

# Women's basketball team victorious

by Joel Fournier

Coach Anthea Bellemare needed just one word to describe this season's performance of her Women's Varsity Basketball team — "fantastic". Coach Bellemare went on to explain that at the beginning of the year the team had set as their goal the AWIAA Championship, and that they had gone on to achieve this target with flying colors.

On the way to winning the championship the girls had a near perfect season. In league play against St. F.X., U.N.B., U.P.E.I., and Mt. A., the squad was undefeated, showing poise, skill and great determination in all their games. Ending up at the top of the league, gave Dal the right to host the AWIAA Championships, which were held at the Dal gym. After playing so hard all year the ladies weren't to be denied. Their first game was against an exciting U.N.B. squad who fought to the final buzzer but who couldn't crack the control the Dal girls displayed in the tight situations. In the finals, Dal won handily against a game but outclassed St. F.X. team. This win gave Dal the right to play in the CWIAU Championships held in Montreal, but more about that later.

The first tournament the team entered was hosted by Loyola, an eight team affair that featured some of the best basketball players in eastern Canada. Dal wasn't expected to do all that well, but surprised their critics by walking off with the championship, winning all their games in the process. Three members of the squad, Rose Johnston, Helika Hudoffsky and Joan Selig were named to the all star team and Joan also captured the tournament's M.V.P. award. An excellent team effort all around and great personal triumph for the girls.

The Dalhousie Invitational was next on the schedule but this meet was to prove less successful than the previous tournament. Dal lost their first game to the Moncton Schooners and were eliminated from further championship play. They went on to win the consolation prize, but this was not especially pleasing to a group of girls who had the taste of winning in their blood. Coach Bellemare feels that this loss

actually benefited the team in the long run by pointing out weaknesses and showing the girls that there is always something to learn.

The team is a closely knit group, each member feeling a responsibility to the other girls, to the coach and manager. Important decisions are made as a unit, thereby giving the individual members a greater feeling of involvement. The coach points out that her rights are the team's duties and the team's rights are her duties. There is a general openness between coach and players which leads to a highly motivated and dedicated group. Mrs. Bellemare does insist on some things though. The girls are responsible for much of their own conditioning and they must be punctual. Self-discipline is a characteristic high on the coach's list of priorities.

As is evident the team philosophy has proven to be successful. Morale and skill level are high and the element of fun has never been lost. The girls are all very co-operative and close to each other; quite an accomplishment for a large group of young females.

In the Nationals the girls got off to a great start by trouncing Bishops 70-44, but in the next game they came up against the powerful U.B.C. squad. In the first half the western girls built up an insurmountable lead and although Dal played inspired ball in the second half the outcome was never in serious doubt. But Mrs. Bellemare is sure that her charges learned much from the experience and is confident that next year will lead to even greater heights.

Throughout our interview the coach emphasized how pleased and proud she was of the girls and their performance and to this I'd just like to add that the whole school is proud of them. They are a great team and fine representatives of Dalhousie.



photo by Jack Novack

Championship team.

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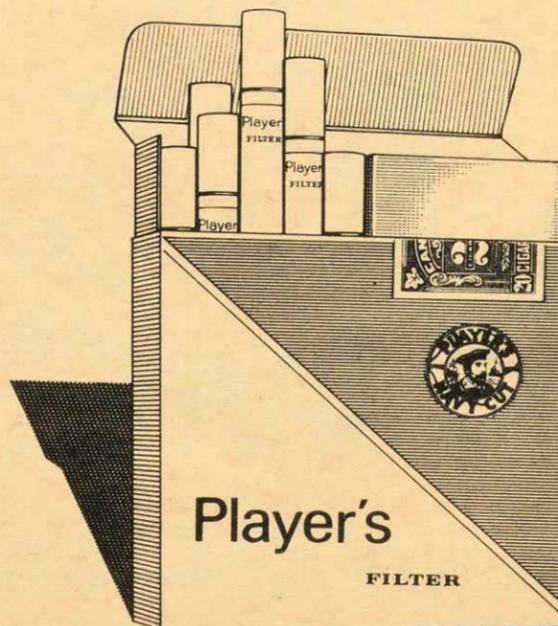


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