

# Rural Raiders Take Back Island Basketball Crown

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SPORTS EDITOR

What were the most exciting, fan crazy, jam packed, rival intensive games held at the UPEI Sports Center this year? Although it may surprise some, those games were the High School Basketball AA Finals. Both the Men's and Women's gold medal games featured the age old cross town rivalry of the Charlottetown Rural Raiders against the Colonel Grey Colonels. Reminiscent of the "March Madness" crowds of the current NCAA finals in the U.S., fans for the Gray and Rural sported school t-shirts, anti Rural/Grey clothing passed down from older siblings, face paint, propaganda posters and noise makers to cheer on their school teams. Added to the current fan base, were former Raiders/Redmen and Colonels going back quite possibly to the opening of the two Charlottetown schools.

The opening game saw the Grey girls who had finished first in the league taking on the Rural team who had finished third. Rural came into the game still high off their upset against the Bluefield Bobcats who had finished second in the league. In

that game the Raiders had trailed 26-10 at half time but came back to tie it up in the second half and then went on to win in overtime. Both Rural and Grey got off to a slow start possibly due to the large crowd or unfamiliar venue of the Field House and 10 minutes into the game the Colonels led 13-04. The two teams soon found their grooves, however, and with less than 2 minutes remaining in the first half Kim Swan hit her third three pointer to put the Raiders up 21-19. Charlottetown Rural scored two more times after that and finished the half up 24-19. Grey was able to battle back in the second half and tied the Raiders 31-31 but Swan, who went on to be named MVP of the tournament, hit another three with just over 8 minutes remaining to put the Raiders back in the lead. The Raiders kept the lead and the final score was Rural 54 Gray 43.

This win returned Charlottetown Rural to the top of the Island in High School Basketball a title they have not held since back to back championships in 1991 and 1992. "We had a very close knit team," Coach Mike Lloyd said when asked about the game, "we worked hard all year." Lloyd also said that the Raiders had to use their ability to stick to their game plan in order to counter the stars of the

Grey who were an able opponent. "It was a great victory, nobody even thought we'd get past Bluefield," added grade 12 point guard and co-captain Sarah Adams "we just went out and said what the hell do we have to lose, our fans were going wild and we fought hard all game."

In the second game the score did not remain as close. The Men's Raiders, who finished number 1 in the league and were a powerhouse all season, pulverized the Colonels 82-47 breaking the 5 year absence of Rural gold. Ryan Paquet and Donnie Killorn, who were each named to the All-Star team, hit several threes each for the Raiders and "big man" Hughie Mullaly, who was named tournament MVP, did his job inside. This game marked the fifth championship and the end of a great coaching career for head coach Dale Farish. Farish retired from coaching the Raiders and as assistant coach of UPEI at the end of this season.

"We knew what we were capable of doing going in," said 3rd year center and co-captain Hughie Mullaly "I had confidence in my team-mates and we functioned as a unit finishing off the year playing great basketball." The pair of championships for Charlottetown Rural is the first time both teams won gold in the same year since 1991. □

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