

Tigers tear up Marauders to win the bronze

BY SHANNON MORRISON

Bronze was a golden experience for the Tigers.

Dalhousie's women's volleyball team dug deep to win the bronze medal at the Digs volleyball Classic this weekend in the Dalplex.

After dropping the first game of their playoff match against Ontario's McMaster Marauders 15-3, the Tigers roared back to a 15-3, 15-6, 15-11 victory Sunday morning.

McMaster controlled the opening game, which found the Tigers lacking the energy and focus of the previous two days. The slow start may have been attributed to the heart-breaking semi-final loss to McGill in five sets Saturday night.

"No matter how hard you try, feelings and thoughts are on last night," said Tigers' coach Leslie Irie. "It hurt a lot to lose. It was a gut check. We had to realize last night was in the past. It's about challenges and rising to the challenge."

Irie delivered those thoughts to her team between games and the difference on the court was immediately apparent.

The determined squad forced their opponents into taking an early timeout with Dal up 3-0. The Marauders' coach must have sensed a change in the Tigers' intensity and wanted to focus his players. Dalhousie continued their domination with accurate passes and defensive saves, which were capped off with well-executed offensive attacks. McMaster fell apart under the pressure and began to make unforced errors. This resulted in a 15-3 Dalhousie win in the second frame.

"A few good plays led to a few rolls and a few points," commented veteran Kim Hilchey. "It upped our confidence. After the first game, we got three or four points right off. Our confidence was high and we didn't let up. We believed in ourselves, we knew we could do it."

Dalhousie utilized the momentum swing to their advantage as pin-point serving and a wide array of hitting patterns kept McMaster on their heels. The Tigers took a 2-1 lead in games with a decisive 9-point victory.

The match seemed to be drawing to a close as the home team grabbed a 9-3 lead in the fourth game, but then McMaster began to regain the form they exhibited in the opening game. A couple of mental lapses by the Tigers allowed the Marauders to get back into the match.

With the game tied at 11, the Tigers picked up their intensity. Alicia MacFarlane delivered a tough serve as Dal took the lead for good, 12-11. Despite a couple of debatable calls from the referees, the Tigers persisted. Kim Hilchey connected for some important kills down the stretch while Christine Frail delivered the final attack to capture the bronze medal.

The contributions of Frail and middle hitter Jennifer Parkes were recognized as they were both named to the tournament's all-star team.

During round-robin play, Dalhousie swept three games from the Université de Moncton (15-4, 15-9, 15-4) and the Université de Sherbrooke (15-6, 15-8, 15-13).

Their third match pitted the Ti-



Christine Frail delivered the final attack to capture the bronze medal.

gers against York, the sixth-ranked team in the nation. The Ontario school handled Dalhousie easily in the first game and was leading 11-6 in the second before the home side came to life.

Setter Michelle Aucoin and Parkes provided the inspiration at the net with some huge blocks. Dal-

prevalled 15-12 after controlled attacks found their mark. The blocking success continued in the third set as York couldn't hit around the Tigers. Dalhousie jumped out to a 5-1 lead with no unforced errors. A couple of misplays gave the Yeoman an opportunity to make a comeback and they pulled out a 15-10 win. York finished the match with a 15-8 victory.

That same evening, Dalhousie faced eighth-ranked McGill in a semi-final battle where neither team would back down. The Tigers slid by the visitors in the first set by a score of 16-14. The two evenly matched squads alternated victories in the first four sets.

A rally point game was required to decide a winner. Dalhousie fell behind early and couldn't overcome the deficit as McGill advanced to the final with a 15-9 triumph. McGill went on to claim the tournament title over York in a close five set match, by scores of 15-12, 10-15, 15-9, 12-15, and 15-12.

Tigers continue AUSA perfection

BY ANDREW COOK

The Dalhousie Tigers women's basketball team faced another tough AUSA test and came out on top once again. The Tigers knocked off the University of New Brunswick (UNB) Varsity Reds by a score of 67-64 in Fredericton on Sunday afternoon. The win runs the Tigers perfect record in conference play to 10-0 and widens the gap between Dalhousie and the second place Memorial Seahawks.

Despite being overmatched talent-wise, the Lady Reds put together a gritty effort in front of the home town crowd, giving the Tigers all that they could handle. The game was a battle throughout, with Dalhousie clinging to a 37-36 lead at the half.

The Reds hit the Tigers with several runs during the second half, but the veteran Dalhousie squad just them all in stride. With Carolyn Wares, the nation's leading rebounder, fouling out with two minutes remaining, Dalhousie kept their composure

and held on for the victory when a UNB three point attempt rimmed out at the buzzer. Dalhousie was led in scoring by Wares, who had 14, while Claire Polomark and Danielle Moe each chipped in with 13.

While one would expect a road win to strengthen the Tiger's national ranking, Dalhousie remained eighth in the CIAU. The Tigers may be a victim of a lack of exposure, and with no other AUSA women's teams cracking the top ten, respect is going to be tough to come by. For Dalhousie, earning respect will have to come at the CIAUs March 8-10 at Laval, where they will have a chance to go head-to-head with those teams ranked ahead of them.

With the win, the Dalhousie women will spend the week preparing for a trip to Antigonish to face the X-Women of St. Francis Xavier on Saturday evening. The Tigers will then travel to Cape Breton to take on Janice Moseychuck and the Capers on Sunday afternoon.

athlete of the week

Jenn Parkes, Women's Volleyball



Jenn was an All-Star at this past weekend's Digs Dalhousie Volleyball Classic. The Tigers placed third in this event, led by Jenn with 10 Aces, 50 Kills, and 14 Stuffed Blocks. Jenn is from Sydney, NS and studies science at Dal.

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The experience gained from this tournament, which boasted some of the top teams in Canada, is a step forward for the Tigers. This weekend's successes and disappointments will only add incentive to the Tigers' work ethic.

"It will give them the drive to train at a higher level, the drive to work," said Irie. "Being more consistent at a higher level is our goal."

"We have to work on varying sets and options of plays," commented Hilchey. "When playing

really good teams, we have to be confident in our ability to win."

Team cohesion and the rapport developing between the players will also assist in pushing the team to the next level.

"They have confidence in each other, faith in each other," noted Irie. "A lot more than before the tournament."

The Tigers are on the road on February 1 at St. Francis Xavier before returning to the Dalplex for their final three AUSA league matches.

Tigers knocked off in double overtime

BY ANDREW COOK

The Dalhousie Tigers suffered their first loss in league play Sunday afternoon in Fredericton, dropping a 106-100 decision in double overtime to the University of New Brunswick (UNB) Varsity Reds.

The foul-marred game was certainly one neither side wants to remember. The officials were active early and often, whistling the Tigers for 41 personal fouls, fouling out six Dalhousie players, and sending the Varsity Reds to the line an AUSA record breaking 62 times. With the whistle steadily blowing and the Dalhousie starters constantly in foul trouble, the Tigers and their now vaunted up-tempo offence never got a chance to get going.

UNB fans watched 6'9" centre Simon Orr-Ewing and 6'7" forward John Kreiner combine for 54 of the Varsity Reds' 106 points. Orr-Ewing, who struggled in the Reds' last game against Dal, hauled in 13 rebounds to go along with his 26 points. Back up guard Simon McDougall added 10 in a winning effort.

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— Coach Tim McGarrigle

The Tigers were once again led by point guard Brian Parker, who dropped in 23 points despite playing much of the game in foul trouble, and eventually fouling out.

Easy to overlook in this contest was the impressive effort put forth by the Tigers' bench. Forced into action when all five starters fouled out, the Dalhousie subs gave the UNB starters all they could handle.

"Our bench really benefitted from the extra playing time they've received over the past few months," said coach Tim McGarrigle. "With

all of the injuries, players like Blair (Pallopson) and Kevin (Bellamy) have taken their games to another level."

Despite the gross disparity in fouls called, the Tigers did have their chances to win the game before UNB put together an 8-0 run in the second overtime. Dalhousie missed two shots late in regulation, as well as two free throws with the score tied and just two seconds remaining in the first overtime.

If Dalhousie is going to find success on the road it is clear their free throw shooting will have to improve. A solid 73% from the charity stripe at the Dalplex quickly falls to an unsettling 61% in opposing school's gyms. This is an area of concern for coach McGarrigle, who knows that road wins are tough to come by in the nation's deepest conference.

"The difference between being in games on the road and winning games on the road for us right now lies in stepping up and making free throws when it counts," commented the Tigers' coach. "Every team in the league steps it up a notch on their own floor and it's going to take an extra effort if we're going to get some wins away from home."

For the Tigers, the loss of a four-point game hurts their conference standing but shouldn't affect them on the national scene. With the loss, Dalhousie is replaced by Acadia atop the AUSA standings, but the Tigers figure to remain in the top five nationally, thanks to two Alberta losses over the weekend and Dal's throttling of Acadia last Wednesday at the Dalplex.

With UNB out of the way, the Tigers continue their longest road swing of the season in Antigonish on January 27. Dal faces Merrick Palmer and the X-Men on Saturday, followed by a trip to the Cape to battle UCCB on Sunday.