

PLAYOFFS THIS WEEKEND UNDEFEATED, THE LADY PANTHERS !!

by John Cairns

Last season the lady's basketball team at the University of Prince Edward Island went winless. It must have been a frustrating experience. Whether frustrating or not, however, it appears to have been beneficial. This season things have been completely turned around and the Lady Panthers have yet to lose. Through nineteen league games the UPEI girls have handled their opponents with apparent ease. What caused this sudden shift in fortune? Is the team as good as its record shows? Will the victories continue this weekend when the team goes away for the playoffs? These were the questions this reporter had in mind during the following conversation with players Dawn MacLeod and Alyson Maxwell.

J.C. - What was your closest game? What was your most lopsided one?

D.M. - The closest one was eight points at Mount A.

A.M. - St. Thomas was the most lopsided one, something like 99-16. Games like that are terrible. We couldn't do anything and neither could they.

J.C. - Who was closest behind you in the standings?

D.M. - Mount A. They were behind us by four games. We beat them in four games and that was it because they won every one of their other games. We were 19-0. They were 15-4.

J.C. - What is the secret? How do you account for winning every game?

D.M. & A.M. - Hermie! (Hermie is Hermie MacNeil, the team's coach.)

D.M. - Really too, I think it is because the team plays as a team. It has been a team effort more than any one individually.

A.M. - The team has a base to it. The base is every-

one together, you know? Nobody is really high on potential, but everybody is together. Everybody is equal, so we know we have to work with each other. Hermie helps out on that too.

D.M. - There hasn't been anyone who got all the points. Every player has had a share of being top scorer.

J.C. - When the season started did you expect to be undefeated right now?

D.M. - Not at all. We thought the competition would be quite a bit tougher because Mount A. had beaten UPEI last year in all four games that they played. Not by much, but still we thought it would be awfully tough. And it really was against Mount A. It was undecided between the two teams who was going to win each game.

A.M. - But we never gave up. We always kept fighting, even when it was close. We don't have any quitters on our team at all. That is one thing really good.

D.M. - This weekend is going to show it, eh?

J.C. - Are you really as good as 19-0?

D.M. - The record shows it.

A.M. - In this division we are. We can't really say about the Nova Scotia teams because we haven't even seen them and they haven't seen us. They're in the other division and the divisions don't play each other until the playoffs.

J.C. - So what do you expect this weekend when you go away for the playoffs?

A.M. - We're going to be there. That's for sure.

D.M. - We don't know. We don't know what the other teams are like at all. We don't know if they think they are going to have it all over us or if they're afraid to go out against us.

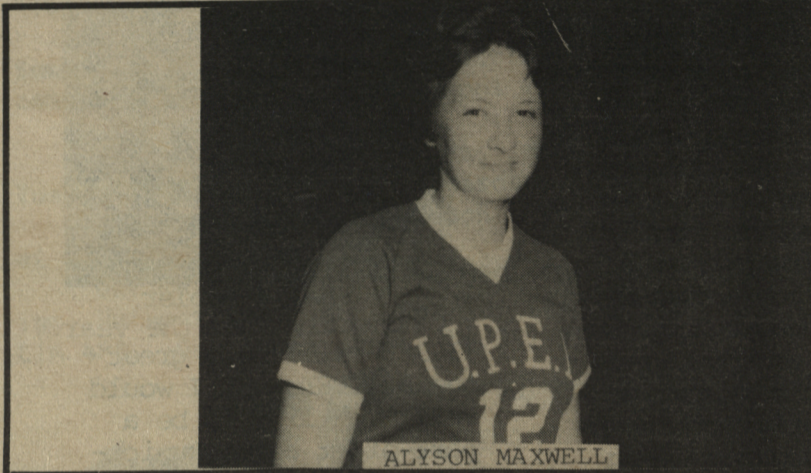
A.M. - We play UNB first. They're ranked number four in Canada and we don't have a ranking at all. That's the big difference, really, in your mind.

D.M. - I don't understand the set-up. Three teams from the other division go into the playoffs and only one from this division. I don't think that is very

freshmen and everyone else continues it is going to be a stacked team within three years. I imagine everybody from PEI will be back and most of the team is made up of PEI players.

J.C. - Are there any seniors on the team at all?

D.M. - None, Sandy Drysdale is in her third year. She is closest. Everyone else



ALYSON MAXWELL

fair. Even if they are better I still think the top two teams in each division should advance. And then, the way they're doing it is that the first and fourth teams in the conference play. The three from the other division are supposed to be tops and we're fourth.

A.M. - So we are the underdogs really.

J.C. - You haven't seen the Nova Scotia teams and they haven't seen you. Will that be a disadvantage now that the playoffs are here?

A.M. - On our part, yes. On their part, maybe.

D.M. - Well, UNB, they have all their players from last year. Their team is the same.

A.M. - They have a lot of experience on that team, but they don't work as a team as we do. I know that.

J.C. - Last year some teams, St. Mary's for one, had Olympic players. Will those people be there this weekend too?

D.M. - Carol Turney and them. Yes, they'll be there.

A.M. - But that team is only rated number three in the other division. They can't be all that good.

J.C. - You've certainly had a great year this year. How does it look for next year?

D.M. - Hopefully most of the team is going to be back. We don't really know yet. Nobody has said anything about it.

A.M. - They're going out recruiting more too. If they recruit a few more

is a freshman or a sophomore.

J.C. - This year certainly looks like a turning point for the team. Is it too soon to say you are building a dynasty in this division?

D.M. - Unless the other teams in the division improve we'll be close to having a dynasty. There was no competition at all until we came to Mount A. and Memorial from Newfoundland wasn't too bad. They gave us a good go too.

A.M. - And then seeing our record this year we could be switched over to the other division next year. That could make it tougher for us or it could make it easier.

J.C. - Would you want to go into that division?

D.M. - Yes, competition you need in order to improve as a team. In some of the games this year we couldn't improve at all. You just can't do that and then go into the playoffs like we are doing this weekend.

A.M. - We don't know what to expect this weekend at all.

J.C. - UPEI basketball fans can justly take pride in their Lady Panthers. Alyson Maxwell said the team might be stacked with talent within three years. The other teams in the division probably think they are quite good enough now. In a world where improvement from year to year means so much they could not have done any better. They have completed a perfect season, and they show the promise of success in the playoffs. We wish them well.



DAWN MacLEOD