

# Raiders Lose To St.F.X.....

By JOHN GEARY  
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There is an old cliché in sports, that says "statistics are for losers." And, after last Friday's 81-77 play-off loss to the St. Francis Xavier X-men, the UNB Red Raiders would probably agree. The Raiders outshot the X-Men, both from the field and the free throw line; they committed fewer turnovers; and, they had more assists. Yet, they came out on the short end of the score - which is all that really matters when a game is over.

The one area where the Raiders did not have an edge statistically was on the boards, and that tells the tale they were outrebounded 37-21. "Any time you're outrebounded by that margin, you're going to lose the ball game," commented coach Don Nelson. "We lost it on the boards, and that's where we've lost games all year long. We just don't have a team that is really strong in controlling our defensive boards, and we got hurt badly on second and third shots against X. And that kept them in the game, even though we shot at a higher percentage."

The game certainly started out well for UNB. They hit their first four shots to jump out to an early 8-0 lead. They accomplished that by playing a disciplined "control" game on offense, and used their hot shooting to take advantage of the X-Men's zone defence. However, the X-Men switched to a man-to-man defence, and that seemed to turn things around for them. "That switch changed our tempo, and the tempo of the game," explained the Raiders' Scott Devine. "They started to accomplish what they wanted to, and took us out of our offensive pattern."

That pattern changed enough to allow X to fight back and finally take their first lead of the game, 16-14, with 12:38 left in the half. The lead switched hands a number of times over the next few minutes, but by then, X was on a roll. It didn't help matters when UNB's previously hot shooting hand

turned cold, allowing St. F-X to pull away during the last seven and a half minutes of the half, and take a 42-35 lead into the dressing room.

That trend continued for the first seven and a half minutes of the second half, and the Raiders found themselves in a hole, down by 15, with only 12 and a half minutes remaining to dig their way out. That's when the X-Men began to falter a bit, and UNB's two big guns, Devine and Chris McCabe, started to take control of the game. They scored a total of 37 points between them, with 28 of those coming in that second half. During the final five minutes, the Raiders came up with a couple of key steals which they converted into points, and with 2:03 left, they were behind only 73-69. Chris McCabe was at the free throw line to shoot a bonus situation foul, and had a chance to pull UNB within two points. Unfortunately, he missed his first shot, X got the rebound, and turned it into a quick two-pointer, giving them a six point cushion. That seemed to take the wind out of the Raider's sails, and although they kept it close, they could never get any nearer than four points during that last two minutes.

So the Raiders had been beaten, and would not vie for the AUAA title. Once again, they had waited until their backs were against the wall, and then attempted to make a comeback - they'd been able to do it before, but this time they came up short. While they had gotten away with it in the past, they waited a little too long this time. "It's been our history to get down, find ourselves in a hole, and pull ourselves back out of it," said Devine. "But this time we just didn't pull ourselves all the way out. You just can't get down by that much to a great team like St. F.X. - it's just not gonna work."

In the second game of the semi-final round, the fans at the Metro-Centre were treated to a real thriller, as the St. Mary's Huskies edged the Dalhousie Tigers 73-72 in a tight, intensely physical

game. So it was to be last year's champs, the Huskies, taking on the X-Men, who had finished in first place in the regular season, for the AUAA title.

The first half of Saturday's title game was a sluggish one for the Huskies, who looked like they were still a bit winded from their battle-royal with Dal the night before. But the X-Men didn't really take advantage of SMU's apparent listlessness, and only led 35-34 at the half. Tournament MVP Rob Latter did feel that the Huskies had a bit of a let-down after the Tiger game. "It was tough to get up after a game like last night's; we had problems getting psyched-up this morning, but after the first ten minutes of today's game, we came alive," he explained.

They certainly did, and they dominated the second twenty minutes totally, using a tighter defence and some excellent work on the boards to record an 81-74 victory over the X-Men. That gave them their second consecutive AUAA basketball title. That defensive change was the key to their win. "We were playing a slightly different defence in the second half," explained Latter. "We switched to a tighter man-to-man, and keyed on (John) Hatch, as he'd hurt us in the first half. And, we just worked harder - those things won the game for us."

In addition to determining an AUAA champ, the tourney was used to distribute some other awards as well. Two UNB players were named to the AUAA second-team all-star squad: Scott Devine and Paul Holder earned spots on the roster. The first team was composed entirely of players from Nova Scotia schools; Steve Lambert and Bo Hampton of Dal were named to the team; Don Ehler of the Acadia Axemen was awarded a spot; and SMU's Rob Latter and John Hatch of the X-Men rounded out the squad. Hatch was also named the MVP for regular season play; and his coach, Steve Konchalski was chosen as Coach of the Year in the AUAA.



GOING TO THE HOOP - UNB's Chris McCabe banks in another shot for the Raiders. McCabe sank 13 of his 19 points in a second half comeback attempt which fell just short.

Ann Kennerly PHOTO

## ... But Still Have Shot at Nationals

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Despite the fact that the UNB Red Raiders did not win the AUAA title last weekend in Halifax, they still may get to the "Final Four" and get a shot at a national title. The CIAU has adopted a new play-off format for determining a national champion this year (see centre spread), and the Raiders may benefit from this new set-up.

Tonight and tomorrow, the UNB Aitken Centre will be the site of the biggest basketball tournament to ever be held in Fredericton, when four teams from across the

country, play-off in the Eastern Regional. As the host team, the Raiders receive an automatic bye into the tournament. Joining them will be the AUAA champion SMU Huskies, the York University Yeomen, and the Brock University Badgers. And the Raiders are chomping at the bit to get at their first-round opponents, the York Yeomen. Last December, the Raiders in the Excalibur Classic, held at York University in Toronto. And to a man, the Raiders want to redeem themselves. "We certainly

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