

# SPORTS

## CATCH 22: PANTHERS LEFT OUT IN THE COLD

By Scott MacDonald

SINCE WHEN HAS A 22 POINT LOSS BEEN A reason to be invited to the CIAU playoffs? If you answered never, then you are correct. After making a valiant run at the AUAA title last weekend, the Panthers came up 4 points short in the race for their first conference crown since 1989, but their 22 point blowout victory over the Saint Mary's Huskies would make the casual fan ask: "Why the hell were those bums invited over us?". Comments floating around campus about the snub include: "It's garbage", "We kicked their butt, we deserve to be there", and "A fluke would be a three point win, not 22".

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Saint Mary's only played one game in the AUAA playoffs, and being that it ended as one-sided as it did, most observers would be left questioning why they were more deserving of a wild-card berth than we are. The CIAU selection committee made statements saying that the Panthers 22 point annihilation of the Huskies was only "an aberration", and SMU's #7 ranking in the country heading into the playoffs was more deserving of the berth than the unranked Panthers were. They also quote the fact that SMU defeated the Panthers twice during the season. But the two Huskie wins (totalling 9 points combined) came at times when the Panthers were not fielding squads that were not completely healthy; so putting my menial math skills to work, that would make the Panthers still up 13 points on the three meetings.

But the real reason that the Panthers were slighted was a fact of life that shows the true face of intercollegiate sports: the Huskies are in mainly because of money. Obviously SMU would draw a bigger crowd to the Metro Center than the Panthers would; the UPEI-SMU game drew approximately 6,000+ fans while the UPEI-UCCB championship game took in about 3,500. SMU sells tickets, its as simple as that, and they are going to be a 'better draw' than our beloved Panthers.

When all is said and done, however, the Panthers are still going to be left on the outside looking in, all the protests in the world cannot and will not be able to avert this eventuality. So the only thing that you can possibly do is to realize that the team had a great year, and perhaps this may be the thing to give the team some intensity for next season. From the university to the members of the Panthers we would like to thank all of you for a very enjoyable year.



## Panthers lose in AUAA playoffs Close but no cigar

BY SCOTT MACDONALD

AS THIS GOES TO PRESS POST-CIAU, one can only sit and wonder as to how well the Panthers could have done in the Canadian version of March Madness, but as the line goes we'll just have to "...wait 'til next year". The Panthers, while losing in the final game of the AUAA playoffs, had an excellent weekend but unfortunately came up just a bit short.

The Panthers' first round match-up saw them as the number three seed in the conference playoffs battling against the sixth-seeded Acadia Axemen. The Axemen were in the throes of a long losing streak, and Acadia was the last team to beat the Panthers in the AUAA playoffs, defeating the P's in the first round of the 1990 playoffs. The Panthers' 85-80 win this time around could be attributed primarily to two men: Raham Dixon and Curtis Robinson, who accounted for 65 of the team's 85 points. Dennis Smith also played an excellent game as he threw in 12 points to go with excellent defense and rebounding. Dixon put on a balanced offensive show as he scored 19 in each half on his way to a tournament high 38 point outing. Robinson's 27-point effort included a key bucket with 1:39 to play which gave UPEI a 81-80 lead

which they never relinquished. The game was one of the best I've seen since the overtime loss to St. FX two years ago, as the Panthers fought back from a 71-61 hole with 7:37 to play to come out on top.

The second game (against the Huskies) showed how much a good defence translates into good offence as a determined Panther 'D' frustrated All-AUAA stars Richard Sullivan and Will Njoku into a horrendous evening of shooting. Sullivan was

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absolutely stone-cold as he shot 2-18 to score 11 points, while Njoku wasn't much better at 6-21 for 21 points. Overall, a stifling defensive presence left the Huskies at a pathetic 29%. Darrell Glenn's 4-point play (three pointer and a free throw) sparked a 17-0 run that made the lead 65-41 with 11 minutes to play. Offensively Glenn ignited for 16, Dixon and Robinson had 15 each, Peter Lawlor struck for 13, and Smith had another great game with 12, as well as limiting Njoku's inside game.

The Panthers came very close in the final, coming from a 13 point deficit at the half to take a 67-66 lead with 3:19 left after a pair of Dixon free throws. The Panthers' comeback started with a 14-4 run 5:39 into the second half. Peter Lawlor was the key man in the comeback: his short jumper brought the P's to within one, and the next time down the floor buried a 3 to even up the game, and later his free throw gave UPEI a one point lead and then followed it up with another jumper to push the Panthers up by 3 points. In the end Rawle Philadelphia was too much at the line for the P's, as his 3-point play did in the team. Dixon led the team again with 24, Robinson had 16, Lawlor 13, and Smith finished with 12 for the 3rd straight game.