

# Dal volleyball hits the bigtime

by Kevin Barrett

Dalhousie Men's Volleyball coach Al Scott went into last weekends CIAU championships with his number four ranked Dal Tigers thinking that his team could finish anywhere from first to eighth. Although he was optimistic about his team chances there was no way he could have expected to end up where the team did.

The Tigers lost all three of their matches to finish eighth overall and end what was otherwise a very successful season on a rather disappointing note.

Dal lost their opening match 3-2 to Toronto, their second match 3-1 to top seeded Laval and their last match 3-0 to second seeded Calgary into the upset driven final eight to end up in eighth place overall.

Prior to the start of the tournament, the ranking committee of the CIAU volleyball decided to drop Dal to the fourth seed. This questionable decision had some bear-

ing on the final results as Dal openly criticized the seed, down from their seven week stay at number three.

However it was the play on the court that ultimately did the Tigers in.

"Against Toronto, we certainly had every opportunity to win," said Scott. "...but we had trouble putting the big points away. We needed to get big games from all of our key players and that did not happen. It is a shame because all season these players had played so well at key points in the big matches."

Dal lead this match 2-1 before falling 14-16, 13-15 to lose 3-2.

On the consolation side of the draw, the level of emotion was obviously lower in the second and third matches. The team had wanted the title and now, the best they could do was fifth. Even though they played against Laval a team they had been practising specifically for, the Tigers lost, this time 3-1. In Saturdays final against

Calgary for seventh and eighth place, the team simply had nothing left.

After getting a few days to recover from the losses, coach Scott stated that this was the best season of volleyball in a number of years at Dal.

"We made a lot of progress in tournaments. We beat Manitoba for the first time, we won the Dal Classic for the first time and we

had three players named to the All Canadian team," said Scott. "We gained the respect of the other teams coaches as well. This was the first time ever that other coaches were coming up to me and saying 'Al you guys can take this year'."

"Scott Bagnall was named to the first All Canadian team while Jody Holden and Deon Goulding were named to the second team. In ad-

dition to this, Holden received a tryout with the Canadian National A team in April. The team selected from this camp will probably represent Canada at the 1992 summer Olympics in Spain. Goulding and Paul Villeneuve were selected to tryout for the National B team which competes in such tournaments as the Pan American Games.

This is the most players that have ever been selected for the national team from one Dalhousie team.

## Hockey

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If a team is judged by the number of spectators watching it, then again the Tigers were successful. Through the season the Tigers had modest crowds ranging from 400 to 800 people. As the season progressed and the playoffs arrived the crowds doubled and even tripled. The final game of the Kelly Division championship with the Uni-

versity College of Cape Breton attracted 1500 fans. The two Conference championship games against UPEI attracted over 200 fans each. A line of over 100 fans was formed by 6:15 for the deciding game of the series that was played at 7:30 pm that night.

Many local observers and fans claim that University hockey is the best hockey in metro. This season the Tigers did a great deal to convince people that this claim true.

If you missed the Tigers this season, trust me when I say - It was something to watch!

## Suzy pans the 'Dels

Having been a fan of the Toronto Maple Leafs for over ten years, and having been exposed to many different levels and types of hockey, I must confess that I have never before had an experience quite like the one I had recently at a Halifax Citadels game. As a description, the word circus would erroneously imply that fun was had, so, for lack of a better word, I will refer to it as a travesty.

### SPORTS EDITORIAL

Prior to the game, an unprecedented amount of pomp and ceremony occurred, all of which was quite humorous bordering on sad. I knew I was in for trouble when a red carpet rolled out and two men in suits, reeking of corporate sponsorship, walked onto the virgin ice. They presented the most valuable player from the previous game (as if anyone still cared) with a reward for his achievement. Now, what does a minor league hockey player really need? What more could any man ask for than... a windbreaker! Such a prize will certainly inspire others to play their hearts out in order to obtain that special token of appreciation. Obviously the player had similar sentiments because, after taking one look at the gem, he tossed it onto the floor beside the team bench.

This moving presentation was followed by the ceremonial dropping of the puck, a ritual usually reserved for important games. Who could imagine a more significant game than one that could decide who will dwell in the basement of the American Hockey League? Get a grip.

Next, we were treated to the singing of the national anthem by Bedford beauty school dropouts, "Naked Knees". These sopranic wonders brought tears to my eyes. Tears of joy? Not exactly! More along the lines of embarrassment because the singing of our country's national song was painfully flat. How flat was it, you say? It was so flat that it made my hardwood floors seem like Mount Everest.

The first period was a prime example of sloppy, end to end hockey. This does not imply that all amateur hockey is boring and unskilled. The Dal Tigers, for example, make the Citadels look like a second rate farm team going nowhere fast. Whoops, I forgot; they are.

Perhaps the most frightening moment came when three men in stereotypically offensive costumes came out representing the ethnically diverse restaurant Alfredo, Weinstein and Ho. To top it all off, they were

not even giving out free stuff! They merely proceeded to bumble around scaring children and bothering anyone unfortunate enough to be sitting in the back rows. ("Please, Mommy, make them stop.")

The most annoying phenomenon of the evening was the fault of a cheap, uncontrolled sound system. The announcer was regurgitating commercials throughout the evening at such a volume that every word was unintelligible. What incompetent fool in management actually believes that anyone enjoys having advertisements yelled at her by 10,000 watts of stereo-power? Furthermore, to those of you lucky enough to have had your ad read for a fee; since when is distorted, nonsensical information a great advertising tool?

After one period plagued with numerous, futile offside and icing calls, the red carpet was once again rolled out for possibly the most obnoxious man in Canada, General John Cabot Trail. His purpose there is still unknown, but it had something to do with congratulating the citizens of Halifax for filling up one (count 'em one) shiny new Jeep Cherokee with donations for a food bank. As I pondered the obvious lameness in the lack of generosity of Haligonians, and their eagerness to applaud themselves, the inevitable question, "Will the fun ever end?" arose.

By the time the second period began, we were treated to the reappearance of a mangy mascot who resembled a twenty-year old stuffed animal in dire need of laundering. During the period, I began to dread every Citadel goal because each one was followed by the crowd yelling a Citadels version of Queen's "We Will Rock You", and a little man on the rafters conspicuously lighting an ear-bursting home-made firecracker, regardless of the importance of the goal or even if it was earned.

Unfortunately, lost in a frenzy of celebration, no one in the crowd seemed aware of the fact that these players do not direct their efforts towards the promotion of the team, but in fact, they are trying to impress someone who can get them out of Halifax and into the Big Leagues.

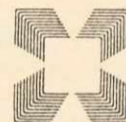
For me, attending a Citadels game was like being transported into a scene from Paul Newman's Slapshot. This leads me into a state of confusion because I cannot figure out why, in a place with as much going for it as Halifax, this event had the same atmosphere as a hockey game in a small, industrial American town with nothing else to cheer for. Bring on Dancing Homer!

Suzy Kovinsky

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