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PROFESSOR OF THE WEEK




DR. KAREN FOX
RECREATION AND LEISURE STUDIES 230

Dr. Fox has been at the U of A for 10 years and believes in a free flowing learning strategy. Her nominator said: "Karen brings her real life experiences to class, which makes the learning more practical... [she] makes the courses fun, challenging and interesting. I got more out of her courses than any other."

Do you have a professor that's unique and shows their value of undergraduate teaching? Nominate them! Email avpa@su.ualberta.ca.

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FILE PHOTO: LAUREN STIEGLITZ

HOOPS I DID IT AGAIN The Pandas will get some extra pre-season practice as they host teams from all over Canada.

Hardcourt Pandas hoop it up

PAUL OWEN
Managing Editor

After playing each other seven times last year, the last thing the Alberta Pandas and Saskatchewan Huskies basketball squads wanted out of their pre-season was another matchup. Both teams will have their wish during this weekend's Pandas Hoopfest tournament after it was reformatted for this season.

"Certainly, me and Lisa [Thomaidis] from Saskatchewan are excited about not seeing each other; we play each other enough during the year," Pandas head coach Scott Edwards said. "Without even trying to play each other this weekend, we'll see them at least seven times this year. From the Canada West perspective, we just want to play other schools; we play each other so much."

Joining Alberta and Saskatchewan in the Main Gym this weekend will be the Bishop's Gaiters, Waterloo Warriors, Concordia Stingers, and Regina Cougars, two more teams than attended last year. The new additions will allow the three Canada West squads to face the three easterners over the course of the weekend, instead of taking on each other.

Though his conference is generally regarded as the toughest in the country, Edwards is more than happy to be facing some unfamiliar foes as his squad lines up for their first exhibition games against CIS opponents.

"For our first tournament in this year, I think we need to have some games under our belts before we get to our tough Canada West [schedule]—not that any of the teams we're playing are slight at all,

but getting ready for Canada West play, we need to ramp up our game. For our first games of the year, I like our draw," he said.

Additionally, facing off against teams that they haven't seen play—and don't even have tape of—offers a chance to concentrate on their own preparation, instead of keying on what an opponent might do.

"From the Canada West perspective, we just want to play other schools; we play each other so much."

SCOTT EDWARDS
PANDAS HEAD COACH

"We have to focus on our team instead of the other teams because we don't know anything about them," fourth-year forward Kristin Jarock explained.

"The neat thing is that we're not pre-programmed into what we're doing," Edwards added. "When we play Saskatchewan, we play Calgary, we play Lethbridge, we play a certain style because we know how to play them and we see them all the time."

"For these other teams, there's a chance to loosen the strings and see what else your team is capable of doing on the floor and see what other kids can do in new environments and new roles and see what their growth has been since last year."

While they don't know much about their opponents yet, what they learn this weekend could come in handy

later in the season. At last year's tournament, Alberta beat the Memorial University Sea-Hawks 63-61, a result that proved prophetic: when the two teams met again in the national semi-final, the Pandas won again.

"You always want to look forward to games that you could get again later in the season," Edwards explained. "Having had the opportunity to play Memorial [in Hoopfest] last year worked really well for us when we walked onto their home floor during Nationals, when there was 2700 people all hating us. I think it calmed us down going into the game knowing we'd already beat them. So hopefully we'll see these guys again down the road because it means we all had a great season."

More than anything else, this weekend's tournament will give the teams a preview of how their squads will look when the regular season starts in two weeks and an opportunity to try to fill the holes poked in rosters during the off-season.

"We need to see what we've got this year," Edwards said. "We've obviously lost some leadership in Kara Stevens and Michelle Smith, and we need to see who can step up and be a leader this year. Putting kids into roles where they can step up and fill that hole will be our goal this weekend."

For the players, meanwhile, it'll be a chance to get back on the court together and get used to each other playing in a competitive environment, rather than just scrimmaging.

"We've got to get back to our style," Jarock said. "[We'll] just get to know our offences and defences and get to know each other on the court as a team."

HOOPFEST SCHEDULE

Friday

Bishop's vs Regina, 4pm
Concordia vs Saskatchewan, 6pm
Waterloo vs Alberta, 8pm

Saturday

Saskatchewan vs Waterloo, 4pm
Alberta vs Bishop's, 6pm
Regina vs Concordia, 8pm

Sunday

Bishop's vs Saskatchewan, 11am
Waterloo vs Regina, 1pm
Concordia vs Alberta, 3pm