

Mr. Robinson's neighbourhood

The AUAA'S MVP Curtis Robinson

By Scott MacDonald

The University of Prince Edward Island has seen plenty of high scorers throughout its tenure in the AUAA: perimeter players like Peter Gordon and Raham Dixon invoke visions of sleek guards raining in three-pointers from all over the court. UPEI's latest scoring machine goes about his job in a different way.

Curtis Robinson led the AUAA in scoring this year with 505 points good for a 25.3 ppg with the majority of those coming in the paint. The fourth year 6'6", 205 lb BA student has stepped up his game this year, as he dons his hard hat and battles it out in the paint nightly, against the biggest players in the league.

Robinson (a native of Pierrefonds, Quebec) came to UPEI after playing at John Abbott Junior College in Montreal, where he was first team All-conference, scoring 23 ppg. He originally planned on heading to Waterloo, but was impressed by how much head coach George Morrison wanted him to come to P.E.I.

"George had a lot of interest in me. He was very aggressive in recruiting, and I liked the idea of starting right away," he says.

Curtis found the jump to the academic level easier to adjust to than the quality of the playing competition. "Players (in the AUAA) were stronger, more physical, and quicker. Maturity-wise, everyone was one step higher. Academically, it was easy, junior college was a good preparation for university."

Robinson quickly made an imprint on the AUAA, being named Freshman of the Year for the 1991-92 campaign. He placed among the league leaders in scoring, rebounding, field goals, and led the league in steals. He was a key component of a Panthers team which featured a large batch of newcomers.

He feels the 1993-94 season was the best year he has seen during his stay at UPEI. The Panthers were ranked in the CIAU's top ten during the season, and came up just short of a CIAU playoff berth: losing by four in the AUAA finals to Cape Breton. "That team was the best of the three years that I was here. We all came together, and were a very mature group," he remembers. Curtis once again led the league in steals, and ranked among the top five in scoring and rebounding on his way to a berth on the all-conference team.

The loss of leading scorer Raham Dixon has caused Robinson to elevate his game from All-AUAA to the level of All-Canadian. He has found a new role to play for the Panthers this year: a leader in the locker room and on the court; not only statistically, but guidance-wise as well.

As the only legitimate inside threat on a team full of three-point bombers, he has seen teams collapse on his with double and triple teams. Most opponents go into matchups with UPEI with the intent of shutting down the middle by swarming Curtis with defenders, hoping to defuse the high octane Panther attack.

"My game has evolved, but not the way I thought. I thought I would go from playing on the inside to the perimeter. I'm still inside, and usually the smallest guy, playing against posts like Bella and Njoku. I'm improving my passing out of the double team. Most teams clamp down on me, but it's a team game, the other guys have to perform for us to win," he comments.

Being a role model for some of his younger teammates has been a tougher transition than he believed it would be. "It's harder to be a role model than I thought. I try to give advice to some of the younger players every day in practice. I try to make them into better players; the younger guys have a lot of potential, I try to help them out by giving them comments during each practice."

Sophomore teammate Greg Lucas agrees. "He definitely helps. He's the best centre in the league, so practising against him makes me a better player. It makes it easier to play after facing him each day in practice, as the competition in games is easier to face."

His scoring is what has turned him into a household name around the AUAA this year. Robinson's league leading average has been fuelled by several big games highlighted by a 40 point outburst against Memorial, and a school record 54 versus perennial power St. FX. Against St. FX, Robinson pulled out every weapon in his deep offensive arsenal: jump shots, three-pointers, slashing drives to the hoop, and a variety of spin moves down low. The 54 point, 22 rebound game earned him Athlete of the Week distinction from both the AUAA and the CIAU. The 54 points was the second highest total ever scored in a Canadian university game.

Curtis was an overwhelming choice for league MVP this year, as the award was given out last Thursday. Robinson is the first Panther to be awarded this honour since Peter Gordon took home the trophy six years ago. Besides his scoring numbers, he finished in second place in league rebounding with 8.7 rpg, and second in field goal percentage, making better than 61% of his attempts.

The casual fan may think that since he's scoring so much, he must be having an enjoyable year; Robinson is quick to point out that it isn't true. "Scoring is rewarding, but I've got to win; (basketball) is no fun without winning. Winning is everything," Curtis says. A feeling echoed by fellow Panther Craig Walker, "He's a good player who really wants to win."

This past weekend, the Panthers were hoping to do just that as they took their show on the road to Halifax for the AUAA playoffs. They just made it into the second season with a 9-11 record good for 24 points, getting the last playoff berth available on the seasons final weekend. They played traditional nemesis St. FX on Friday night in their first round matchup. Robinson's four years at UPEI have been very important to him, and he realizes that he has learned a lot, not only on the floor, but about the way things work in life. That may be the most important lesson that anyone could gain from university.

60-57. Hillary Watson was named a second team All-AUAA player, the third year in a row that she made the second team. ***The mens hockey Panthers early exit from the playoffs was a disappointing way to end a season which saw so much promise. Rookie defenceman Daryl Lavoie was named a first team All-Star in the MacAdam division. Scoring sensation John Nelson was slighted, however, as he failed to make the team. Nelson being withheld from the team is ridiculous; he was second in the AUAA in scoring, and ranked third in all of Canada in total points. Nelson was clearly one of the top frontliners in the AUAA this season, and was clearly deserving of an All-Conference selection.



PISCES (Feb 19 - Mar 20)

You will buy one of those scratch and win lotto tickets and this time you will be a winner...of \$1, that is. Hey...at least you broke even!

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 19)

You will say hello to a person you have never met before, but is in one of your classes. That person will proceed to stalk you and harass you with obscene phone calls at 2 am every morning.

TAURUS (Apr 20 - May 20)

Watch out while driving this week...you will be in your beloved car, racing down University Avenue at twice the speed limit, get stopped by the local police and spend the night in jail.

GEMINI (May 21 - Jun 20)

One of the rafters in the Kelley Building is going to rot and fall on top of you on your way to check the tentative exam schedule by the Registrar's Office.

CANCER (Jun 21 - Jul 22)

You will go to the Pit and sit around a while and do nothing. On your next trip to the doctor, you will find out that you have contracted lung cancer and emphysema.

LEO (Jul 23 - Aug 22)

While walking on campus, you are going to start day-dreaming about a special someone and then in the midst of that fantasy, you will not be watching where you are going and walk right into the person you were thinking about.

VIRGO (Aug 23 - Sept 22)

You will walk to Subway one day during a break and take a short cut through the field by the dorms. You are going to sink waist deep into the sludge in the middle of it.

LIBRA (Sept 23 - Oct 22)

Approximately forty-one people are going to laugh at you in the run of an hour. You will wonder why and become very self-conscious, until you notice the toilet paper stuck to your shoe.

SCORPIO (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

A person from your past will reappear and you will think it is because of their undying love for you...it is because of the money you owe them.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

Upon going downtown for a few drinks at your favourite bar, you will be hit on by every person that you see. Don't worry, it is just because you are so darn good-looking.

CAPRICORN (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

There will be a bomb threat in one of the buildings and you will somehow get trapped in a room with the person of your dreams. You will be suspected of phoning in the threat.

AQUARIUS (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

You will try to attempt to get your yearbook from the X-Press office and the disgruntled employee you encounter will suddenly pull out a pistol and direct you to the actual Yearbook office.



***The womens' basketball Panthers came very close but fell 3 points shy of an AUAA title, losing in the finals to Memorial