CIS women's volleyball nationals: V-Blues prevent dramatic comeback, upset Carabins

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[Nathan Liewicki](#), **Sports Staff**

After blowing a 2–0 set lead, the Toronto Varsity Blues mustered up extra grit and determination in coming back from a 14–10 fifth-set deficit to win 16–14, and defeated the second-ranked Montreal Carabins in the most exciting match of the tournament so far.

One point away from completing an impressive comeback, the Carabins imploded with an assortment of untimely mistakes, allowing the V-Blues to snag the final six points of the match and the victory.

"It was a bit shaky being down 14–10, but I have to hand it to the athletes. They played clutch when they needed to play clutch, and I am really proud that they gutted it out and demonstrated some character," Toronto head coach Kristine Drakich admitted.

Down two sets, the Carabins appeared to find their rhythm as they began to increase their level of blocking and attacking. Led by Sophie Leblanc (11 kills) and Laetitia Tchoualak (18 kills), the Carabins displayed tenacity and heart in pushing the match to its full limit — however, they could not close out Heather Bansley and the Varsity Blues.

One of five fifth-year players for Toronto, Bansley was all over the floor helping her team both offensively and defensively, proving her worth as a potential candidate for a CIS First-Team All-Star position. The Waterdown, Ontario product tallied 13 digs to go along with a game-high 24 kills.

"Heather was so good and so solid today. She is so small, but she can use the block and she made some clutch digs for us," Drakich said.

Toronto will now have to prepare themselves for a showdown at high noon with the Beth Clark and the Regina Cougars in Sunday's fifth-place match.

"We really wanted to play on Sunday, and for many of the athletes, [especially] those in their last year of eligibility, it has taken them a while to get here," Drakich explained. "In the tight moments, I think they believed they would be playing on Sunday."