

AUAA Championship Preview

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

Despite the fact that the Varsity Reds women's basketball team seemed to be dominant throughout the season, it took them until the last day of the regular season to clinch the right to host the AUAA Championships.

After losing to St. FX Saturday night by a score of 79-64, the Reds relinquished their spot at the top for the first time this season. The Reds therefore found themselves in a must win situation on Sunday against the competitive Dalhousie Tigers, and St. FX found themselves praying for a miracle.

But the Reds came ready to play as they held the Tigers to only one field goal in the first ten minutes. And things wouldn't get better for Dal as they shot a dismal 25.6% from the field, compared to an astounding 55.6% effort by the Reds.

The UNB squad went on to win this game by a convincing 72-56 margin and will now host the AUAA's beginning tonight at the LB Gym.

The key to last weekend for the Reds was the one-two offensive punch of potential League MVP and CIAU All-Canadian Laura Swift, and a likely AUAA all-star candidate Jackie Flieger. In the two road games, Swift had 50 points and 19 boards, while Flieger posted numbers of 38 points, 9 rebounds and 9 assists. And with play like this, these two will be relied upon in the games this weekend.

While Coach Lordon agrees, she

knows that all of her players have to come prepared to play. "I think their performances are key to our success but we'll need a really good effort from everybody and that's when we perform well; when everybody is doing their best on a game day."

On many occasions this season dif-



Coach Pauline Lordon

ferent people were forced to step up, and on any given night any player could take over in key situations. Lordon thinks that this has gotten them where they are now and will continue to carry them throughout the playoffs. "I think that we've done a real good job to go 17-3 considering all that we've been through. Playing with injuries, playing with illness,

playing with rookies, a lot of people have stepped up. We've had some adversity and we've talked about how championship teams play through that.

"We're not a championship team yet, but we're number one in the league have and if everything can come together for us this weekend then I think we will be the best team in the league."

But in order to become the best, the Reds will first have to get past their opening match in which they face St. Mary's. The Huskies posted an eighteen point win over UNB earlier this season, but that was without the services of Flieger and Bonnie Hale. Yet SMU will still be confident that they can take the Reds to town, and Lordon knows this. "I think that they will be very, very keyed up because they haven't done this well in a long time. They're really excited; they beat Dal, they beat us, they had close games with St. FX, they think they belong, and I think that they've played really well at times. We're going to have to work hard to beat them."

But the Reds will also have the home court advantage in their favor. The combined home record of the men's and women's team is 18-1 this year, and "The Pit" has thus proven itself to be one of, if not *the*, toughest gyms for opposing teams to play in.

Coach Lordon believes that staying at home is undoubtedly going

AUAA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Friday, March 4

- 6:30 pm UNB vs. SMU
- 8:30 pm St. FX vs. DAL

Saturday, March 5

- 2:00 pm finals

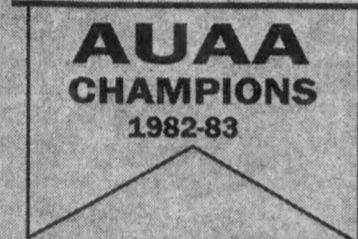
All games at LB Main Gym

to help her team "It's not really the home court, it's the fact that you don't have to pack, prepare, or go away from home. We're at our own facility, our own locker-room, and in front of our own fans. It was evident last weekend that some of this team was a little fatigued and tired. We don't have to travel now. The girls get to do their regular routine."

So the Reds will head into their first game of the post season tonight with aspirations of becoming the AUAA champs one more time. And for Pauline Lordon, it would be her second champion-

ship in five years; including one as a player in 1989. Both her and her team have worked hard all year and they know they have a golden opportunity but they are not over-confident.

"We haven't had too many games this year that were not competitive. We've worked for everything we've gotten I think. We've had a couple of easy ones against Acadia and UCCB, but that's been the extent of them. We've taken control in a lot of games, but we've had to work hard for everything. We're not going to take anyone for granted."



Final League Standings

Team	GP	W	L	FOR	AGNT	PTS
UNB	20	17	3	1399	1166	46
SFX	20	16	4	1402	1206	44
DAL	20	14	6	1436	1225	38
SMU	20	11	9	1154	1160	34
MUN	20	10	10	1278	1286	26
UPEI	20	8	12	1296	1327	20
ACA	20	2	18	1015	1331	8
UCCB	20	2	18	1004	1283	8



Laura Swift (6) lead the AUAA in scoring throughout the season. Photo by Kevin G. Porter