

Volleyball

Tigers the toast of the league

by Andrew Sinclair

The Dalhousie Tigers head the list in both the men's and women's divisions of the AUAA volleyball standings, but while the men have a stranglehold on first place, the women claim to top spot is tenuous to say the least. The men raised their AUAA record to 10-0 this past weekend by defeating Memorial University in two matches and are hoping to enter the playoffs with a perfect 12-0 slate, while the women split their pair with the Beothuks, leaving them with identical 8-2 records. The Tigers, however, slipped into first place by virtue of a better win-loss record in terms of mutual games.

The men had little trouble with their Newfoundland opponents, downing them in four games on Friday night, 15-10, 7-15, 15-5, 15-6, and again in four Saturday afternoon, 15-8, 15-6, 12-15, 15-4. Phil Perrin was the big hitter for the Tigers, his 20 kills on Friday earning him the offensive player of the match award, while Bernie Derible led the way defensively with 10 digs and was named the top defensive player in both matches. Rookie Jamie Hanham won Saturday's offensive award.

Despite the Tigers' success, Perrin felt that more could have been accomplished. "The weekend should have been more of a learning process," he said, pointing out that Dalhousie's near total domination of the league is one of its biggest problems: "We have to go out West to find any competition. It's a different style of ball out West, it's much faster with a lot of low ball hitting." The Tigers have

been out West twice this year already, trips that Perrin feels greatly helped the team, and if they win the upcoming AUAA championships they will have another chance to tangle with the top ranked teams at the CIAU's in Victoria. If the Tigers do make it, and Perrin is confident that they will, he feels they should be successful: "If we play well we can be in the top three easily. If we play consistently and with enthusiasm we should do well."

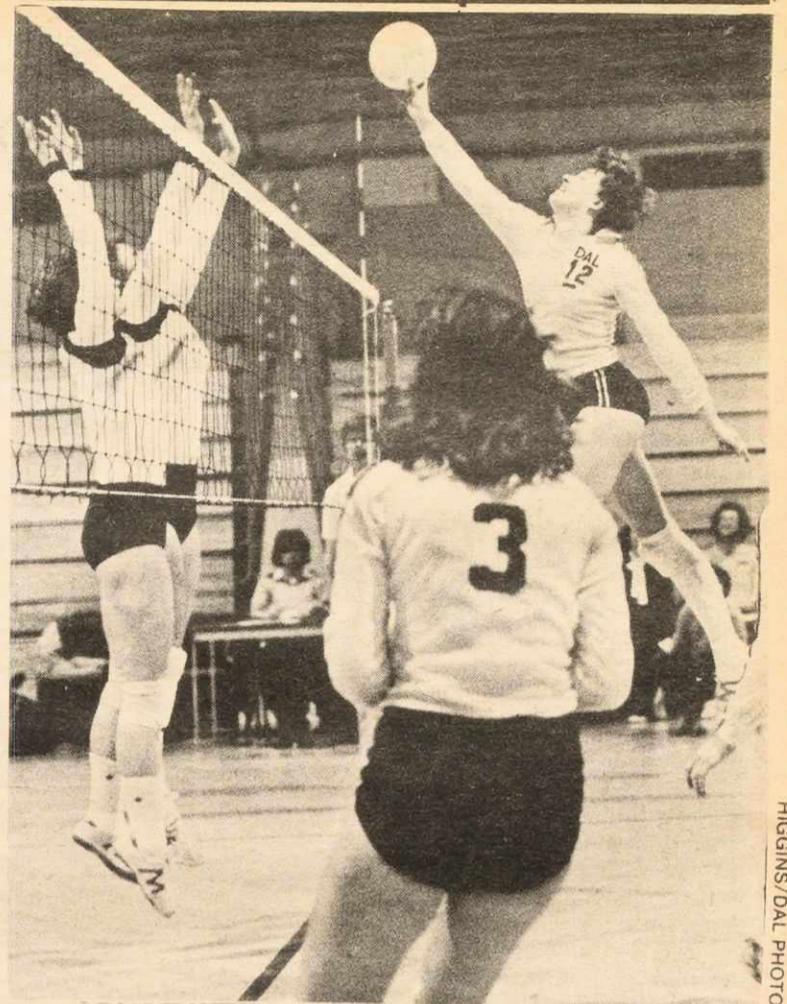
Coach Al Scott, however, is not looking ahead to the national championships, but is rather concentrating on just making it there. "The thing we can't do is go into the playoffs thinking that what happened on the season will happen again automatically," he said, "especially since it is a sudden death situation. It is very important that we're mentally ready, we have to go into each game with a specific game plan."

For the women, it was a weekend of comebacks. The Tigers got off to a bad start on Friday night, dropping the first two games of the match 13-15, 8-15, and losing Wendy Keeping when she broke her nose in a collision with Karin Maessen in the first game, but came back in the third game as they jumped to a 9-2 lead and pressed on to win 15-4. The Tigers then rallied from a 7-9 deficit to win the fourth game 15-11 and were ahead for most of the deciding game before narrowly losing 13-15. In losing the match, Dal also gave up first place, but not as they say for long, as they overpowered the Beothuks in three straight games on Saturday. Dal was forced to play

catch-up ball in two of those three games, but did so brilliantly. In the first game the Tigers charged back from a 5-9 disadvantage to win 15-9, and in the second, Cindy Moore entered the game with her team down 6-11 to serve six straight points and lead them to a 15-11 triumph. The Tigers won the third game 15-10.

Maessen led the Tigers' attack with 41 kills and 16 serving points, while Kathy Andrea was the top blocker with 7 blocking points and 25 kills. Second year player Veronika Schmidt was outstanding in relief of the injured Keeping in both matches, and Marie Landry came off the bench on Saturday and confounded the Memorial defense with her left handed hitting.

The Tigers will travel to UNB this weekend for their last regular season matches and will return to New Brunswick the following weekend for the AUAA playoffs, where Coach Lois MacGregor expects to meet, and hopes to beat, Memorial in the finals. "If we play Memorial, I think it should be as exciting as it always has been. We've beaten them at key points this year and I think we play better under pressure than they do." MacGregor would not speculate, however, on her team's chances in the CIAU's. "We're looking at the AUAA's first. We still haven't played our best yet. Each time we play we are better than before."



Karin Maessen extends herself against Memorial over the weekend in AUAA action at the Dalplex

Co-captain Maessen was more optimistic, both about the AUAA's and the CIAU's. "We're going to win for sure", she said in reference to the Atlantic region playoffs. "There's no question about it. I always go into a game believing we can win, but this I'm really confident of. Player for player we are better (than Memorial) and we have lots of depth." About the national championships, where the

Tigers finished fifth last year, Maessen said, "This year I have a good feeling about it. Everybody's got confidence and they've learned to come through in tough points. We're much more consistent than we were, we won the Waterloo Invitational and the Dal Classic back to back, and that's hard to do. We have more potential than last year and, of course, we are shooting for gold."

Dalhousie hosting sixth annual Invitational tourney

The foremost water polo event in Nova Scotia will take place at the Dalplex, this weekend February 13-15. The Sixth Annual Dalhousie Invitational Water Polo Tournament promises to be the exciting and talent ridden event it has proven to be in the past.

In the past two years the Dal Invitational has become the second largest water polo tournament of its kind in the country. This enlargement is due to the acquisition of the superb Dalplex facilities and the surge of Dalhousie to becoming a powerhouse in the field of university water polo.

This year the tournament has attracted McMaster University of Hamilton, Carleton University of Ottawa, NAAC of St. John's and the Halifax Water Polo Club. This is an impressive field with three of the top four university teams attending. Top ranked Simon Fraser University was unable to attend due to financial consideration, and the University of Waterloo backed out at the last minute for the same reason.

McMaster is back to defend their Dal Invitational championship of last year. They would also like to avenge their 3rd place finish in their own Challenge

Cup Tournament earlier this season. Carleton are currently ranked second in the nation. They have several national team members who train in Ottawa. NAAC of Newfoundland are a young team but everyone expects them to display their superior conditioning. The Halifax squad have a mixture of seasoned veterans and energetic youth.

The Dal Tigers are anchored by goaltender Colin Bryson, who was once voted to the Junior National Team. Sandy MacDonald will be the spearhead of the Tigers offense. MacDonald has been the standout for Dal in the past several years and was voted the MVP for the Dal Invitational last year. Brian Lane and Peter Henderson should share the gruelling role as the centre of the offence. Peter Hastings, Mark Cann and

Mike Tighe will alternate, providing the other offensive punch that is necessary. Dave Simpson, Chris McKee, Bob Abraham and Phil McAuley are the basis for Dalhousie's famed resilient defense.

Coach Steve Cann has designed a more open game for the squad. He is relying more on mental alertness of his team than endurance, due to the lack of preparation time to get the team in proper shape for a tournament of this magnitude.

The tournament provides excellent entertainment for all spectators. Over the year, team rivalries have always existed, and, in recent times, intense personal rivalries have emerged. These elements promise to make each match a toughly contested battle. Entrance is free, and all are welcome to the Dalplex Pool.

ATHLETES OF THE WEEK



Rick McCallum — hockey — the fourth year recreation student from Halifax has been brilliant for the past three weeks leading the Tigers to six wins and two ties in ten games.

During the past seven days, the centreman has scored three goals and added five assists to move into the top five scorers in the AUAA's Kelly Division. He has also moved into fifth place on the all-time Dalhousie scoring list.



Jill Tasker — basketball — the 5'11" centre has led the Tigers all season in scoring and rebounding and has been instrumental in the 11-0 AUAA record they hold. A fourth year physiotherapy student, Tasker scored 21 against Saint Mary's in an important Tiger win last Tuesday and added 19 against Acadia Saturday. She had a dozen against Midtown in exhibition play Sunday.