

# SPORTS

## Women need stronger voice in athletics

by Brent Jang

Several reports on women's athletics all agree on one thing: "Women, when qualified, must receive preference in order to rectify their under-representation." \*

"If women are qualified, that's the key thing," says Dr. Garry Smith, director of Athletic Services. Smith says with a U of A women's soccer team starting up in September, the concern that the coach be male or female will not be important to the team's players.

"I've talked to some of the players on the team this year and they just want a good coach," says Smith.

Pandas basketball coach Deb Shogan has a different view. She says that establishing "a legacy of women coaches in a sport is essential. The Gold Medal winner in the Faculty of Physical Education is often a woman. There's no doubt there are qualified women coming out of the faculty."

Women in Canadian universities do not have a strong and effective voice in the governance of their sport programs, say Shogan and Dr. Ann Hall in their May 1981 report.

"There are all kinds of women out there who are eminently qualified. It's a perceptual problem," says Hall, a professor in the Faculty of Physical Education.

"I don't see it as men versus women. Athletic Services has got the whole program to look at. I think everyone here is striving for the same thing; women should get more involved in athletics," says Smith.

He adds that "women themselves need to support women's programs. It would help if more women came to the games."

Shogan, studying for her doctorate in education philosophy, says "the impetus has to come from the Athletic department."

"That women would all of a sudden appear at the gym and that it's all supposed to happen in a vacuum is naive. I think Athletics has an educational role in changing existing attitudes," says Shogan.

Smith says promotions such as the Coca-Cola and Work Warehouse giveaways at last week's Bears hockey game were initiated by those companies. It's harder to find sponsors for the Pandas, he said.

Such promotions allow the



U of A President Myer Horowitz strikes an informal pose in a discussion with the Pandas gymnastics team.

sports and 11 women's sports. Today, there are 10 men's and 7 women's sports. In 1981-82, only 13 per cent of the full-time coaching staff was female.

"This weakened support for women's programs has coincided with a period when the proportion of women in the undergraduate population has increased from 38 per cent in 1970-71 to 47 per cent in 1980-81," according to figures by Bella.

Smith says Athletic Services is doing its best with the resources available at the moment: "We're doing all we can to bolster the women's programs. It would help if the provincial or federal government paid part of a coach's salary like they do with our volleyball (Therese Quigley) and diving (Don McGavern) coaches. In the meantime, we could try to get sponsors like Avon and Bonne Bell for the women's sports."

"It's important that our sports be seen as legitimate events. There's the role model thing; a girl might aspire to play women's university sports," says Shogan.

Smith reiterates that "everyone here is striving for the same thing. The women coaches we do have here are good; they're among the best in the country."

Dr. Gerry Redmond was the most likely candidate to coach the new women's soccer team, but he will be on sabbatical next year. Thus, the competition is open.

"I think it's important to give women opportunities in administration and in coaching," says Shogan.

"There's a chance for men to coach both women's and men's sports, but women are restricted to coaching women. Already, our opportunities are cut in half," says Shogan.

Indeed, there is a silent mandate for Smith to hire a woman as the coach of the women's soccer team.

\*The reports were:

- Women in Athletic Administration at Canadian Universities, Spring, 1981.
- Fair Ball: Towards Sex Equality in Canadian Sport, Summer, 1982.
- Committee on Hiring Patterns for Men and Women in Athletic Administration at the University of Alberta, Fall, 1982.
- A Position Paper by the Women's Intercollegiate Committee on the Women's Athletic Program at the University of Alberta, Winter, 1982.
- Women Who Win/Exercising Your Rights In Sports, 1980

public to come in contact with the Bears' games, but the same is not carried over to the Pandas.

"It's being done by an administrator in the men's program, so why not have one for the women?" asked Shogan.

"There are no full-time positions open because the university has a hiring freeze on," says Smith.

A report by Smith, Wendy Bedingfield, and Leslie Bella, suggested that "in times of economic uncertainty, programs perceived as less important are the first to suffer withdrawal of funding."

Shogan realizes the impact that cutbacks can have; the Women's Coordinator position was cut a few years ago before

Bedingfield volunteered to fill the spot on a part-time basis.

"Women in our faculty recognized the problem of losing the Women's Coordinator," says Hall, "we didn't let emotionalism get in the way. The May 1981 report recognized that the problem wasn't restricted to Alberta. Women have got to be placed in places of authority to break out of the cycle of being under-represented."

"The Committee on Hiring Patterns for Men and Women says, 'There's little doubt that inequity fosters bitterness...The number of first-year men and women on this campus is very close to equal, they pay the same fees, and it would appear unjust that resources provided to these

students' programs are not more equitable."

"We're cognizant of the problem," says Smith, "but it's a university economic problem. We just don't have the funds."

"I agree that this administration has recognized the past situations," says Shogan, "they've really been positive. I think Garry (Smith) is quite sincere. Granted, it's not an issue from the perspective that we're not openly fighting; it's not confrontational. Women's athletics is still an issue, though, in that the problem hasn't been solved."

Actually, there has been an overall decrease in the number of sports that the U of A takes part in at the intercollegiate level. In 1971-72, there were 15 men's

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## Wrestlers to Saskatoon Meet

The Canada West wrestling championships will be held this Saturday at the University of Saskatchewan. Co-coaches John Barry and Bill Dowbiggin hope to place at least four wrestlers on the conference team.

There are twelve weight classes and the top two wrestlers in each class advance to the nationals, scheduled for March 11-12 at the University of Western Ontario.

Top prospects for the Bears include heavyweight Blake Dermott and Mike Payette at 126 pounds. Dermott is working hard these days in preparation for a try-out with the Edmonton Eskimos and is the defending Canada West heavyweight. Other key members are Steve Hibbard (119 lbs.), Tom McKee (134 lbs.) and Dave Bush (158 lbs.).

Last year, the Bears were second in Canada West action, finishing behind the University of Saskatchewan 62-58.

The rest of the wrestling team is: Rob Key, Doug Gilroy, Laurie Mrozcek, Gord Glanz, Marc Landry, Brad Chestnut, and Dave Elwood.