

Vikings sail into town

by Mitch Panciuk

Both of the University's basketball teams are in action again this weekend as the mighty teams from Vancouver Island sail into town, attempting to continue their domination of the Pandas and Bears.

Golden Bear coach Don Horwood is excited about this weekend's match-up because "for the last 10 to 12 years Victoria has been used as a measuring stick for Canada-West basketball...and this gives the guys an opportunity to measure themselves against one of the best teams in the country."

This year marks a startling difference for the U of A men's program. For only the second time in the last

"We've always known that we would have to beat Victoria in order to go on to nationals." — Horwood

ten years, Victoria has not only been ranked lower than the Bears, but also lower than their traditional number one.

Horwood feels that the team will be very evenly matched as Vic has only lost one game thus far, and "we've always known that we would have to beat Victoria in order to go on to nationals." This weekend's series will count heavily in the top-ten national rankings, and if Victoria can split or sweep the Bears, they are almost assured the number one ranking. If the Bears are able to rise to the challenge, this may be what is needed to firm up their number one ranking for the remainder of the season.

Games for the Bears go this week-

end at the main gym. Game times are 8:15pm Friday and Saturday, or immediately following the Pandas.

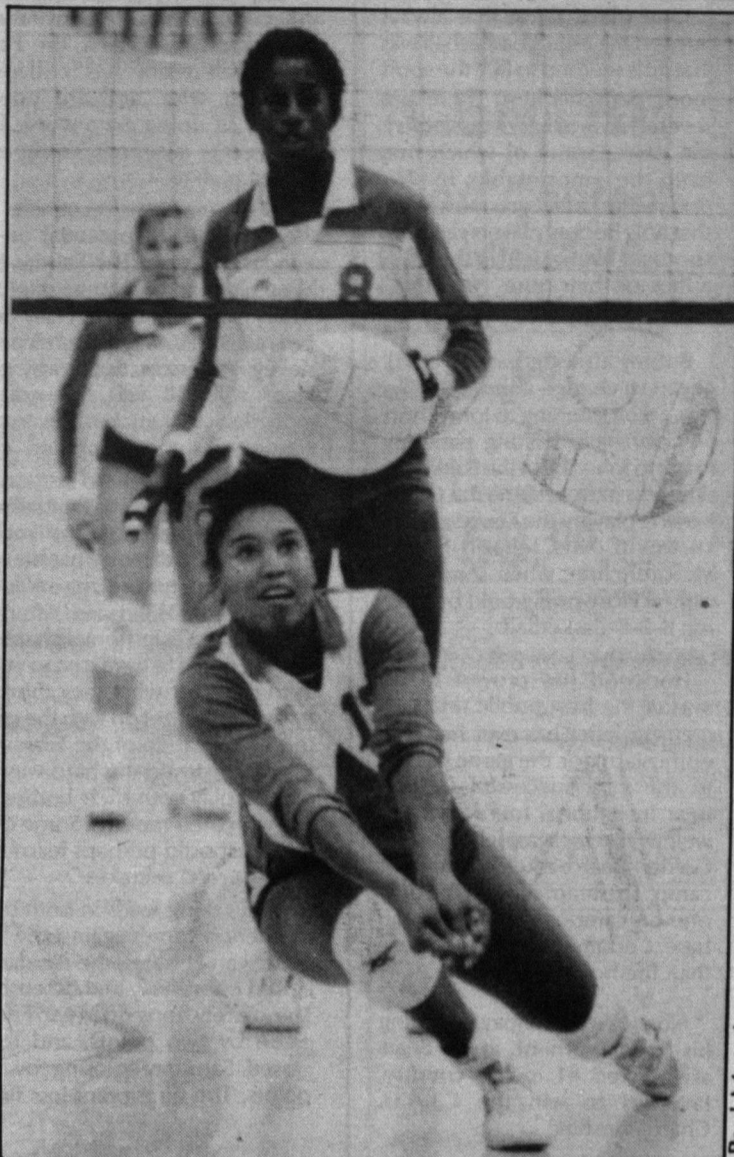
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The Pandas are also in action as they take on the very tall and very tough Vikette squad from Victoria. Coach Diane Hilko feels that while "it will be a tough game. We know what we have to do in order to win, and we have to stick to it and be tough."

Last weekend the Pandas suffered a humiliating loss to the Saskatchewan Huskies after narrowly beating them on the Friday night. In the last fifteen minutes of Saturday's game, the Pandas shot just 25 per cent from the field and Hilko feels that this may be a result of poor "concentration and [not] knowing that you're going to get hit—it's a mental game under there."

Therefore, this week Hilko pulled out the plastic dummies designed to simulate contact, in order for the Pandas to get used to the contact which occurs in real-life situations. This weekend Hilko hopes that these types of specialized practice skills will pay off and enable the Pandas to play much better.

The Pandas are in action on both Friday and Saturday nights at the main gym at 6:30pm.



Paul Menzies

This as close as you'll get to volleyball action this weekend. The Pandas travel to Victoria.



Pandas vs. Vikettes: 6:30
Bears vs. Vikings: 8:30
Friday & Saturday
Friday on FM88/CJSR



U of A goes to the mat

by Ajay Bhardwaj

The University of Alberta wrestling team goes to the mat again this weekend, as they host the University of Alberta Classic tournament.

Joining the Bears in the tournament will be Simon Fraser University, the University of Calgary, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, and a club team from Moose Jaw. All but two Bears will wrestle.

"We don't have to travel and that makes it cheap to wrestle," coach Mike Payette said. "It also gives everybody a chance to wrestle."

The meet will also give Payette a better chance to evaluate the talent on his team. "Sometimes guys come on better in tournaments and vice versa. Call it killer instinct, call it pride, but some guys can just get up for competition."

A feature match could be between Peter Guterson, a two time national senior champion and Alf Wurr, a world champion in the under-20 age division. The two recently squared off, with Guterson winning in overtime.

The Bears are hoping to snare at least two medals in the eleven weight category meet. "Ron Morrie is a good bet," Payette said of the 61 Kilogram wrestler. Vang Ioannides, Pascal Bonnet, and Wade Spelrem will all compete in the 52-kilogram weight class. They are three of the best wrestlers that Payette has in his stable. "I've got a good core of really committed athletes this year."

Although he may be tempted to, Payette will not use the tournament as a means to pick his team for the Canada West tournament. "There are still so many things that can happen. Guys can get injuries, or change weight classes. There's still two and a half months before Canada West."



Ajay Bhardwaj

Did you know that there are sixteen teams on the campus of our University? Of all of these, how many charge admission? Well, you can't count them on one hand, but it's pretty accurate to say six.

Football, hockey, men's and women's basketball, and men's and women's volleyball. The football Bears drew 1,781 fans to their home opener in which they thumped the University of Manitoba Bisons 38-0. From then on the crowds dwindled. The hockey team hasn't been drawing well. I don't know why: the hockey is good and every player busts his butt on every shift. The basketball Bears always draw well and they're also helped by their annual tourney. The women draw fairly well because they provide the undercard for the men. Finally, volleyball draws well. It's a growing sport around the world.

What about some of the other sports on campus? Yeah, track & field, swimming, wrestling, soccer, and gymnastics? Well, unfortunately, the Department of Athletics has decided that there are two types of sport: those that are marketable and those that are well, ahem, not wanted to be paid to be seen. The five sports and nine teams I've just mentioned are sports which Athletics has deemed "unmarketable." Write-offs. We should have these sports," they say, "for the sake of the athletes."

Certainly, there's nothing wrong with having sports only for the sake of the athletes who participate in them. That's a better

Pandas want consistency

by Ajay Bhardwaj

It's out to the coast for the Panda volleyball team, as they take on the University of Victoria Vikettes. The Pandas enter the weekend matches with a 3-5 record, while the Vikettes are 5-3.

"We're going to work on a couple of things," said Panda coach Suzi Smith. "We just want to be more consistent and become solid at basic and intermediate things. It's tempting, but I think we're fooling ourselves if we try some new things."

Smith wants her players to become more consistent in all aspects of the game. "The team can develop confidence if they know they've got the basic skills. For example, we worked on service reception today (Tuesday). You could see the girls getting more comfortable with it."

Despite being behind division-leading British Columbia, Smith is not concerned about the standings. "Team development is more important than the standings. If you focus on winning and not blocking, you put yourself in trouble. If you can do the elements, the big picture will take care of itself. I'd be happier if we won, but why get upset about the standings?"

Therefore, Smith is not putting any pressure on herself or her players to beat Victoria, a team that was 18-2 last year. "We're talking about being consistent. We should focus on that and not put pressure on ourselves."

reason for having teams than saying, "we have a team so that we can kick your butts all over the field." But I can't remember the last time I walked into a gymnastics meet at the U of A only to find gymnasts going about their business in an empty auditorium.

Granted, I've only been to one gymnastics meet in my three years as a sports writer here. But then again, there's only been one gymnastics meet here over the past three years. But when I did walk into the gymnastics room (a little, claustrophobic room you can find in the corner of the Physical Education building if you're looking for a closet) to cover the meet, the place was packed. People had to line up at the door to watch. "This is an unmarketable sport," I recall saying to myself.

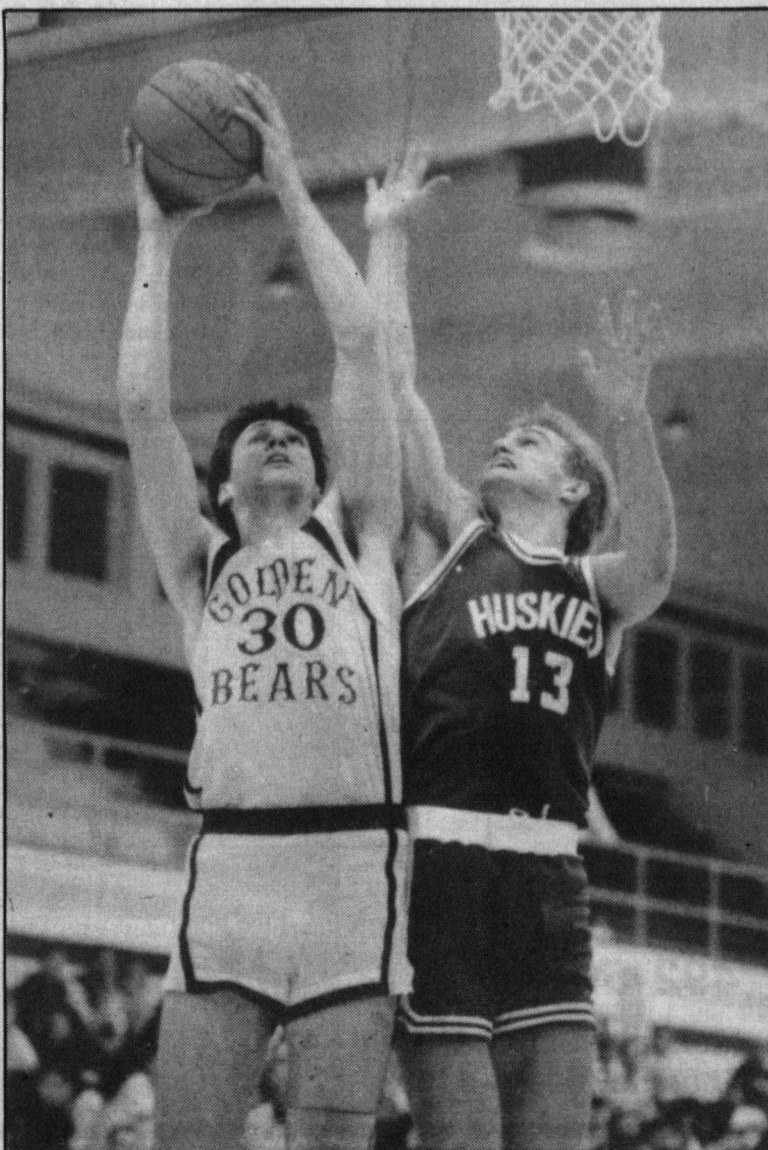
Is swimming really unmarketable? Not when you have names like Cam Grant, Harry Taylor, and more around. Not when you have a Mark Tewksbury paying a visit from the University of Calgary.

Is soccer really tough to sell? It is if you play at some God-forsaken place like the Faculte St. Jean. But if you take the national champion Pandas, and Len Vickery's men's squad, and have them play over at Varsity Stadium, you could get fans out.

Wrestling? Hey, you've got one of the best young coaches in the country in Mike Payette (who also happens to be a pretty funny guy) to help make it marketable. The Bears also have a strong core of smaller wrestlers, who can give fans a lot of excitement.

Track and Field. Certainly it's marketable. I've rarely seen a small crowd at a track and field event. It can fly, too.

As far as I'm concerned, all sixteen teams are marketable. People should be encouraged to see every sport, and I think they'd even pay admission.



Jeff Cowley