

Pandas run rings around competition

Two big wins for the women's soccer team this weekend means Alberta's still on the hunt when it comes to Canada West playoffs

MARC AFFELD
Sports Writer

Doing exactly what they needed to do to keep their playoff hopes alive, the Pandas soccer team managed to pick up two important wins at home this past weekend. The two seemingly polar opposite victories—a huge 1-0 upset of the Manitoba Bisons on Saturday and an 8-0 win over the Regina Cougars on Sunday—put them back in the race for the Canada West playoffs.

“Coming out with six points is crucial for us,” Pandas head coach Liz Jepsen said. “Scoring a total of nine goals is really going to help us with confidence—so I would call it a successful weekend.”

Saturday's match-up between the Pandas (4-4-0) and the Bisons (6-2-0) was hard-fought on both sides of the field; however, neither team was able to capitalize on some huge chances in the first 85 minutes of play.

With only five minutes left in the game, Pandas rookie Salina Stanley was able to head a cross from Lyndsay Stewart past Manitoba keeper Ashley Forbes for what would prove to be the winning goal.

“I didn't see it coming,” Stanley said. “Then it just hit my head. I didn't think it was going in, but it did—it's really exciting; I'm really happy.”

“I was hoping we'd get a tie,” Manitoba's head coach Walt McKee said in regards to the near-stalemate. “They scored at the most opportune time, which was five minutes left in the game—and that's a good time to score.”

But McKee was confident that his team would be able to bounce back.

“In Canada West, because you play games back to back, you can't stew on it, so you have to get this out of your system.”

Coming into the weekend, the Bisons were leading the Canada West division and were ranked eighth in the country overall. The Pandas, on the other hand, were struggling with a 2-4-0 record.

“Alberta's play is better than what the record shows,” McKee said. “They played a really good game today—they outplayed us, and they deserved to win.”

“[Manitoba] is a classy team, they're a hard-working team, and they're an intelligent team,”



PETEYEE

ON THE MOVE The Pandas (black) were always two steps ahead of their competition this weekend, as they beat both Manitoba and Regina.

Jepsen said. “So to achieve the likes of a win, it shows that we're here to battle.”

“I think it's just a job done,” Jepsen said in regards to downing a team with such an impressive record. “It's nice to know that we can beat them because I felt that we could, and I think the players felt that they could.”

Sunday's 8-0 win against the Cougars (0-7-1) was a considerably different game for the Pandas. Lyndsay Stewart, Sarah Smyth, and Jacqueline

Smith were each able to put one point on the scoreboard for Alberta before halftime. The score stayed 3-0 until the 47th minute, when Sarah Smyth scored her second goal, quickly followed by one from Laura Matemisz, two from Danielle Stewart, and a final goal courtesy of Lisa Annicchiarico.

But despite the way it may have looked on the scoreboard, Jepsen did not feel the game was a complete cakewalk.

“Regina battled hard—they're physical and they're smart,” she said.

The win against the Cougars may have also helped the Pandas overcome an inability to capitalize on scoring chances that had been plaguing them. In their last three games, the Pandas have scored 13 goals, winning all three.

“It's nice that a lot of players got on the scoring board,” Jepsen said. “It gives us the opportunity to actually execute what we've been training.”



SHAUN MOTT

LEADER OF THE PACK Alberta's Brett Colvin (18) shone against the Huskies.

Bears bounce back from tight tie

ROBIN COLLUM
Sports Editor

All season long, Golden Bears soccer head coach Len Vickery has been saying that what sets the Bears apart and accounts for their potential is their attitude and drive to win. Unfortunately for them, that fighting spirit wasn't with them on Saturday as they played the University of Saskatchewan Huskies.

The Bears (4-2-2) only managed a 1-1 tie against the Dogs (2-4-2), a result Vickery attributed to their lacking a mental edge. The overnight break did them good, however, as they came back Sunday afternoon a much more focused team and won 3-1.

“Basically, it came down to a difference in attitude,” Vickery said. “Whereas they may have been a bit lackadaisical in the first game, or not prepared to do what it takes, they certainly went about their business in the game today, and got their just reward.”

“[Saturday] was a poor performance by our standards, particularly given our goals,” he elaborated. “Today was much more encouraging. We played much better, and our passing game was superior to yesterday's, and that

made the difference.”

Saturday's game started out slowly, but picked up when Saskatchewan midfielder Alvaro Campos headed one into the Alberta net in the 19th minute. The Bears missed several chances after that, but the score stayed at 1-0 for the visitors until near the end of the match. In the 70th minute, fourth-year forward John Konye headed in a Junior Castrillon-Rendon cross to equalize.

“[Saturday] was a poor performance by our standards, particularly given our goals.”

LEN VICKERY
BEARS SOCCER HEAD COACH

Despite reservations about the team's general attitude, Vickery was able to point out some performances he was happy with from Saturday's game.

“Brett Colvin played very well,” he said. “He's a first-year player, and he leads the line, so to speak, as he's our high forward. He had an exceptional

game yesterday. Junior played well yesterday [also].”

Chastened by the draw, the Bears came back on Sunday with renewed vigour and vitality. Fourth-year midfielder Danny Neilsen scored Alberta's first goal—and his first of the season—from a Colvin pass in the 23rd minute of play. Neilsen was also responsible for the home team's next goal, in the 46th minute, with the assist coming from forward Ammon Hoefs. The last two goals of the game, one per team, were both from penalties. Castrillon-Rendon, along with Husky Jerson Barandica-Hamilton, took the credit for those.

“It was like night and day,” Vickery said. “I think we did what we needed to do to go forward and score goals, and just possessed the ball much better in critical moments of the game.”

Overall, Vickery was happy with the way his team was able to turn their fortunes around for the second game of the series and salvage the weekend.

“We definitely got more than we got from yesterday,” he said. “It was a collective effort; the team just picked up. We weren't content with the performance yesterday, and came forward much stronger.”