



FILE PHOTO: MIKE OTTO

**HANDS IN THE AIR** Daryll Roper (1) and Alexa Berton (8) will be trying out for Team Canada in May.

# Volleyballers invited to Team Canada tryouts

ROBIN COLLUM  
Sports Editor

Four volleyball players from the U of A and nine Alberta alumni have been invited to try out for the men's and women's senior national indoor teams.

From the Pandas, outside hitter Jocelyn Blair, setter Daryll Roper, and middle Alexa Berton have been asked to try out for Team Canada in May. Three Pandas alumni—setters Tiffany Dodds and Larissa Cundy, along with middle Tasha Holness—have also been extended invitations.

From the national-champion Bears team, middle blocker Adam Kaminski will join five former U of A players—setter Brock Davidiuk, left sides Pascal Cardinal and Nicholas Cundy, and right sides Dallas Soonias and Alexandre Gaumont Casias—for tryouts in Winnipeg.

All of the current Alberta athletes selected already have some national-team experience. Kaminski was on the national Junior 'B' team last season. Blair and Roper were both on the senior women's team last year, while Berton has played with the junior women's team.

"These three are obviously the strongest that we've had in a long, long time," said senior women's team assistant coach Mike Ling of the trio of Pandas players trying out this year. Ling also serves as assistant coach for the Pandas.

"All three have had experience at the national team level [...] and have progressed as they've come up through high school and university. They've just emerged as very skilled, strong athletes, and have displayed qualities that will make them move to the next level, the international level."

"Making the invited list for a national team isn't because of a flash-in-the-pan kind of

reputation," Pandas head coach Laurie Eisler agreed. "You have to have built something over time to show that you can be competitive at the international level. I think what these three have shown is that over time they have developed, and they continue to develop so they can [be] international-style players."

Blair was the Pandas' powerhouse hitter this year, making 3.87 kills per game with a .247 attack percentage. Roper made 10.03 assists per game organizing the Pandas' offence. Berton had a team-high .329 attack percentage with 1.91 kills per game.

Adam Kaminski had a .429 attack efficiency this season, with eleven service aces.

"[Kaminski] has progressed rapidly in the years that he's been here, and I think that he's ready to make that kind of next jump," Bears head coach Terry Danyluk said. "He's one of those guys who was a late bloomer in volleyball. He came to us with no elite training, and as an athlete, he's still learning things and he's still progressing, which I think is very unusual for guys in their fifth year."

"I think he's going to have a really long career on the national team, as long as he takes the next step the right way. He's really got to focus on his physical [play] and becoming more aggressive. As a university athlete, he was gifted because of his height and his natural athletic ability. Now he's got to learn to work just a little bit harder."

Both the men's and women's tryouts will take place in May at the University of Manitoba. Since neither qualified for the Beijing Olympics, the main competition that the Canadian teams will be working towards this summer season will be the Pan Am Cup, which begins in late May.

our city's major professional sports franchises—oh, and let's not forget our own beloved Editor-in-Chief Adam Gaumont. Hopefully this time, though, he'll represent us with a few less punches and a few more goals. Or maybe, at least, some decent skating. Baby steps, Adam.

The game begins at 7pm on Wednesday, 9 April. Admission to this mismatch is a donation at the door, with proceeds going towards funding at the Cross Cancer Institute. In particular, they're aiming to help aspiring ringette player Brittany Taylor. She recently lost her leg in a battle with cancer.

## SPORTS SHORTS

By Nick Frost

**Bring in the ringer!**

Cheers and good spirit will ring out through Clare Drake Arena next week, as the U of A Ringette team participates in their annual charity tilt against a team of well-known Edmontonians. Some of the personalities involved include members of CTV, Global, CityTV and Team 1260, as well as

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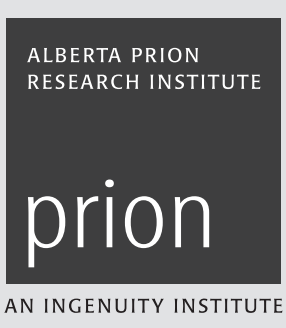


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