

# Raiders eye playoffs

By DAVID MOMBOURQUETTE

It was only two short weeks ago that Coach Don Nelson, of the UNB Red Raiders, laid out the plan his team would have to follow if they hoped to gain a playoff spot in the highly competitive AUAA men's basketball conference. He said then that, "we have to win the must games, against UPEI, Mt. Allison, and Acadia." With only three games remaining in regular season play, the Raiders are still following that plan, but keeping to it has been anything but easy. After squeaking out an 81-80 victory last Tuesday night over the Mt. Allison Mounties, the Raiders took their show on the road, falling 98-77 to St. F.X., before outlasting the Acadia Axemen 89-87, the following day.

There was never any doubt that the game on Friday night against the X-men, would be anything but a war, with the Antigonish squad looking for revenge of the defeat they suffered in the Aitken Centre two weeks earlier. An exuberant crowd of close to fourteen hundred, had the X gymnasium hopping in the warm ups, and it was clear that both teams were hyped for the game.

The action was extremely fast paced as the X-men front-court took their team to an early lead. With Chris Selitri scoring 20 first half points, and John Hatch controlling the boards, the St. F.X. squad increased their lead to more than ten points several times. The fact that the Red Raiders were able to keep the halftime deficit to 54-50, was a tribute to the good shooting of Scott Devine, Don McCormack and Ken Amos.

The second half started the same way as the first, with Hatch and Mark Brodie hitting the offensive boards, and quickly leading the X-men to a seventeen point margin. The brilliant play of Scott Devine enabled the Raiders to fight back to within seven, with about 12 minutes left to play, but the strength of the X big men eventually broke the Raiders back. When the smoke had cleared, the Raiders had suffered a 21 point defeat, although the play had proved

to be closer than the score indicated.

The next stop on the road was the War Memorial Gymnasium in Wolfville, where they met a hot Acadia team. The Raiders gave notice that they were determined to go home with a victory, with one of their more inspired warmup sessions of the year. A dunking Chris McCabe carried his intensity into the game, as he led all UNB scorers with 25. But before the Raiders could get into their game plan, they had to contend with a pair of radar controlled shooters by the names of Donnie Ehler and Alfie McLeod. They scored 15 and 20 points respectively, hitting almost entirely from outside of twenty feet. Although the Acadia squad was treated to leads of up to twelve points, the Raiders closed the score to 49-43.

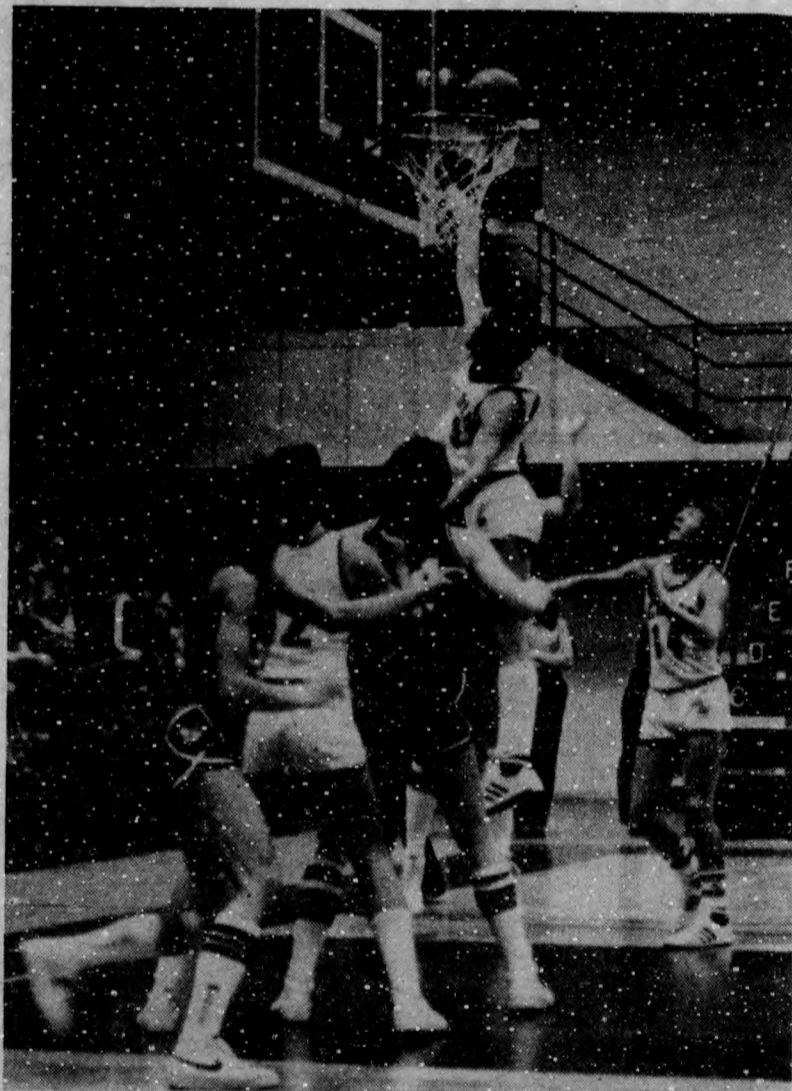
The second half was a classic, as Scott Devine led the

Raiders to within 3 points of the Axemen. With Devine taking outside shots, and feeding Chris McCabe inside, the Axemen attempted to regain their lead from the perimeter. But by this time some of the guns had cooled down, and more importantly McLeod had fouled out.

The action remained intense the rest of the way, but the Raiders enjoyed a five point lead until the last two minutes of the half. The Axemen gave one last attempt however but could only manage to pull within two.

Leading scorers for Acadia were Ehler with 30 and McLeod with 22, while McCabe with 25 and Devine's 24, paced the Raiders.

The Raiders next two "must win" games take place tonight and tomorrow at the L.B. Gym. Admission is free to all students, and a capacity crowd is expected.



Acadia's Phil Coldwell lays one in over Ted DeWinter, in action in Wolfville last Saturday.

## Athletes of the week

Janice Johnson and Jamie MacKinnon have been named UNB's athletes-of-the-week.

Johnson sparked the volleyball Reds to a weekend sweep over Moncton, winning 15-10; 15-9; 15-5 on Friday night and 15-10; 9-15; 6-15; 15-4; 15-6 in a closer contest Saturday. A third-year Physical Education student, she performed consistently well both offensively and defensively.

Coming off the bench, Johnson played what coach Jim Sexsmith called an "instrumental role in both our victories." She is a 20 year old native of Sackville, N.B.

MacKinnon, competing in the AUAA Gymnastics Championships in Dalhousie on Saturday, placed third overall and qualified to attend the CIAU Championships to be held in Winnipeg on March 5th

and 6th. His score of 44.75, a personal best, was as a result of his steadiness and confidence in all six events. MacKinnon's effort helped establish a record team score of 220.6 points for the UNB Saltos, which left Moncton and Dalhousie distant finishers with 109 and 99 points respectively. A second-year Chemical Engineering student, MacKinnon is from Fredericton.

# Free Throws

By DAVID MOMBOURQUETTE

Hello, and welcome to this week's road trip special. After spending last weekend on the road with the Red Raiders and Red Bloomers, it's great to be back home and off of the bus.

But before I get into the details of the great expedition, a more important matter should be discussed. I speak of course of the Raiders fight for the playoffs, and this weekend's key matchup with the University of Prince Edward Island Panthers. With the AUAA playoffs slated for Halifax, only two weeks from now, the Raiders, Panthers and St. F.X. X-men are battling for the third and fourth playoff spots. While the Raiders cannot influence the fate of the X-men, their two games with the squad from P.E.I. give them the opportunity to nail down a postseason game.

If the last matchup between these two teams is any indication then this one should prove to be a classic. After a couple of tough years, the Panthers have taken off, sporting such players as Len Redmond, Chris Summer and Vinne De Pinto, to name a few. It was mainly these three players that gave the Raiders such a hard time on the Island, and recent reports have shown they still hold the key to their team's success.

Raider coach Don Nelson is very optimistic about this weekend, while keeping in mind his charges will have to win both games to guarantee a playoff spot. The Raiders are a little healthier than they were the last time the clubs met, and the friendly confines of the L.B. Gym won't hurt matters either.

One of the reasons for Nelson's optimism has to be the improved condition of forward Chris McCabe, a fact that should give the Raiders more control of the boards. Chris certainly isn't shying away from the challenge, saying, "I'm really looking forward to it. It's going to be like two gladiators going at each other, but I think we have the edge. They have a very disciplined offence so we're going to have to play great defense."

The games are both taking place in the L.B. Gym, with tonight's game slated for an 8:00 start, and tomorrow's contest going at 3:00 in the hope of attracting a good crowd, the Raiders will be letting in students for free, so come out and cheer the guys on.

If it is true that two out of three ain't bad, then three out of four is even better. That is what the final tally is of last week's trip to X and Acadia, as the Bloomers swept both games and the Raiders gained a split. The Bloomers were clearly the more dominant team, having little trouble, as they defeated X, 59-47 and Acadia 62-50. The Raiders, provided the excitement however, defeating the Axemen in a thriller by the score of 89-87, after losing to the X-men 98-77.

The trip gave me a better idea of what the teams go through on the road. After a three-hundred mile drive, all I was really to do was crash out somewhere, but the guys and gals had to face well rested competition. It's pretty clear that the travelling trick, takes some getting used to, and the guys came well prepared to pass the time. A special thanks to Chris McCabe for running the music show, and to the rest of the guys for the comic relief.

As a final note on the trip, I'd like to pass on a few hello's from Fredericton native Mike Cunnane. Mike had been playing with the Acadia Axemen, but a broken wrist has sidelined him indefinitely. He says hi to the folks, and the rest of his old crowd.

The Red Bloomers have pretty well wrapped up the second place rung in the women's AUAA ladder, and finish out their season Saturday against the PEI Lady Panthers. At last notice the Bloomers were ranked tenth in the country, leaving Coach Colleen Dufresne very satisfied.

"I'm happy with the rankings, considering we only have one starter back from last year, and are carrying seven freshmen. We need some more strength inside, but hopefully we'll be stronger next year."

The coach also served notice on the top teams from out of the conference saying, "It will take good recruiting but in two year's time we will be challenging them."

Well, that's it for this week, so I'll see you at the game tonight at 8:00. Remember it's free, so bring a friend.