

Athletics at Dal — Administrative view

by Joel Fournier

Those readers who took the time to peruse this column in the last issue of the GAZETTE will recall that a definition of University policy with regard to sport on campus was desired, and in fact, needed.

In this issue, the contributor is Professor W.A. MacKay, Vice-President (Academic) of Dalhousie, and professor of constitutional law at the Faculty of Law.

by Professor W.A. MacKay

Athletics and physical recreation do have an important place in the life of the University. They are of special interest to many students and, indeed, to others at Dalhousie and the community. Of course, they are not the only important area of recreation for, fortunately, the interests of people in the Dalhousie community are diverse and the University does offer reasonable opportunity for their varied interests to find a measure of satisfaction.

The programme in athletics and physical recreation is itself a very diverse programme,

providing many opportunities for those interested in particular physical activities to participate at various levels of skills and competition. Naturally some people are particularly interested in major team competition such as football, hockey and basketball, which do seem to get the most attention in the newspapers. Not only the players on the varsity teams but many others at the University share in the competition provided through intercollegiate sports of this kind. But even more members of the University community have a chance to participate in other aspects of the athletic programme, and are interested in doing so.

Dalhousie's name does not depend upon the success in athletic competition. Indeed, I suspect that for most people in the University that criterion is not very important in their appraisal of life at Dalhousie. Far more important is the opportunity which many of them have to "do their own thing" in athletics within the varied programme available.

Indeed, the variety of the programme at Dalhousie is really remarkable in light of the completely inadequate facilities we now have. These were designed for a much smaller university community and there is no doubt that much expanded facilities are needed to serve students and staff now on the campus, and to assist in meeting needs of the wider community of Halifax. We still hope that we will not be long delayed in starting to add to our existing facilities for physical recreation and athletics.

In the development of policy about athletics at the University, the relatively new Council on Sports and Physical Recreation can play a vital role. Students and staff interested in this area of university life can all contribute to the development of policy. There will always be a limit on the financial resources to support athletics, but within this limit a varied programme is possible.

If I had to express a view for the administration about athletics, "the administration" of the university, at least at



Vice-President (Academic) W.A. MacKay.

(Charles Gosling/Dal Photo)

Dalhousie, has traditionally not had a particular view about the kind of athletic programme that ought to be provided. It does have some influence on resources available for

athletics, but even the level of support as well as the emphasis within any programme support is always open to comment and criticism from the entire university community.

Volleyball - good teams, little competition

by Joel Fournier

One of the great success stories in Varsity sport at Dalhousie has been the rise in prominence of the Men's Volleyball team. Just five short years ago volleyball on this campus was a one tournament a year affair. Since that time under the guiding hand of Dr. Jan Prsala the team has surged ahead in leaps and bounds.

Coach Prsala is a member of the Physical Education staff, teaching volleyball, track and field, gymnastics and alpine skiing. In his native Czechoslovakia, Dr. Prsala attained distinction in each of the above sports and was recognized as one of the top all around athletes in his age group.

In training his volleyball hopefuls, the coach emphasizes conditioning and skill. A very thorough teacher, his players reflect his determined drive for perfection in the calibre of their play. This meticulous approach to the game has also shown in the league standings, where the Dal squad has risen from second last place five years ago to Maritime Intercollegiate Champs and Provincial Senior Champions last year.

This success story didn't happen overnight. In the first few years the team suffered from inexperience, resulting from youth and under-exposure. It wasn't long though before the maturing process set in and they began to make a name for themselves at the local and

national levels.

As winners of the Maritime Intercollegiate Championship last year, the team won the right to advance to the National College finals. This was their first exposure to top-flight competition and while they played very well throughout most of the games, they couldn't finish off with wins. This was certainly nothing to be ashamed of as most of the players on the opposing three teams were seasoned veterans with several being members of the Canadian National Team. One of the universities competing had stocked their team with eight Czech players, obviously the quick way to fashion a winning team.

More honours fell to the young

Dal team. Coach Prsala and five of his players were chosen to represent Nova Scotia in the Canadian Men's Senior Championship in Edmonton. This all-star team didn't win any medals, but they did gain invaluable experience. Dr. Prsala feels that just being exposed to this type of competition will go a long way towards helping his players develop to the degree that is necessary to start winning at the national level. He laments the fact that the major volleyball centers of Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg are so far away as to make exhibition games totally unfeasible, thereby depriving his and other Maritime teams of much needed competition.

This year the club is competing in the Atlantic Volleyball League, comprising the eight best teams in the Maritimes. The teams play in four two-day round-robin tournaments held throughout the season. Thus far, Dal has won the first two and have high hopes of repeating in the next two. A win in these events will once again enable the team to play in the National Seniors, this year

being held in Ottawa. If this is eventually the case, Dr. Prsala feels that they will fare much better than last year.

The team is also confident that they have an excellent chance to advance to the Intercollegiate finals in Sudbury. Here again they expect to improve over their previous performance. A National Championship would look awfully good at Dalhousie.

Volleyball in this country isn't a glamour sport like football, hockey and basketball, but anyone who has ever seen the game played at the higher levels of competition will agree that the degree of skill and agility involved are the equal of any sport played anywhere.

If you're tired of the same old thing in your sports life, why not try taking in a game of this fast moving sport the next time the team is home in the Dal gym. Chances are you'll be pleasantly surprised by what you see.

I'm sure that all good sport fans on campus will join me in wishing the team every success in future play, especially in Sudbury and Ottawa.

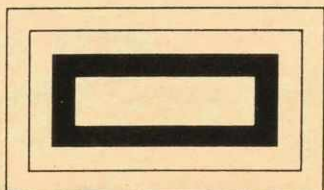
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