

Tales of a Basketball Road Trip

by F.A. MacLeod

It is three o'clock on Thursday afternoon. The chartered bus pulls away from the Dalplex on its way to Antigonish with the members of the men's and women's basketball teams aboard. The atmosphere inside is optimistic. For awhile the women's team at the front of the bus quiz each other on basketball and show biz trivia questions. Carolyn Savoy, their coach, who had earlier worried about getting to the game at St. F.X. on time (one schedule gave the game time as 6:15, another had it at 6:30), is now contentedly knitting a sweater in the front seat.

As time passes a couple of players start to play cards. By 5:00 the coach is reviewing the game plan on a magnetic board with movable markers representing players. The strategy being discussed is the trapping of opposition players with the ball along the sidelines. Anne Lindsay, the team captain, leans over the back of a seat, studying the board and makes suggestions.

The strategy review completed, Patti Langille and Darcella Upshaw start playing basketball on a pocket computer.

The bus enters Antigonish and stops beside the Oland Centre on the St. F.X. campus at 5:50. The women's team piles off to get dressed for their game as the men go to find a place to eat supper. A few minutes later the women are warming up in the gym, the St. F.X. team have been for quite awhile. A discussion starts between Carolyn Savoy and the referees, who understood the game was for 6:15. She wins out and the game begins at 6:30.

At the outset things do not look favourable for Dal—only 7 players are dressed for the game; three are on the bench in street clothes and one is in Halifax because of illness. The team's manager worries about Dalhousie getting into foul trouble. Very few spectators are in the gym to watch the first half, in which the shooting on both sides is deplorable. Dal is not playing

its usual game and it is largely due to Anna Pendergast's powerful rebounding that they stay ahead of St. F.X.—she was to collect 15 of the team's 31 rebounds.

Margaret Berthiaume of St. F.X. commits her second foul, bringing about a bonus situation for Dal with five minutes left in the first half. However, it goes unnoticed by the officials and when Savoy brings their attention to it they say it is too late. A chance for two free throws goes down the drain. Savoy and her bench are fuming. Carol Rosenthal is charged with an offensive foul and as time-out is called she kicks over one of the canvas chairs which serve as a bench in an uncharacteristic display of anger and frustration. The half-time score is in the Tigers' favour, 29-22.

The second half is marred by physical play more closely resembling lacrosse than basketball. Dalhousie dominates this half and wins the contest 62-42. Rosenthal with 21 points and Lindsay with 20 were the high scorers for Dal. Marg Berthiaume led X with 14 points.

Next stop: Gentleman Jim's Steak House. They return to watch the last part of the men's game against St. F.X. When that game finishes and the Dal men have trudged off to the locker room, the women's team waits on the bleachers, some getting their ankles taped by the trainer.

After quite a wait, the men's team returns, rather subdued after a disappointing game.

Getting on the bus for home improves everyone's spirits. Savoy and company start discussing some of the opposition's players and how the game went. Carol Rosenthal is travelling along the aisle of the bus, telling decidedly off-colour jokes, much to everyone's delight. The conversation switches to Steve Lambert, the Tigers' new guard. They wonder why he wasn't back from the States for that night's game as had been expected. There is a camaraderie between the men's and women's teams—they each seem to care very much about how the other fares.

"Ace is always high!" exclaims a voice near the back of the bus. Snow is being blown about outside against the windshield and at times the visibility is so bad that the driver must slow the bus to a crawl. Injuries are the next topic of conversation—mainly ankles and knees.

Someone mentions the national championship, which is to be held at Dalhousie. The subject is excitedly pounced on by all within hearing range. Quite obviously the women's team are thrilled by the possibility of playing in the Metro Centre before several thousand fans. (The women's national final has been scheduled for the Metro Centre, preceding the AUAA men's

championship.) However, they will face stiff opposition and will need both hard work and a generous supply of luck to get there.

The team expressed the hope that the University of Saskatchewan makes it to the nationals. The Tigers were very appreciative of the way the Saskatchewan hosts treated them in a tournament earlier this year and would like the opportunity to show some Maritime hospitality in return.

Halifax. The bus stops every so often on the way to the Dalplex to let people off as they near their homes; it is two o'clock in the morning. The roundball players start thinking of the next day's classes.

On Tuesday evening the Dal squad were very poor hosts, easily handling St. F.X. 60-33. The game marked the return to action of Andrea Rushton after an extended stay on the bench, brought about by an injury. The game was interrupted frequently by the referees' whistles and as a result the game was not as exciting as it might have been, neither side getting an opportunity to play wide open, fast basketball. The Tigers were deadly from the foul line, sinking 18 of 22. Carol Rosenthal was selected Dalhousie's player of the game.

U.N.B. will be the visitor at the next home game which is tomorrow at 8:00.



Jones up for a jumper

'X' takes two from Dal

by Sandy Smith

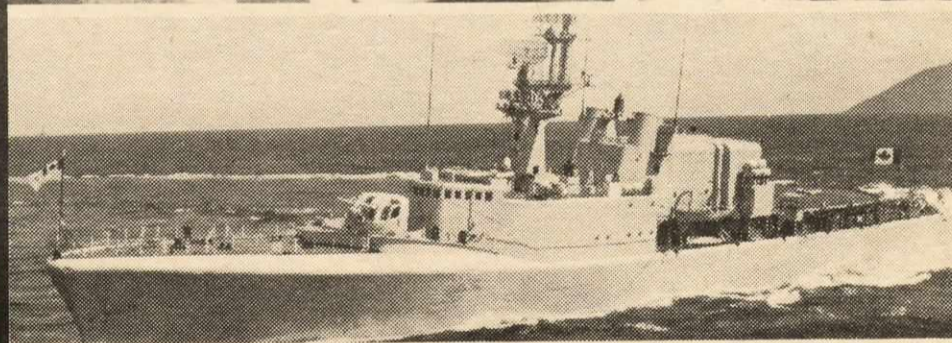
Varouj Guranlian came off the bench to score all 19 of his points in the second half and spark the St. F.X. X-Men to a 99-73 win over the Dal Tigers Tuesday night. The win was the second in as many outings for the X-Men over the Tigers, last Thursday they won 85-53 in Antigonish.

Steve Lambert, returning to the lineup for the first time since obtaining his student visa, was the game's high scorer with 22 points. Phil Howlett was next on the scoring parade for the Tigers with 18 points. Former QEH standout Geoff McIver returned to town and scored 21 points as top scorer for the visitors.

Dalhousie played a solid first half, leaving the court down only 44-39. Again the second half proved troublesome for the Tigers, but Coach Doc Ryan said that it was not a case of the Tigers suffering a letdown, but rather "they just outmanned us." He went on to say that he thought that "the guys worked hard . . . they have nothing to be ashamed of. I was pleased with their performance."

The Tigers go on the road for their next six games, and they will have to knock off one of the league front runners should they have any thoughts of remaining in the race for the playoffs. The next home game is February 26, when the Tigers face the Acadia Axemen.

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