

Inconsistency plagues Pandas

VOLLEYBALL PREVIEW

Pandas @ Bisons

Friday, Feb. 1 and Saturday, Feb. 2 at 6 p.m.
Investors Group Athletic Centre, Winnipeg

Andrew Jeffrey
SPORTS EDITOR • @ANDREW_JEFFREY

As the end of the Pandas' volleyball season approaches, the standings show the team battling for top spot in the conference through recent inconsistent play.

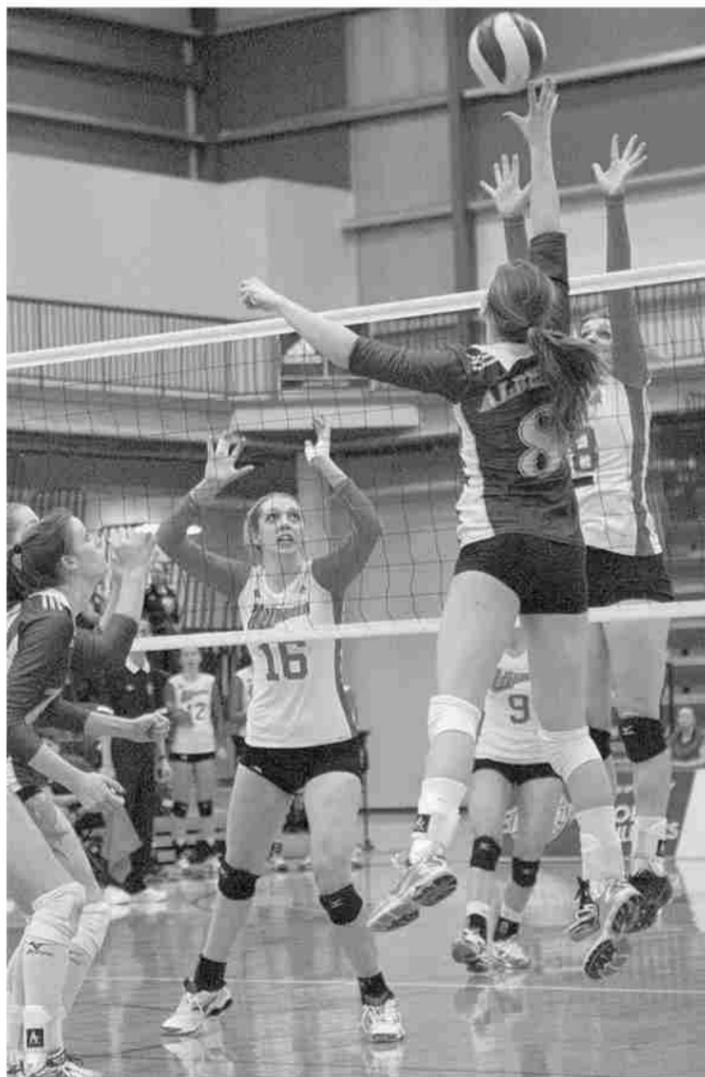
The Pandas had a strong start to the year, losing only twice before the season's winter break, which made them one of the top CanWest teams this season — a natural position for the defending conference champions. But the team has gone .500 since coming back from the break, splitting three straight weekends for a record of 3-3.

"Over the last couple of weekends, we've had trouble stringing together two nights in a row with inconsistent performances," fifth-year Pandas Krista Zubick said. "We played really good on Friday all around and on Saturday we started out really well, but when they pushed back in the second set, we didn't respond to their pressure very well. I think that's where we had a bit of trouble and need to bring a consistent performance over both nights."

While the Pandas didn't respond well to pressure in their Saturday game against the University of Winnipeg Wesmen, Zubick is confident the team can improve when it counts.

On Saturday, the team won the first set of the match before falling behind in the second and never truly recovering from there, losing 3-1. But Zubick noted that the team has still played a strong game overall, not showing any real signs of particular weakness against their opponents.

"I don't think there's one glaring problem. This past weekend, our response to stress wasn't the appropriate response," Zubick said. "We're still at the part of the season where we're going uphill, and we're going to peak over these past



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two weekends going into playoffs. We're still in control of hosting home playoffs in (the quarterfinals) and if we take care of these next two weekends, we definitely have control over that."

With playoffs just around the corner, it's clear that now is the time for any consistency problems to be solved, as the Pandas will likely host a quarterfinal series starting on Feb. 15. In their second-last weekend of the season, the Pandas will face Manitoba.

While the Bisons are only 9-9, getting two wins would be huge for playoff positioning with the much more difficult task of defeating the second-place Trinity Western University Spartans looming for the Pandas in the following weekend.

"It's a short week this week, so have a few hard days at practice and we're ready to go for the weekend in Manitoba," Zubick said.

"We just have the mindset where we know there's a lot on the line for us, but it's an exciting opportunity and we're not shying away from it."

From there, Zubick hopes the Pandas can advance to another Canada West championship victory and potentially go to nationals for the team's first national championship since 2006-07.

The team has been to nationals for the past three seasons, but have yet to find a way to victory. But with more consistent play, they may be able to find their way to nationals again.

Basketball Bears play top Prairie teams to finish regular season before playoffs begin

FOOTBALL ROUNDUP

Bears vs. Bisons

Friday, Feb. 1 to Saturday, Feb. 2, 8 p.m.
Saville Sports Centre, Edmonton

Nicola Flynn
SPORTS WRITER • @NFLFLYNN13

The Golden Bears basketball team is facing a tough stretch ahead, playing their final six games of the season against the three teams just behind them in the Prairie Division.

The first-place Bears will play the second-place University of Manitoba Bisons, the fourth-place University of Winnipeg Wesmen and the third-place University of Saskatchewan Huskies in consecutive weekends before the Canada West conference playoffs begin.

The first of those three matchups, which will see Alberta host the Bisons, will be crucial in determining whether the Bears will finish

the season in the top spot in their division.

"It is a big weekend for us — we are hoping for a large turnout to get some home support," said Bears head coach Barnaby Craddock. Manitoba is a playoff team with a winning record, so they are going to be tough games."

Going into these difficult matchups, the team recognizes they need to work on their defence.

Craddock acknowledged injuries have put the Bears at a disadvantage all season, hurting the team's defence, but he's nevertheless trying to push a defensive mentality for his players, who have responded well to this defensive mindset, aware of the improvements they need to make that will be necessary for the team's success throughout the upcoming playoff season.

"I think our defence and rebounding has to be better at this point in the season," third-year Bears guard Kenneth Otieno said.

"There were certain points earlier

in the season where we were holding teams to less than 60 points and out-rebounding them. We have to get back to that mindset and make defence and rebounding the identity of our team."

Because of injuries, the Bears are in a rough position player-wise. But Craddock notes that fortunately, a number of injured players have returned to form since playing again, while others have stepped up in the absence of the team's usual starters to injuries.

The improved play of these members of the team only adds to the depth that will be necessary for the team to compete in the Canada West playoffs.

"We've got all the top teams coming down the stretch, and were hoping to hold our own. Hopefully it is the type of schedule that has us playing some good basketball coming into the playoffs, because we know they are strong opponents and it will definitely get us playoff ready."



SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

6 pm

3-04 SUB

Wednesday
Jan 30, 2013

TENTATIVE AGENDA

- 1) Introductory remarks
- 2) Election of two volunteer representatives to represent volunteers for the Editor-in-Chief hiring board on February 2nd
- 3) Election of three volunteer representatives to represent volunteers for the Line Editor hiring board on March 2nd
- 4) Review and approval of bylaw changes proposed by GSJS Board of Directors
- 5) Refreshments

All members (ie. those who have made five or more contributions in the last 365 days before March 29 and have opted in with a Gateway editor) are asked to attend. Those who qualify and would like to become a member, please contact the Editor-in-Chief at eic@gateway.ualberta.ca.
This meeting is also open to the public.

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