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*UBC's Eric Kristiansen goes up against an opponent during the International Invitational Cup tournament*

## THUNDERBIRDS ARE A HIT IN MANILA

The Canadian Embassy staffers who greeted the sleepy members of the University of British Columbia (UBC) men's basketball team at Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport on 25 April were a little apprehensive. The Thunderbirds, invited to the Philippines to compete in the International Invitation Cup tournament and travelling on a grant from the Department of External Affairs, seemed so young. Would these 12 young men, whose average age was less than 20 years old, none of whom had ever been to Asia, be able to withstand the effects of jet lag, culture shock, 40°C temperature and a killing schedule that would see them

play 10 games in 11 days?

The answer was overwhelmingly yes. After heartbreaking losses by one point in each of their first two games, the Thunderbirds reeled off four victories in a row (including a convincing defeat of RFM Swift, the eventual champions) and advanced to the final round and, in the end, finished fourth in the eight-team field.

Funding for the trip came under the auspices of the Canadian Government's International Sports Relations Program. The UBC athletes were indeed superb representatives for their country. Basketball is by far the most popular sport in the Philippines and the

Thunderbirds were a popular attraction on and off the court. Four of their games were nationally televised and wherever they went, the players were singled out by name.

UBC coach Bruce Enns, no stranger to international competition, complimented the Filipino teams on their fine basketball which emphasizes speed. But the Filipino standard was best summed up by assistant coach Kent Chappell. When informed that he was scheduled to give a brief clinic at a local basketball camp, Chappell wailed, "What am I supposed to teach these guys?"