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Badminton gets a bum rap

by Chris Murray

"Well, it's a better way to kill time than having your teeth pulled out."

This is a standard answer when people are asked about their interest in the sport of badminton. When asked how often they participate in the sport, "every second blue moon" seems too common an answer. The general consensus is that it is not a bad sport but is hardly as challenging or exciting as bullfighting with a blindfold on.

If anyone on campus were asked to name a prominent Canadian tennis player, Carling Bassett and Helen Kelesi would come to mind — but a badminton player? A typical response: "Is this a trick question?" Very few people know that Canada's best badminton player, Mike Butler, lives in that far-off land of New Brunswick.

Badminton was an exhibition sport at the Olympics this year and will be a medal sport in 1992. The coverage the media provided this year was shorter than the average car commercial, which really helps to boost the sport in

the eyes of the public.

The game as played at a competitive level is a far cry from what most people picture. For example, did you know a smash can travel at one hundred miles per hour? A bit faster than the game you play in your back yard. Good players must return this shot many times in a single game. This is the same sport in which many people still call the shuttle a "birdie" and think the racquet is made of wood.

Racquet cost is variable, with models available from \$10 to \$200, depending on the quality. A good racquet can be purchased for about \$70.

A game of men's singles goes to 15 points, while women's games are played to 11. For those who think it is not much of an exercise try playing a skilled player for even half an hour!

For any badminton enthusiasts who want some practice against fairly skilled individuals, the Dal badminton club meets Sundays from 6:30 to 8:30 and Tuesdays and Fridays from 8:30 to 10:30 at the Dalplex.

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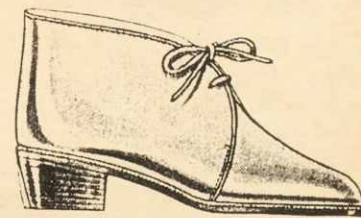
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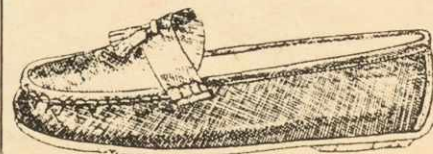
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