



FILE PHOTO: PETE YEE

GO FOR THE FIVE-HOLE These women's hockey teams don't know how good they have it with their school colours.

Rams stung by hockey bug

Ryerson University wants to catch up to the rest of CIS by getting a women's hockey team, but there are hoops—like playing for two years as the “Stingers”

JORDAN HAY
The Eyeopener

TORONTO (CUP)—The women's hockey program has returned to Ryerson after a 59-year hiatus. But don't call them the Rams—at least not yet.

Before being welcomed to CIS, the team must compete under probationary status in a different league for a minimum of two years.

In addition, players cannot compete under the name “Ryerson” or “Rams,” at the risk of losing eligibility once the probation period has ended.

“We don't want to lose a lot of our players, so we've entered them as the Stingers,” said acting Ryerson athletic director Jean Kennedy, a former University of Toronto hockey player.

Once assembled, the Stingers, who will play at York University, will be competing in the Tier 4 division of the Golden Blades Women's Hockey League. The veteran organization consists of four tiers, Tier 1 the most advanced.

“We decided that we should enter low and look good rather than enter high,” Kennedy said.

The decision to establish a women's hockey program was initiated by fourth-year fashion communications

student Stephanie Poulin. It was furthered by a recent CIS call for participating universities to have parity in terms of male and female teams by 2010.

“I think it's time we step up our game if we want to have a competitive athletics department, and this is a step in the right direction.”

STEPHANIE POULIN
STINGERS FOUNDER

“It's something that needs to happen here. York has a women's team, and U of T has a women's team. I think it's time we step up our game if we want to have a competitive athletics department, and this is a step in the right direction,” Poulin said.

After campaigning for two years and seeing no prospect of a program, Poulin organized an unofficial team that practiced weekly and secured a tournament win last year.

“After that tournament, I couldn't keep shut,” Poulin said.

She personally called Ryerson

President Sheldon Levy to inform him of the rebel squad's victory. Levy saw it as a good sign and rewarded Poulin's initiative by giving her the green light to form her team.

This year the team will receive \$16 500 in financial assistance from the University to cover basic needs.

“It's certainly not enough,” said Kennedy, who is well aware they will need to drum up significant support through sponsorship, Ryerson's adopt-an-athlete program, and fundraising.

To further cut costs, Poulin and her father, temporary head coach Harvey Poulin, have volunteered to work without pay.

It may seem like a long road for the eventual Rams, but the team knows how this game is played.

“There's a very specific structure and a very specific process they have to go through to see if there's even sufficient interest to pursue the development of a varsity team,” said team administrator Liz Devine, a hockey player herself.

Regardless of the strict regulations, the Stingers' bottom line is having fun.

“There's no point in playing sports if you don't have fun,” Poulin said. “I want the girls to enjoy having fun and getting to be part of this movement at Ryerson.”

SPORTS SHORTS

by Robin Collum

Pandas not so cuddly this weekend

The Pandas soccer team (1-3-0) hope not to be gracious hosts this weekend, as the University College of the Fraser Valley Cascades (2-1-1) and Trinity Western University Spartans (2-2-0) will be at Foote Field to take them on.

The young Alberta team has struggled to find consistency so far this season, but fans hope that they'll be able to convert home field advantage into a pair of wins against their coastal rivals. Games are at 12pm on Saturday (Trinity Western) and Sunday (UCFV).

Bears look to turn their luck around Pre-season ice time for the U of A

The football Bears are at home this weekend as well, and they hope to be able to finally get something to put in the win column. So far, Alberta is 0-3, and the upcoming game against Simon Fraser University is widely considered a must-win situation. They do seem to be improving, though: last game against UBC was the first one this season in which they scored at all in the first quarter.

Last year, Alberta missed the conference playoffs for the first time in three years, and with only five games left in the schedule, it could be a close call as to whether or not they can squeeze into the post-season this year.

The Clan (0-3) aren't doing any better the Bears, so fans who attend the game at 2pm Saturday afternoon at Foote Field should be able to see a tight match.

If you're counting the seconds until the NHL and CIS seasons start, and the Oilers Rookie game wasn't enough to quench your thirst for pre-season hockey, you can get your fix this weekend, as both the Pandas and Bears will be playing exhibition games.

The Pandas face off against the women's team from Red Deer College at Clare Drake on Saturday at 2pm. The Pandas lost many of their multiple-national championship-winning players at the end of last season, but they're still a strong team, and it should be a fun game to watch.

Though the Bears will be facing more familiar competition—Saskatchewan and Manitoba—their games this weekend will be in Saskatoon, so unless you're really into road trips, stick with the Pandas.

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