Women's Volleyball

Volley Reds look to playoffs

by Geraldine English
Brunswickan Sports

The UNB Women's Volleyball team met St. FX at Antigonish this past weekend. Unfortunately, despite some very aggressive playing, the Reds dropped to 7-6 after losing both matches. UNB was defeated 3-2 (10-15, 12-15, 15-7, 15-11, 19-17,) on Saturday and 3-2 (11-15, 16-14, 15-5, 6-15, 16-14) again on Sunday. St. FX now stands at 5-6.

The Reds were missing some of their key starters for the weekend's matches, namely Gail Toner, out with a broken foot, and Sara Ouellette, with a sprained knee. Coach Al McGarvie is hoping to have both girls back on the court in a week or so, but feels it's still too soon to make any predictions.

Chantal Martin lead the Reds with 57 kills, 16 stuff blocks and 15 digs over the two matches. She has now totalled an amazing 265 kills, leading the AUAA. Jennifer Tune set two excellent matches, compiling 17 digs and 12 stuff blocks. Sandra Morrison played her personal best so far this season, with 28 kills and 7 digs. She attributes her success to positive thinking and confidence. In regards to the team's overall play during the matches Morrison said: "We played really, really well this weekend, we just keep losing our momentum."

Loretta Totten waits to dig, while two of her teammates look on. **Photo Warren Watson**

Both Morrison and Coach McGarvie felt that the injuries of 2 key players played a role in the team's failure to overcome St. FX, who pulled out both matches. Denise Barwise lead the way with 39 kills and 19 digs and Shelley Constanin racked up 32 kills and 16 digs.

The Reds, two time defending AUAA champs, are hoping to earn a spot as one of the four teams competing in this year's championships at Mount Allison, February 16-18. "We're still very confident," said Coach McGarvie. "We'd been hoping for a second or third position, but with the team injuries and the losses to St. FX this weekend, we'll be content with fourth." Morrison second this opinion, saying: "We have three matches left, and long as we finish strong, we shouldn't have any problems." Coach McGarvie sights Dalhousie, U de M, Mount Allison and St. Mary's as strong candidates for the AUAA championships.

The team plays Acadia at home this weekend and close the season with a match at U de M on February 10th. These promise to be close and exciting games as the teams battle for their positions at the AUAA championships.

Brian Scales

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The Reds have eight games remaining and "we should be in fine shape if we take these two this weekend" (St. FX on Friday at 8:30pm and Acadia on Sunday at 3pm) both at the LB Gym. These games are worth four points and Scales feels that "this would be a good jump for us in the standings."

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Commentary

A right Roy-al mess

a commentary by Neil Duxbury
The Brunswickan

Inter province roadtrips in the AUAA have gotten a lot tougher this year. The distance has always been there, however this year there's a new problem - adjusting to a different style of refereeing.

Kevin Cameron, chief executive of the AUAA, insists that this is not a problem. "On a given night that could be true, ref's don't call games the same way. But there's not a distinguishable difference between [N.B. and N.S.]."

However players and coaches from both sides of the border are of differing opinions.

"After tonight I have a new appreciation for the referees in Nova Scotia." was Dalhousie coach Darrell Young's comment after losing a penaltyfest a couple of weeks ago, while SMU's Paul Boutilier was unable to find any civil words about the refereeing of Marc Ouellette after an imbalance of 73 minutes in the penalty calling.

UNB's players have been less cryptic. "You go up to [play] Acadia and they call the obvious stuff and you come back here and they call penalty after penalty." was Frank LeBlanc's opinion after a November roadtrip. Defenseman Kayle Short was equally blunt after the Saint Mary's game. "The officiating definitely is different from New Brunswick to Nova Scotia, but we're used to the officiating here in New Brunswick. A lot of teams get frustrated, but we were getting frustrated down there."

The AUAA's referee assigner, Maurice Roy, also disagrees with Cameron. While he speaks of the "need to make sure that the referees are calling the penalties in the manner of the CHA [Canadian Hockey Association]" he adds "certain games in Nova Scotia, PEI and Moncton which I have not been able to attend have been a different matter."

Like the NHL, the AUAA has toughened up on the neutral zone fouls. Cameron believes that this may be where the confusion is coming from "With the restraining rules in the neutral zone: these are discretionary calls, some referees call them to the letter of the law." One commonly heard complaint is that some referees are using less of their discretion when Maurice Roy is in the building.

As part of the assigner's job, Roy evaluates and supervises games. While Roy does not always tell referees when they are being evaluated, he "generally makes his presence felt." In the Saint Mary's game this included two intermission visits to the referees' dressing room.

Roy was surprised at the suggestion that his presence makes for a less interesting game. "The people who write for the newspapers don't have a good assessment of the way a game should be called." Presumably Roy also includes the paying customers at the Aitken Centre Friday night among those who "don't have a good assessment of the way a game should be called," considering the resounding booing which accompanied Ouellette's reappearance after the intermissions.

Roy summarised, "The whole idea of the CHA is to have games called the same way across the country. That way when national championships are being played, none of the teams are penalised excessively." However, this is not even happening within the AUAA. Meanwhile, Cameron admits that it is "Difficult for the players to adjust to inconsistency that exists between games." However, neither of these people are directly affected by the calls.

Paul Boutilier sums it up well. "It's frustrating for the players and both teams. It's a shame for the fans trying to watch the AUAA"

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