

# Dal puts on a 'Classy' show

by Manoj Vohra

The third annual Dal Volleyball Classic which took place January 22-24 at the Dalplex was termed to be, by many, one of the best intercollegiate tournaments ever to be held.

Although the calibre of play was very high, the most impressive thing about the tournament was the attendance. Estimates place attendance at over 3000 with over 1200 showing up for the finals. This high attendance must be contributed to the organizing committee and the general media build-up which the classic was given before it ever took place. However, when Joel Jacobson, the public relations manager for Dal Athletics, was asked to comment on the success of the tournament, he indicated that most of the credit should be given to Lois MacGregor and Al Scott, the head coaches of the womens and mens volleyball teams.

The pleasing aspect of this tournament was that Dal did not concentrate on getting as many teams as possible (and end up with a confusing manner to choose the eventual winners), but rather attracted teams which exemplified a high calibre of play, making every game an exciting one. Thus the Classic served a dual purpose. It enabled people to watch some excellent volleyball while it also served as a preview of the CIAU championships which oddly enough will be held at the Dalplex on March 11-13.

In the men's division the Tigers were in competition against seven other teams for the title. The men's division also had an added international touch as the Penn State Mittany Lions took part (Penn State finished third last year in the NCAA).

Exciting volleyball mixed with a touch of good luck enabled the Tigers to finish second only to Penn State. The Tigers made such an impressive showing in the tournament that the coach of the Lions, Tom Tait said he was surprised Waterloo was ranked above the Tigers.

It seemed, however, Penn State had Dal's number in the tournament as they defeated Dal in the preliminary round in five games while winning the final in four.

Along with the Lions and Tigers the other teams consisted of Memorial, Waterloo, Western Ontario, Laval, U.N.B. and Sherbrooke. Although the team played very well, Dal's 6'3" hitter Jamie Fraser was outstanding for the Tigers cause as shown by his choice as athlete of the week for both Dal and the CIAU.

The opening match of the tournament pitted the Mittany Lions against the Tigers. Penn State were thoroughly tested by the Tigers before capping a 10-15, 15-13, 7-15, 15-2, 15-6 victory. The Tigers demonstrated that in volleyball our top Canadian teams can compete with America's top collegiate teams. The Tigers rebounded to win their two remaining matches in preliminary pool play with wins over Laval (15-11, 15-13, 15-4) and Memorial (15-4, 7-15, 15-11, 15-5).

The semi finals produced an exciting 5 set victory over Sherbrooke University, 5th ranked in the CIAU. The match saw exceptional defense by both teams before Dal prevailed in a lengthy 2 3/4 hours match. Scores were: 8-15, 15-12, 15-11, 15-17, 15-10.

The finals again matched the Tigers with Penn State. The Tigers played well for 2 1/2 games, when the Mittany Lions' experience began to dominate. Penn State won the match 12-15, 15-11, 15-7, 15-2. Jamie Fraser and Phil Perrin were selected to the Classic's all-star team. Other standings were: 3. Sherbrooke, 4. Waterloo, 5. Western, 6. UNB, 7. Laval, 8. Memorial.

As a result of their second place finish the Tigers are now 5th ranked in Canada.

In the women's section Dal once again found itself in a tough preliminary round. The first game saw Dal take on the 6th ranked team from Sherbrooke and lose in five games. In their next game the women took revenge on the

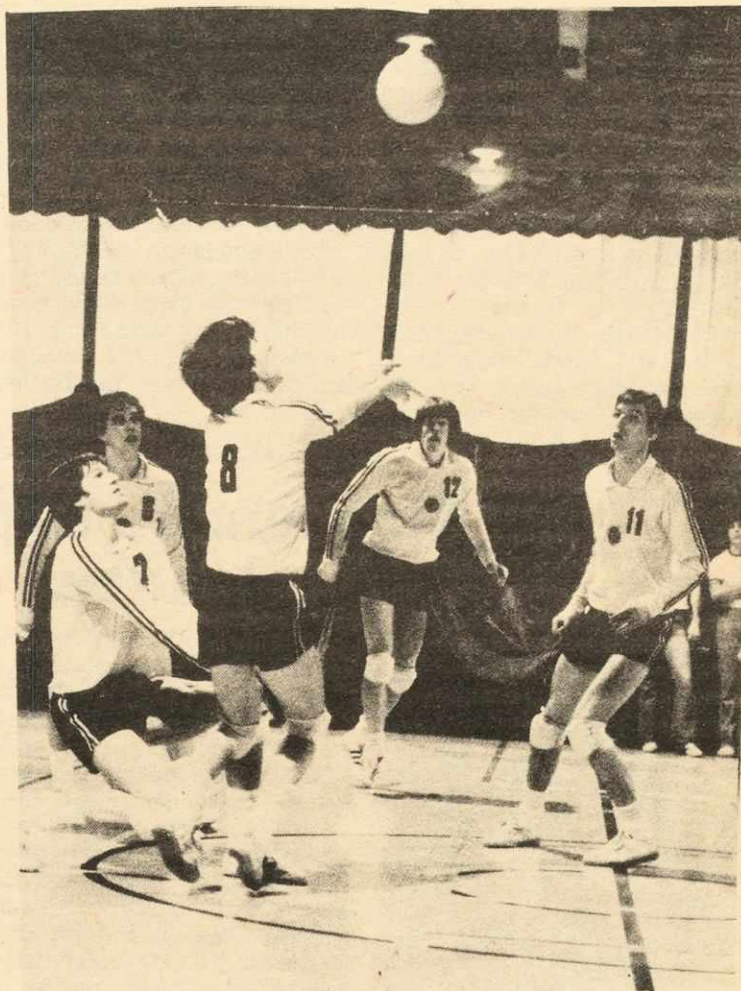
team from Calgary as they swept the Dinnies three games straight. This game held special significance for the Tigers who were defeated at the Calgary Invitational tournament just a week earlier.

In the final game of their preliminary round the Tigers took on the Lady Wesmen from Manitoba. The Lady Wesmen were not treated very ladylike by the women Tigers as the Dal club hammered Manitoba in three games.

Because of their record Dal qualified for the semi-finals where they faced the nationally ranked first place Laval team. Although Dal lost the first game of the match 14-16 they rebounded to win the second with a convincing 15-8. However the Laval team were the better of the two teams on that day, and consequently won the next two games of the match 7-15 and 6-15. Laval eventually went on to win the women's division of the classic.

Coach Lois MacGregor felt that the loss to Laval in the semis could partly be attributed to the Tigers inconsistent serving. Combined with their ineffective service reception in the last two games of the match, the Tigers were just not in form. MacGregor says that "We eliminated their two big girls in the second game and that's why we were successful."

However, the women rebounded from their loss to Laval and on Sunday captured the bronze medal by defeating Manitoba once again. Once more the game only lasted three matches as Dal defeated Manitoba by scores of 15-9, 15-6, and 15-13. The victory for Dal was sweeter than it really seemed since MacGregor pointed out the Tigers had to play without two of their leading players. Kathy Andrea and Veronika Schmidt both arrived late for the match because of the inclement weather. MacGregor was forced to use her bench where she received strong efforts from players such as Beth Yeomens and Janet Rhymes while also seeing rookies such as Kathy Cox and Leanne Fougere help tremendously in the quest for the bronze medal.



Redmond / Dal Photo


Co-captain Karin Maessen, who was selected as the outstanding player on her team in the semi-finals, felt that the team's showing in the classic was in line with its progress. She felt that it was good that the team "didn't peak too soon" and that they were right on course for the CIAU championship title. MacGregor added the tournament gave some much needed experience to the younger players as they encountered teams they most likely will face in March.

MacGregor also expressed pleasure in the fact that the Tigers displayed a concerted team effort. Notable performances were given by Veronica Schmidt and Karen Fraser, both of whom were selected to the all-star team. Schmidt was also Dal's athlete of the week.


The Dal Volleyball Classic was termed an overwhelming success by the media, the fans, but most of all by the teams themselves. With the respectable showing that the men and women gave, we look forward to the CIAU championships in March as well as next year's version of the Dalhousie Volleyball Classic.



All-star team at the Dal Volleyball Classic stands tall.




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