

York badminton out of playoffs

by Franko Fernandez

Despite a dramatic comeback, the badminton Yeomen came up one win short of a playoff spot in the final OUAA tournament at the Royal Military College (RMC) January 27. It all came down to the last doubles match.

The Yeomen came into the tournament trailing Western by nine points and Waterloo by 11 in a three-way battle for the two final berths. The cross-over format gives Eastern teams 10 more games than their Western rivals in the East versus West tournaments, so York was within striking distance.

The team closed the gap dramatically, winning 14 out of 20 singles matches, and was trailing

both Western and Waterloo by only four points after Saturday's play, with 10 doubles matches remaining. York's top two seeds Eddie Watt and Dan MacDonald led the way, both going five for five. Sharing third spot for York with one point each were Tutul Kundu and Thomas Siaw. Fourth seeded Yeoman Jason Ferguson won two of five.

In the doubles, York's second pair, Kundu and Siaw, won their first four matches, while Watt and MacDonald took their first three. With three matches to go, the Yeomen needed to win only one of the two matches against Waterloo to clinch the final playoff spot.

After losing to Western, Watt and MacDonald took the first game from Waterloo's top team

but lost the next two, suffering from "battle fatigue" after an intense weekend of play.

In the final match of the day, Kundu and Siaw lost the first game to Waterloo's second pair 15-10 but battled back to take the second game 18-16. They fell behind early in the second game, made a strong comeback, but lost 15-10.

"The team played with great intensity," said York head coach Fred Fletcher, "but we just ran out of gas. Eddie (player/coach) Watt had the team as well prepared as they could have been and every player gave it his best shot. Tutul and Thomas were very strong in the doubles.

"In the end, it was fitting that it came down to two games against Waterloo," Fletcher said. "They

took both and deserved the playoff spot."

UofT took top spot for the year with 84 points, followed by Queen's with 80, Western at 60 and Waterloo with 58. York's 57 points (for fifth place) was a significant improvement over its seventh place finish last year. "With any luck," Fletcher said, "most of our players will be back. Watch out for us in 1990-91."

There was a silver lining to the badminton Yeomen's black cloud of disappointment at narrowly missing the OUAA playoffs.

Player/coach Eddie Watt swept his singles at RMC and ended up tied with UofT's Steve Nenninger for most singles victories among the top seeds. Both won 14 of their 16 singles matches over the four tournaments.

Watt was awarded the silver medal and Nenninger the gold. Watt's only two losses were to Nenninger.

Watt and Dan MacDonald wound up third among the top doubles pairs, winning 10 of 13 matches. In unofficial results,

MacDonald was among the top performers among second seeds, winning 11 of his 16 singles matches.

The Yeowomen badminton team, led by Sharon Johnston, picked up 14 points at the final OWIAA tournament at RMC on the weekend.

York edged Ryerson for sixth place, up a notch from last year. With two first year players starting, the team expects continued improvement as it enters its fourth year of operation next year.

One bright spot for the Yeowomen was the performance of player/coach Johnston, who swept her five singles matches and ended up tied for third place among top seeds. She was fifth last year.

Sandra Zagar, in her final tournament for York, won three singles and two doubles matches. Also contributing with wins for York were Rebecca Staples (one), and Roula Roubis (three) and Tracey Moreland (two). Yvonne Ong sat out the final tournament.



Hibbert victorious in Auckland

York student Curtis Hibbert has brought home the gold in a best-ever performance by a Canadian gymnast in the Commonwealth Game's history.

Greeted by friends and family at Pearson International Airport Sunday night, Hibbert showed off the five gold, one silver and one bronze medal he captured in Auckland, New Zealand.

Masaaki Naosaki, Hibbert's coach, who was not allowed to accompany the gymnast to

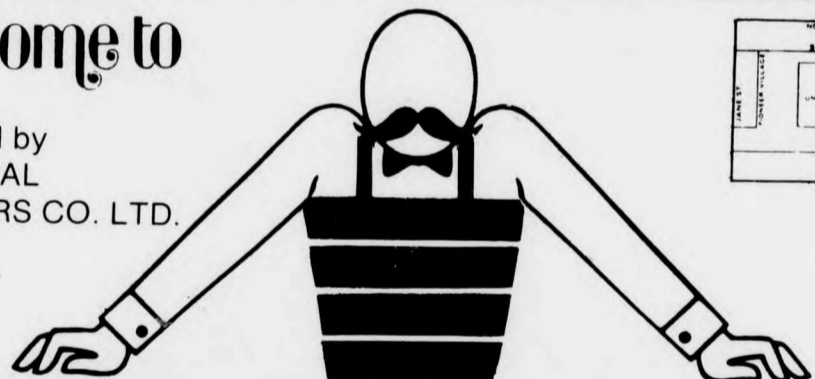
New Zealand because of international conflict with the administration, said, "I'm impressed with Hibbert's performance but I noticed that he was uptight during his floor exercises. Under that kind of pressure he competed very well."

Hibbert's next challenge is the 1991 World Championships in Indianapolis.

Naosaki hopes to resolve all of his problems with York and coach Hibbert in the World Championships and the 1992 Olympics.

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