called the second set 15-7.

Calgary shut down the Yeowomen in similar style in the last two games, winning 15-5 and 15-7 to take the bronze.

If there were any doubts about how the Yeowomen felt after the loss, they were answered by the look on York setter Sue Craig's visage as she sat glumly at the end of the bench afterwards. Nevertheless, the first team All-Canadian was recognised for her efforts and named player of the match for York.

"York came out hard in the first game. They were strong in the middle in that first game. In the second set we started to serve tougher and that basically took their game away. They (York) couldn't set to the middle because they didn't have good passing," Dinosaur coach Marla Watson said afterwards.

"We basically controlled their (York's) game. They seemed to lose intensity," Watson added.

For the Yeowomen, the fourth-place finish was a step down from last year's bronze at the Nationals. Going into their homecourt, the Yeowomen were riding on the momentum of their third straight provincial title several weekends before. Undisputed sovereigns of the Ontario scene, York's game was rendered obsolete by a bunch of Dinosaurs.

In their first match, against Laval on Thursday night, there was every hope that it was going to be the Yeowomen in the gold medal match. The audience seemed to anticipate this, filing into Tait McKenzie pumped up with expectation at the Quebec matchup.

Manitoba meanwhile rolled unimpeded on its way to a berth in the final. The Lady Bisons were actually in the Nationals as a wildcard, having lost to Winnipeg in the final of the Grand Prairie Athletic Conference championship. There was little doubt, though, that it would be Manitoba in the final, the main question being who their opponent would be.

The Lady Bisons shut out UofT and Calgary and the Winnipeg Wesmen did the same to Dalhousie and York on both teams' respective way to the Saturday night showdown.

Manitoba started the damage with 15-7 and 15-5 wins in the first two sets. Winnipeg put their act together in the third set, forcing the game to a 16-14 final for the Wesmen. The spur in Winnipeg's offence was power hitter Janis Kelly, a first team All-Canadian who impressed the audience with her blend of power and precision.

Kelly's prowess gave the Wesmen important points in the fourth game. For a while it seemed as if Winnipeg would push the match to a deciding fifth game. The Wesmen faltered at the ten point mark, and could only watch as Manitoba worked its way to game, match and CIAU championship.

Manitoba coach Ken Bentley, named CIAU coach of the year the awards banquet the Wednesday before, was pleased with the team and himself in the way that coaches whose matches go according to plan usually are.

"That was one of our better matches of the season. We stayed cool, composed. It was such a nice match. We made no errors in the first two games," Bentley said.

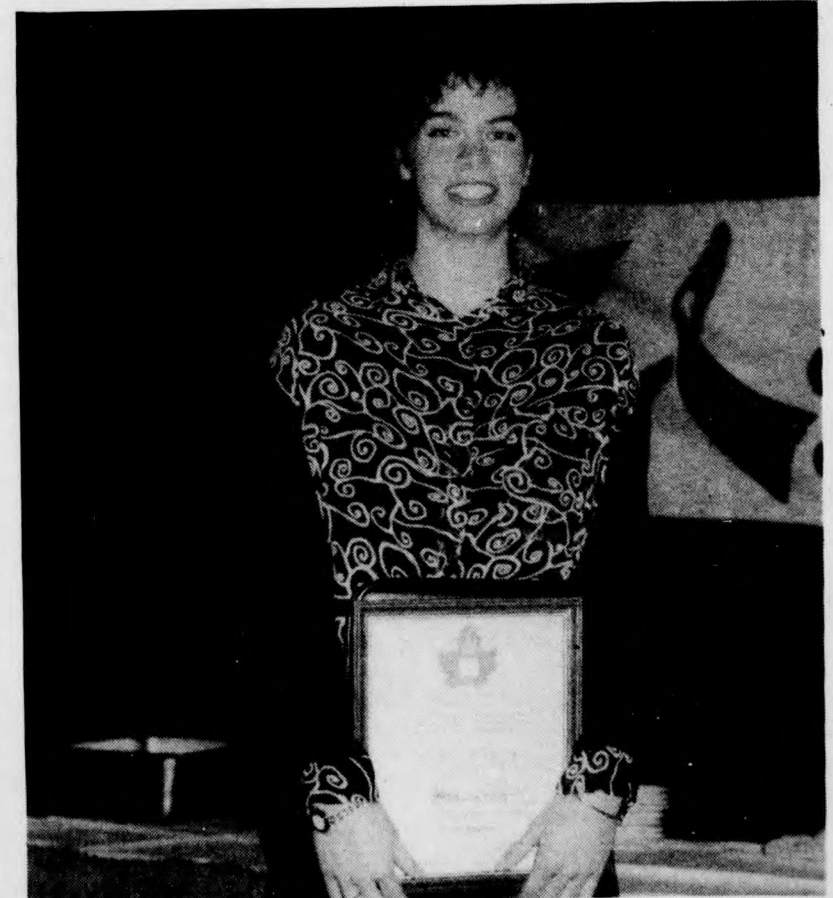
Lady Bison middle hitter Lisa Kachkowsky was chosen the tournament's Most Valuable Player, while teammates Michelle Sawatzky and Tonya Moreton were named to the tournament All-Star team.

York's Cheryl Guay was named to that All-Star team.

At the Wednesday CIAU awards banquet Sue Craig was named to the first team All-Canadian squad while teammate Mary van Soelen got an honourable mention. Manitoba's Sawatzky was named player of the year for the second time.



MERV MOSHER: The York coach talks to his team during their match against Calgary, the Yeowomen losing 4-1 to the Dinosaurs. York started off the Nationals with a convincing four set win over Laval but were shutout 3-0 Friday against Winnipeg.
 photo by Clive Cohen



FIRST TEAM ALL-CANADIAN Sue Craig poses with some hardware at the CIAU awards banquet Wednesday night while teammate Mary van Soelen recieved honorable mention.
 photo by Michele Boesener