
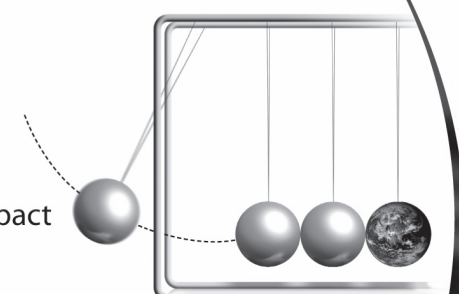


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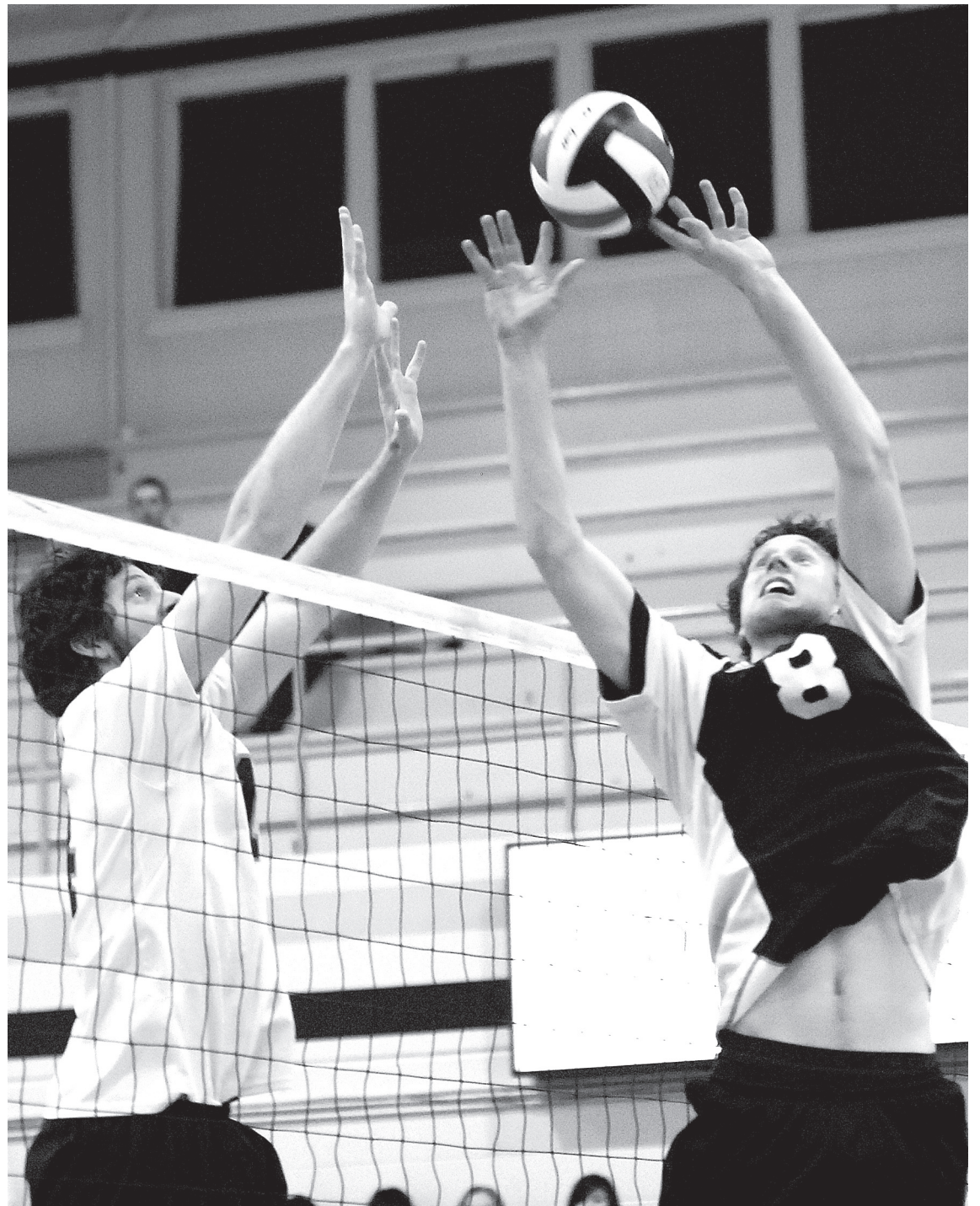
2007 Peter Kilburn Memorial Lecture

Thursday, November 8, 2007

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FILE PHOTO: MIKE OTTO

HIGH FIVES ALL AROUND Fresh off two wins in Brandon, the Bears will be looking for more of the same against Regina.

Alberta volleyballers on top of the league and looking to stay there

Nearly undefeated so far this year and leading the CIS ranks, Alberta has to be careful that they don't get ahead of themselves or behind the competition

BEN CARTER
Sports Staff

For a Bears volleyball team ranked first in the country and looking to do one better than their silver medal finish last season, there's no magic formula for success—just sweat.

That's exactly what the team is doing in practice this week as they prepare for their home opener against the Regina Cougars.

"We need to be working hard in practice all the time and make sure the consistency's there," said fourth-year left side Tim Gourlay, one of five returning starters.

So far, the hard work seems to have paid off for the Bears, as their 12-1 pre-season record can attest. That's not to say that Alberta won't face tough games this season, though, as they did last weekend against the Brandon Bobcats, winning both games by narrow 3-2 margins.

According to fifth-year Alberta middle Adam Kaminski, the Bears are prepared for Canada West teams throwing their best at them each week, especially after last weekend.

"A win is a win, but we had to struggle through it, which we didn't really expect," he said. "It's the one thing we can't really take lightly all year."

For a team with so much talent and such high expectations, there's always the danger that they'll get ahead of

themselves, rather than focusing on the games immediately in front of them. However, Kaminski and his team have recognized this risk, and are trying to approach every game with the appropriate attitude.

"The main thing is not to take any team lightly. We don't know who has what, what kind of players, what they run."

ADAM KAMINSKI
BEARS MIDDLE

"The main thing is not to take any team lightly. We don't know who has what, what kind of players, what they run," he said. "And as we saw last week against Brandon, we didn't know much about them and what they did, and they made it close games each night. You have to expect that every week."

That's a philosophy the team will be carrying with them this weekend.

"[Regina] should have a team a lot like the one they had last year. They weren't really tough, but that's what we thought about Brandon, so we can't really expect the same team this year," Kaminski said.

Alberta, on the other hand, is hoping that they haven't changed too much over the off-season. The Bears had to fill two starting positions, but with four new players as well as a number of returnees, they hope that the skill level on the court has stayed consistent. Setter Brock Pehar, a second-team All-Canadian in 2006/07, sees the abundance of talent manifest itself in practise each week.

"We've had great competition on both sides of the net, and it makes for some great practices because they're always battling hard," he said. "Having a deep bench will make us a better team."

While two of last year's starters are gone, Gourlay, Pehar, Kaminski, Joel Schumland, Thomas Jarmoc and others bring with them the skill and experience that has had the Bears playing in the past six national championship games.

When pressed for a scouting report on the Cougars, Gourlay doesn't seem overly concerned with what Regina is going to be showing them.

"We don't know much about them, but we know they're gonna come out gunning for us like Brandon did, like all the teams in our conference will," he said.

The Bears will see what the Cougars are serving this weekend in the Main Gym. They play at 8pm on Friday, and then at 6:30pm Saturday.

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