

Sports

Pandas lose six starters, lots of height up front

by Mark Spector

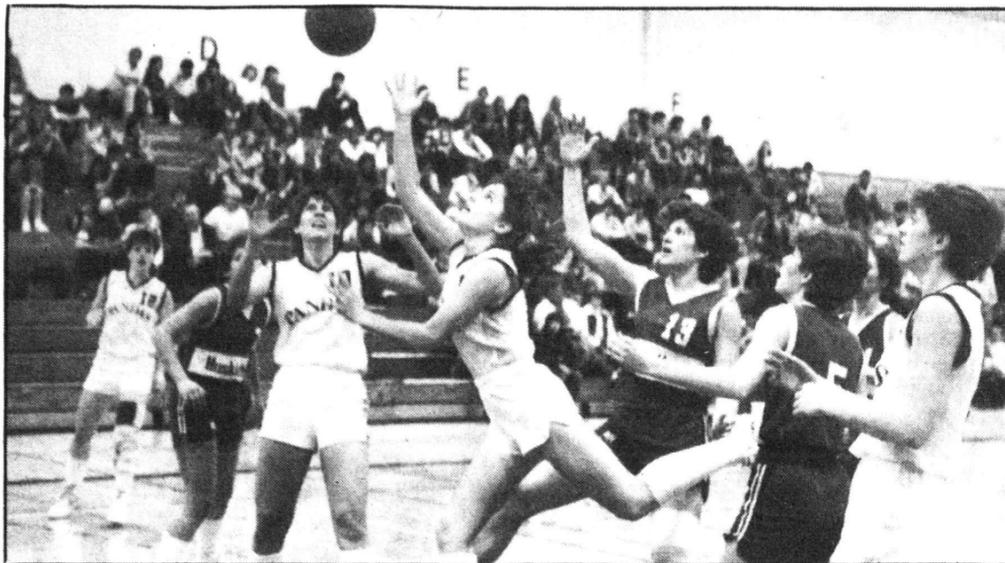
It will take a miracle for the Pandas basketball team to repeat their 1985 finish of fourth place in Canada.

The team has six returning veterans, but most importantly they have lost their only two tall players: Toni Kordic and Yolanda Kruyer. To add to their underdog status, long time coach Debbie Shogan has given way to Sherry Stevenson for at least one year so that Shogan may complete her sports philosophy dissertation.

But things aren't as bad as they may seem. All that Alberta has to do is finish in the top four in the five team Canada West to make it to the playoffs in Lethbridge. And as the men's team found out last year, from there anything can happen.

The biggest problem, however, will be the size factor which weighs against the Pandas. CIAU second team all-star Toni Kordic was to return and lead the team at the post position but she tore the cartilage in her always hurting left knee and underwent arthroscopic surgery over the summer. The 6'2" post is gone for the year.

But Debbie Shogan had prepared for just such an occurrence by honing 6'1" Yolanda Kruyer to take over the low post spot. But Yo's marks weren't sufficient to get her back into university this year, so Stevenson takes over the job minus



Sue Tokariuk will not be around this year. Neither will Jenny Webking (far left Panda) or Toni Kordic (second from left).

both of last year's centers who just happened to make the difference between a height advantage and a height disadvantage.

Lisa Janz, a six footer, will be the center on this team that will rely on the run even more than they did last season.

"Our height situation is definitely a concern," admits Stevenson who, incidentally, spent last year coaching at McNally High here in Edmonton. "We have to be very effective at blocking out (under the

boards). We aren't tall enough inside to get away with cheating on the ball, so we'll just have to work harder with the people that we have."

And those people are definitely quality basketball players, there just might not be enough of them should injury strike.

Back is fifth year point guard Shelaine Kozakavich, who has at her feet the responsibility of quarterbacking this team's offense. Kozakavich must both run the fast-

break out of the defensive zone, and improve her outside shooting in accordance with the lack of height inside. Sue Tokariuk, perhaps the best outside shooter in Canada West last year, has no eligibility left so her shoes must be filled by Kozakavich and third year guard Debbie O'Byrne.

Like all of the second stringers, O'Byrne saw next to no action under Shogan last year, and although she will be ready to play she will have to gain some game expe-

rience in order to be effective.

Also returning are Trish Campbell, last year's fourth forward who will start this season; Dawn Schooler, a seldom used forward who should do well with some steady floor time; and Annette Sanregret, a forward/guard who took two years off from the team and returns just at the right time.

It will be a different club this year, as the Panda's roster dictates that they must go the "running" route.

"Now that Toni is gone, the other players won't have her to fall back on, knowing that she'll get her 20 or 25 points a game," says the rookie head coach.

Stevenson knows that there is a possibility that this team could be successful this year, and a lot depends on herself getting the most out of what is there to work with. Word will soon get around the league that they rely heavily on the fast break, so Stevenson will have to continually modify the Panda's offensive scheme. Fortunately, a veteran starting corps will allow for changes.

Realistically, the Pandas will be happy with a third place finish behind Lethbridge and Victoria and then try to pull off an upset in the playoffs. Whether that upset is in the making or not, only the season will tell.

Photo Tom Huh

The time is now for U of A athletics

by Mark Spector

Maybe it's asking too much too soon. Maybe, like a fine wine, the athletics department needs time to mature into the top flight program that chairman **Bob Steadward** would have us believe it's going to be.

But in the mean time, while Steadward and his amiable sidekick and ace marketing man **Dale Schulha**, are focussing their concerns on future seasons, the current one is well on its way to being a complete disaster.

Combined attendance at two home football dates this season is an estimated 550. This on a campus of 25,000.

The hockey tournament this weekend was scheduled perfectly. It boiled down to the final game between Alberta and Saskatchewan for the trophy. There were at best 175 people there.

Let's get this into perspective now, shall we.

The university of Calgary has an enrollment of 14,500. In a city that is notorious for housing fair weather fans the Dino-Bears game drew over 5000 fans. Most were students.

So it is obvious that the fans around these parts simply do not care.

Perhaps they have been brainwashed by the always-negative Edmonton Journal columnist **Mar**

Horton.

Perhaps it is simply a case of minor league sport in a major league city.

But quite simply, if someone doesn't do something about putting some fannies in some seats this year, the football season will pass them by completely.

There is only two more home games this year and the Bears have failed to even draw 600, let alone 1000 fans. Of the remaining dates, the nearest is three weekends down the road versus the Dinosaurs. This will be a critical day for the Steadward regime in a couple of ways.

First off, there is a good chance this will be the most important game of the season for the Bears, as Calgary and them should battle it out for the top spot in the WIFL. Secondly, and probably most im-

portant for the front office, Calgary will be bringing with them as many as 300 fans up on busses. It could prove to be a very embarrassing situation for all involved should Alberta be outdrawn in their own backyard by their neighbours to the south.

There can be no question that athletics needs fan support on their side.

But some kind of respect from the local media would no doubt be welcomed by this oft-maligned program as well.

Unfortunately, none is in sight.

An obvious reason is that the press facilities on this campus rank as poor to terrible. And if that is not enough, quietly ushered out during the airlift which took place upon Steadward's inception was **Steve Knowles**. Knowles was merely the best sports information director around, and his acute knowledge of the university sports scene

made any reporter's job more barable on this campus.

Newly created was Schula's position of Director of Marketing and Public Relations.

What this fancy title means is that, although he does his best, he simply has too many responsibilities and makes too much money to be concerned with the little things (like roster moves and scoring summaries) that make a reporters story all the more informative.

And yes the media has noticed the difference.

In Knowles place Schula has organized a small network of students who are doing an excellent job but cannot be expected to fill Knowles' shoes even from the laces down.

As minor as it may sound, it is little things like this that sway the pens and microphones of scribes and jocks.

The weekend of October 18 - 20 will be the major test as to how far, if anywhere, athletics has progressed from last year in which they reached their lowest point.

The hockey Bears open their regular season schedule at home against UBC, the basketball teams host their alumni in a pair of exhibitions, and the Calgary entourage heads north for a potentially big football game.

This will be the first display of marketing power put on by athletics this year.

In order to affirm my beliefs that this program is on its way up and will eventually regain the respect of the community, Steadward and Schulha will have to show that although planning for the future is important, it cannot come totally at the expense of the present.

And should 300 Calgarians outnumber the home fans on October 19, there will be a lot of red faces in the big yellow building on 87th avenue.

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