

St. Mary's wins first CIAU basketball championship in 20 years

Huskies defeat Golden Bears in hoops final

BY SUMANT KUMAR

When the St. Mary's Huskies men's basketball team won the Atlantic championships two weeks ago, every local basketball insider said the team should be considered the favourite for the national crown.

But when the seedings for last weekend's CIAU championships came out, due to the over-rated Canada West and Ontario West conference, the Huskies were only seeded seventh.

However, to the surprise of those other two conferences, it was the Huskies cutting down the nets on Sunday at the Metro Centre, claiming the national championship with a 73-69 overtime victory over the number one-ranked Alberta Golden Bears.

The Huskies reached the final with victories over the number two-ranked Western Mustangs, and the McMaster Marauders, who were ranked sixth.

In the quarter-final victory over Western, the talk from the Ontario media indicated that the Mustangs were going to dominate inside with their All-Canadian Nat Graham, and on the outside with former SMU guard Micah Boudreau. But in the Huskies' 66-62 victory, SMU forward Cory Janes dominated Graham, scoring 23 points and 15 rebounds. Graham was held to a mere 11 points and 5 boards.

In the semi-final against McMaster, it was Huskies guard Jonah Taussig's turn to be 'dominated', this time by All-Canadian guard Steve Maga. According to one Ontario expert, Maga was "a class above every other guard in the country".

However, Taussig proved that he's also one of the best point guards in Canada. In SMU's 77-68 victory over Mac, he notched 20 points, seven assists, five steals and only one turnover in the game, while the Marauders' Maga had 14 points and six turnovers, with eight of the points coming in the first two minutes and only two coming in the

second half.

This set the stage for Sunday's final between the Huskies and the Golden Bears. The Bears had reached the game with victories over the hapless Ryerson Rams and the Brandon Bobcats.

The first half was an even affair as both teams started out tentatively, and at the half the score stood at 36-36.

"It's a great feeling as a player and it's a great feeling as a coach, it's a feeling I wanted all these guys to have."

In the second half both teams were neck-and-neck until the end, and with the score 61-61, Taussig had a chance to win it at the buzzer, but missed a driving scoop shot. The game went into overtime for the first time in finals history, and the conclusion will be remembered as one of the greatest in CIAU history.

In overtime the teams initially traded baskets, but after a Patrick Toulouse free throw miss, the Huskies were down by one and it was Alberta's ball with 1:20 remaining.

Alberta forward Nick Maglisseau nailed two free throws with 55 seconds left to give Alberta a 69-66 lead and temporarily quiet the 8,385 fans in attendance. But they soon erupted when, with 45 seconds left, Huskies forward Lloyd Thomas curled off a screen at the top of the three point line, received a pass from Taussig and buried a three, the last shot of his career.

After a couple of SMU free throws and Alberta misses, Janes sealed the national title with five seconds left by hitting two free throws.

Alberta had no hope, and after a desperation three-point attempt, the crowd stormed the court to celebrate SMU's first national title since 1979.

Cory Janes went from watching last year's playoffs in

street clothes to CIAU tournament MVP. His final effort of 26 points, 13 rebounds and 10-12 shooting from the free throw line earned him the award.

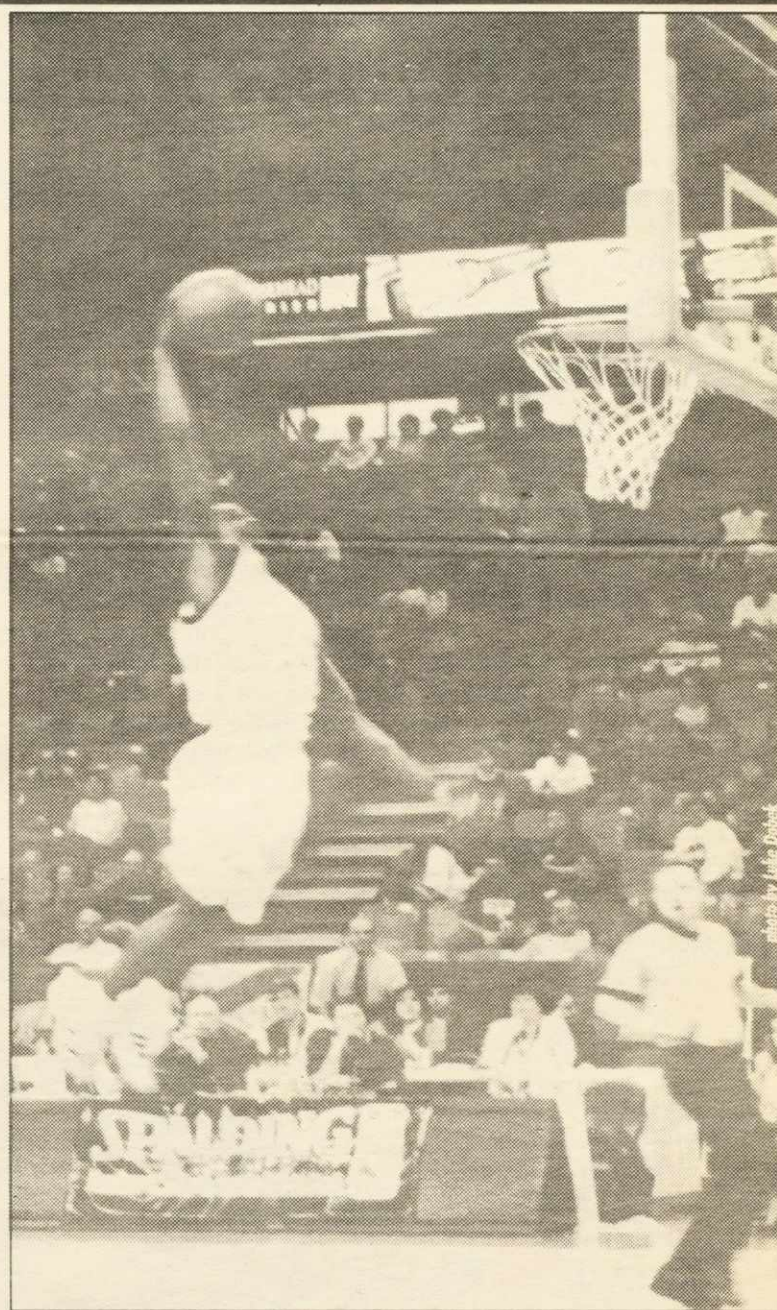
"I wasn't nervous at all," Janes said about his free throws, "I stepped to the line and knocked them down."

Ryan McClintock, the emotional forward from Pennsylvania, felt that they owed it to the crowd to win the game.

"We couldn't disappoint [the fans]. Look at the way they were here for us, and we [couldn't] send them home disappointed."

Quietly revelling in the victory was SMU coach Ross Quackenbush, who was a member of the 1979 national championship SMU team, and who became the first coach to win a national title as a player and a coach at the same school.

"It's a great feeling as a player," Quackenbush said "and it's a great feeling as a coach, it's a feeling I wanted all these guys to have."



SLAM: dunking action at this week's CIAU tournament at the Metro Centre

CIAU Individual Awards

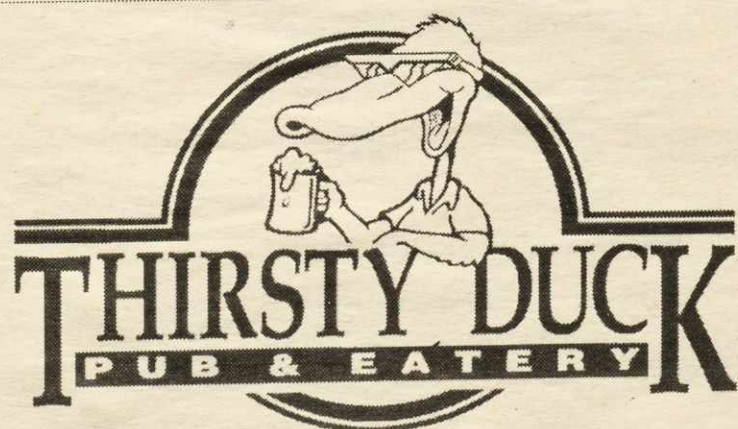
Player of the Year — Eric Hinrichsen, Victoria
Rookie of the Year — Robbie Green, Victoria
Coach of the Year — Craig Boydell, Western

First Team
Eric Hinrichsen — Victoria
Jan Trojanowski — Acadia
Ted Dongelmans — Laurentian
Steve Maga — McMaster
Nat Graham — Western

Second Team
Dale Holmes — Regina
Jay Prosper — Concordia
Danny Balderson — Lethbridge
Brian Leonard — Carleton
Ramon McElmurry — Lakehead

Tournament All Stars
Jonah Taussig — SMU
Steve Maga — McMaster
Mark Passley — Brandon
Nick Maglisseau — Alberta
Corey Janes — SMU

Tournament MVP
Corey Janes — SMU

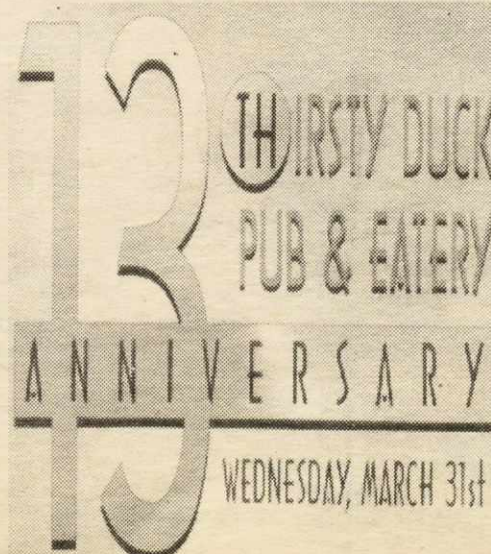


5472 Spring Garden Road • (902) 422-1548
 Visit us on-line at thirstyduck.com

- Every day in March you can receive a ballot with the purchase of any menu item
- 3 contestants drawn daily to qualify for the Grand Prize
- Prize drawn March 31st at Duck's 13th Birthday Bash

MARCH MADNESS

Win a trip for 2 all inclusive to Beaches, Varadero, Cuba



- Fantastic Specials 4-9 PM
- Dance to "THE HARBOUR SHARKS" 8-12 PM
- Great Food Specials all Night
- Hourly Draws for T-shirts, Hats, Gift Certificates & More
- Everyone in Attendance gets a Ballot for the 10 PM Draw for a Chance to Win a Trip for Two to VARADERO, CUBA!
 (MUST BE IN ATTENDANCE TO WIN)

