

# International experience prepares Martin

BY EUGENIA BAYADA

Since he started playing volleyball for the Tigers, Terry Martin has won a string of awards. Starting in the 1994-'95 season, he was the AUAA and CIAU Rookie of the Year, as well as being named to the AUAA All-Star Team with the likes of Tiger veterans Scott Bagnell, Chris Schwarz and Eric Villeneuve.

However, last season was arguably his most successful with Dal as he became the first Tiger ever to receive MVP or All-Star recognition in every tournament. The team went undefeated all season in AUAA league play and put in their first-ever appearance in a national final only to lose to the Alberta Golden Bears, a team they had beaten twice for bronze in '94 and '95. Martin was a CIAU National Tournament All-Star, as well as being named to the CIAU All-Canadian Team [First Team]. He spent the summer training and travelling with the team.

"We trained in Winnipeg for June and July, and then we travelled for the first two weeks of August to France and Denmark," he notes, "then we were training in Calgary for about a week with the 'B' team — that's the university team — and then we travelled to Sicily at the end for the [World] Student Games."

The Canadians' showing at the Games was quite disappointing as they were faced with a higher international standard than that typically exhibited at CIAU level. The experience, however, proved invaluable both for the team as well as for the individual players.

"It went well," says Martin. "The volleyball was not *great*. I don't mean to use that as an excuse [but] we got a tough pool [and] our results were not really defined by the kind of team that we were... We did have a tough pool and we ended up not getting out of that so we were in the bottom half of the tournament so that was not really the best part of the trip, but the travelling was excellent and the people that we met and everything was fabulous."

"Some of the Cubans were on their 'A' team who are one of the top five teams in the world and so I played against the best middle blocker in the world right now and that was pretty amazing."

Despite differences in the level of play, Martin found that the Canadian team members were embraced for their commitment to the game.

"They love Canadians [in Europe] because they say we've got such a work ethic and a great 'practise' kind of game where we

practise what we play — we don't give fifty per cent in practise and a hundred per cent in the game, we give a hundred per cent all the time so that was [why] they loved to watch that, they loved to watch people just wanting to play at all costs."

One thing that the team benefitted from was seeing how the game varies between different continents.

"It's neat to see it at that kind of competition," he explains, "because you've got Asian teams who are typically smaller but they run a very fast offense and their game is very fast, and then the North American style is kind of a lot bigger, it's more physical, it's a lot more hard-hitting, taller guys with big blocks and that kind of stuff, and the Europeans are

kind of a mix between the two of them — they're generally taller but they're not so defensive-minded."

Surprisingly, Martin is unsure of whether he would want to make a career out of volleyball.

"There's a lot of opportunities these days for players to go over to Europe and play professionally and play on the national team and that kind of thing... I don't know if I see myself playing until I'm forty — which many guys do and they do really well and make a lot of money — but I would like to spend a couple of years and see a new culture and learn a new language before I figure out where I want to go after that."

For the time-being, the 21-year-old Ontario native is back for a fourth season with the Tigers while

he finishes a BSc in Psychology. His expectations, while realistic, are high. Last season's second-place finish has proved to the Dal team what they can do and how far they can go. While careful not to lose sight of the actual game, Martin and his teammates now that they know how to go about getting there.

"I think we've got a good team, we've got a good strong team and I think of it kind of differently this year because in past years we've just been guys that are going out there and having fun playing volleyball and now this year we've got a good team coming back and we all have expectations of ourselves."

"Getting to the national final last year and [finding that] it's very

much a two-step process — getting there and getting slapped because you don't really realize how big of game it is until you're actually playing in it and then you work that whole next year learning from that experience and knowing what you have to do, and then getting there again so I think we've got a little bit of pressure put on ourselves by ourselves but I think we could look to win AUAA's again and just be satisfied and have some fun too."

With the departure of veterans like Jamie Mallon and Villeneuve, the younger players will be looking to Martin, among others, for leadership. He appears to have the right attitude, having seemingly struck a balance between wanting success and being willing to work for it, but not being totally obsessed with it.



Terry Martin heads up for the kill at last year's CIAU Nationals as setter Peter Exall looks on

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