

Podloski powers puck Pandas past pooches

Edmonton product's six-goal and nine-point weekend helps keep Alberta atop the Canada West standings with a 9-1-0 record

PAUL OWEN
Sports Editor

Hockey coaches like to say that you need to be good to be lucky. Tarin Podloski was both in leading the Pandas to a pair of victories over the Saskatchewan Huskies (5-7-0) this weekend.

The third-year forward racked up six goals and added three assists on the weekend as Alberta downed the Huskies 5-1 on Friday night and 7-1 on Saturday.

The good half of Podloski's weekend started in the second period Friday when she handled a bouncing puck off a cross-ice pass from Lindsay Fairfield, batting it out of the air and past Saskatchewan goalie Erin McKay. Podloski displayed her skills again early on Saturday, scoring a pair of goals in the first period. On both, Podloski took the puck on the right wing and rifled it through goaltender Chauntal Armet's legs.

"I saw the five-hole open so I took a slapshot," said Podloski of her first two goals Saturday. "If I see any [opening] I like to hit it. [Armet] gave me a lot, so I knew if I shot quick I'd have a chance at scoring."

The luck would come for Podloski later in Saturday's game as a cross-ice pass to Jenna Barber deflected off a Saskatchewan defender and past Armet during the second period. In the third, Podloski managed to get her stick on a loose puck in front and pot her fourth goal.

"[Podloski is] just powerful," Saskatchewan head coach Wayne Grund said. "When she plays with Barber and [Lindsay] McAlpine, they play a beautiful three-way hockey. Then they double shift her onto that second line and she plays a completely different style. She plays a little more individualistic, drives it off the wall and is just a power



ANDREW RURAK

I THINK IT WENT OFF HER FOOT Tarin Podloski (81) watches as the puck she redirected slides past Chauntal Armet (31) for her fourth goal of Saturday's game.

forward; we couldn't contain her coming off the wall."

Podloski, McAlpine and Barber—the top three Canada West scorers—continued their dominant season notching a combined 20 points in the two games and controlling the puck when they were on the ice.

"They never stop, and they've got that killer instinct," Pandas head coach Howie Draper said of his top line. "When the opponent's down, they keep

kicking them, and they just don't give them an opportunity to get back up. I think that was indicative of the whole team, but especially those three."

The Pandas started slow on Friday, according to Draper, but still managed a 15-3 advantage in shots. While Draper noted that it could have been due to the team's bye week, their talent inevitably won out.

"Ultimately, I think we're a more skilled team," he said. "Maybe if we

were playing a team that was more even, then after that first period [on Friday] it wouldn't have been a 0-0 game. Once the flow starts going, particularly once we scored that first goal, it starts to loosen everybody up and [we start to] play our game."

Despite Draper's concerns, Grund thought that Alberta was the better team for all six periods this weekend.

"The Pandas were definitely hungry after their split with Manitoba and

they came out flying," Grund said. "They played the strongest hockey that they've ever played against us. They beat us to the puck all over the ice."

With the victories and Regina's two losses to Lethbridge, the Pandas now have a four-point lead in the Canada West standings with two games in hand.

"This has been our strongest start that I can remember in a long time," Draper said.



ANDREW RURAK

FAMILY RESEMBLANCE Theresa Iginla is sick of being Jarome's little sister, and is leading the Huskies in scoring as she distinguishes herself in CIS hockey.

Husky stepping out of bro's shadow

ANDREW RENFREE
Sports Staff

Ever since she first laced up skates, Theresa Iginla has always been known as Jarome's sister. After five years in her brother's shadow, the third-year Saskatchewan Husky is making a name for herself in the hockey world.

The soft-spoken Theresa doesn't really care for the limelight and would rather avoid the attention her famous surname generates as a result of her brother's success with the Calgary Flames. Whenever people see the name Iginla and the number twelve on the back of her jersey, she finds herself answering the same questions.

"It's a unique name so people always make the connection," she notes. "It's an honour to be compared to my brother—he's a great hockey player—but the comparisons do get old."

When Iginla started in CIS, she struggled to adjust to the pace of university hockey. She had only played hockey for three years before joining the Huskies in 2004/05, and her inexperience showed early on. In her rookie year, Iginla only notched a single goal and one assist, and did

only marginally better with a pair of goals and four helpers last season.

"She left her first years with not a lot of points and a lot of penalty minutes," Saskatchewan head coach Wayne Grund says.

But since struggling through her first two seasons, Iginla has, through a combination of disciplined off-ice training, mental focus and conditioning, evolved from a grinding player who spent more time in the penalty box than on the score sheet to one of the strongest power forwards in Canada West hockey. While she was held off the score sheet in a pair of losses at the hands of the University of Alberta Pandas this weekend, she leads the Huskies with six goals and four assists in twelve games, more points than her first two seasons combined.

"The biggest thing about Theresa and her growth has been her determination," Grund says. "She's as determined as any athlete, if not more so, that I've ever seen. Her year last year was okay, and one of the biggest things is that she really gained a lot of mental discipline in the off-season and she came into this year with a positive attitude and a lot of focus."

In addition to leading Saskatchewan in scoring, Iginla sits tied for ninth in Canada West for points. Her coaches feel that her offensive explosion this season is directly because of her off-season efforts and her desire to improve her game.

"She is our best conditioned athlete because she works so hard," Grund notes. "I couldn't believe when she came into camp in the shape that she was in, and she took that not only physically but mentally. She's been out of the penalty box and she's just driving to the net with a renewed passion for the game."

After seeing flashes of potential last year, the Huskies coaching staff told Theresa that she had a good shot at becoming an assistant captain for the 2006/07 season and her hard work has earned her the A this year.

"She's really matured into a team leader in the dressing room, and her desire to win is as hard as her desire to train," Grund says, adding that Theresa's attitude is rubbing off on her teammates. "Her passion has really spilled over into the other players—it's really been a nice domino effect throughout the room."