

SPORTS

Capers Shut Down Huskies to Claim AUS Title



Josh Lewis
Reporter

They dominated the conference all season long and on Sunday the Cape Breton Capers got their reward, defeating the Saint Mary's Huskies 68-56 at UPEI to win their second Atlantic University Sport women's basketball championship in three years. Point guard Debbie Ruiz poured in 25 points to earn the player of the game award for CBU, which heads to the Canadian Inter-university Sport championship one year after bowing out to Memorial in the AUS final. Conference rookie of the year Kelsey Daley led Saint Mary's with 18 points and took home player of the game honours for the Huskies.

The Capers dominated early in the game, a rematch of last year's AUS semifinal, controlling the play and causing several turnovers, as Ruiz caused all kinds of trouble for the Huskies at both ends of the court. Her teammate's high-tempo play made it difficult for the opposition to get anything going, and Cape Breton jumped out to an early 20-6 lead. The Huskies managed to keep things fairly even for the remainder of the half, but failed to make up any ground, and the Capers led 42-25 at the half.

The Huskies had a tense moment at the end of the first half as fifth-year post Laura MacPherson, a North Wiltshire native, left the game with two minutes to play after being knocked down under the net. MacPherson received medical attention and would return in the second half.

The Huskies began the second half much better than the first, clawing back with an early 7-2 run. The attempt was short-lived, however, as Cape Breton began to apply pressure and extended its lead to 21 points with just under nine minutes to play. Saint Mary's once again showed signs of a comeback with a 6-0 run keyed by guard Sherelle Carvery, but failed to make up much ground. The Huskies trailed 66-49 with three minutes left when forward Vanessa Ryan restored a glimmer of hope with a three-pointer. Guard Natasha Eadie put an

end to any possible comeback, however, with a clutch trey of her own with 1:30 remaining. Saint Mary's guard Shannon Grant scored as time expired, but it would not be nearly enough for the third-seeded Huskies.

In addition to Ruiz's 25 points, the Capers got plenty of secondary scoring from Tamara Alleyne (15 points), Maureen Murrin (10) and Eadie (10). SMU's Carvery, MacPherson and Alise Brown each contributed eight points in a losing effort.

CBU, the tournament's top seed, advanced to the final after a 61-51 victory over the fourth-seeded Dalhousie Tigers on Saturday. Eadie led the way for the Capers with 18 points, while Cecilia Romero added 16 and Ruiz chipped in 12. Tournament all-star Ryan McKay scored 18 points for Dalhousie, with Leslie Duncan adding 12.

Saint Mary's got to the final with a 64-52 upset of second-seeded UNB, also on Saturday. Carvery and MacPherson led the Huskies with 17 and 16 points respectively, with MacPherson garnering player of the game honours. Carolyn Plummer was the top scorer for the Varsity Reds with 17 points, while Christy McBride tallied 13.

Friday's quarterfinal action saw the host UPEI Panthers vanquished by Saint Mary's 59-42. Lindsay Coade had 11 points for the Panthers, while Brown and Carvery led the Huskies with 16 and 14 points.

Also Friday, Dalhousie dominated the fifth-seeded Memorial Seahawks by a score of 65-48 on the strength of a 21-point effort by McKay. Katherine Quackenbush led Memorial with 22 points, while Krista Singleton added 10.

The CIS championship, taking place this weekend at UNB, will be the last hurrah for Murrin and Cheryl MacInnis of the Capers, while Sunday's loss marked the final game of CIS eligibility for MacPherson and Christie Darius of Saint Mary's.

What Happened?!

Josh Lewis
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Did hell just freeze over? Or am I seeing things? This is worse than the time Gary Bettman was named NHL commissioner and his first question was

"How do I open this puck?" At any rate, Canadian hockey fans witnessed a shocker a couple of weeks ago when Team Canada lost to Russia 2-0 in the quarterfinals of the Olympics. It was a bigger surprise than it would be for the Toronto Maple Leafs to make the playoffs this season (sorry Pat Quinn, but I'm a realist).

Canada actually played very well for most of the game, matching the Russians chance for chance and hit for hit. I was impressed that they actually seemed to care, unlike every game in the round-robin, when they looked like they'd rather be golfing. The game was tied after two periods, but Todd Bertuzzi's penalty at the end of the second would prove fatal, as Alexander "The Moscow Missile" Ovechkin scored on the power play under a minute into the third to give Russia the lead for good. Alex Kovalev added what may as well have been an empty netter with 23 seconds left to seal the victory. I say empty netter because Marty Brodeur didn't try to stop the shot. Really, can you blame him? He deserved much better than this for his stellar play throughout the tournament.

Canada was all over the Russians in the final 10 minutes, overwhelming the opposition with rush after rush, chance after chance. I thought to myself, "What do we have to do to buy a goal here?" And then, we scored! Oh wait. Dennis Larue is a dumbass. Apparently he lost sight of the puck. How do you lose sight of the puck when it's in the middle of the crease? Thanks, Dennis. Thanks for screwing over an entire nation.

Despite the intervention of an American ref, the fact remains that the



Canadians did not deserve to win gold. They didn't even deserve to make the medal round, but even they couldn't find a way to lose to Italy. This team just

did not have the passion or the desire that Canadian hockey prides itself on.

I could handle it if our guys gave it their all and came up short. But losing because they didn't have the heart? I have never, EVER seen that from a Canadian hockey team in my entire life. Even the Nagano team had more determination than the Torino version.



Say what you want about Wayne Gretzky, Kevin Lowe and company, but don't hang this mess on them. It wouldn't have mattered if Bobby Orr and Rocket Richard were in the line-up. This team simply did not want to win. Saying that Canada lost because Gretzky picked the wrong team is ridiculous. Having Jason Spezza, Eric Staal or Dion Phaneuf on the squad wouldn't have helped one bit. If you want to lay blame (and I do), throw it at guys like Rick Nash, Todd Bertuzzi, Joe Thornton, and yes, even Bryan McCabe, who floated around the entire tournament. With the exception of Nash, their effort was disappointing at best. Nash had his chances, but he just couldn't seem to find the trigger.

This isn't Nagano all over again. There's no need for any fundamental change in Canadian hockey. Canada iced some of the best hockey players in the world. They just didn't show up. I can't prescribe a remedy for that, but let's hope the humiliation of letting down an entire country will do the trick.

"But Lewis, you said we'd win the gold medal! What about your spotless record?"

Ah, shaddup. People have made false guarantees before (read: Daniel Alfredsson).