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Dean Bennett

Varsity Swamp

Have you seen Varsity Field lately — or should I say Varsity Swamp.

This field is in rough shape, well parts of it anyway. The heavy rainfall of late has caused half the field to drain nicely while the rest remains under pools of water. The reason — a poorly back-filled trench.

When the Butterdome was constructed a few years ago, Varsity Field was torn up so a utilities trench could be dug. But it was never filled up again properly.

"They (the contractors) backfilled it with too much clay and not enough sand," said John Barry, Director of the Division of Student Support Services.

The result is that every year, the groundskeepers fill the hole up again (to the tune of about \$5,000) only to watch it sink again over the winter. Interestingly enough, it costs them \$25,000 each year to fix Varsity Field alone.

Expensive stuff, this gardening. Barry says there is not much you can do to fix the hole, short of filling it up every year and hoping it doesn't settle too much. "Actually, the field isn't too bad compared to last year," he said. "It's just that we've had so much rain this year."

What compounds the problem is the fact that the Bears have to practice on the same field they play on.

Because the Lister Hall fields are booked up all week, the team spends the entire week chewing up what's left of the sod, leaving the field a mess of green pabulum come game day.

"There's a definite lack of green space on the campus," said a disgruntled Bears coach Jim Donlevy.

Actually, the field is only one of the problems at Varsity. For one thing, the stands aren't the right kind of bleachers to watch a football game from. They should be raised up to provide a better view of the field.

Right now, if you sit in the first row it's like a worm's eye view of the game.

The press box is no great shakes, but all you have to do is enclose the thing and you have a happy media. All four of them — that's all it will hold.

The above points may seem miniscule in comparison to the other ones faced by Athletics, but this is the kind of improvement that they must undertake if they want to bring the students back to the football games.

Especially when they're charging a \$2.00 admission.

Smith to turn around Pandas

by Mark Spector

The Panda volleyball program was abysmal in 1985-86. At season's end their record stood at an embarrassing 1-27. Out of 88 games played (a match consists of a best-of-five), Alberta won only nine.

Enter Suzi Smith.

Smith has played on the Canadian Senior women's volleyball team for three years ('82-'85), and led the University of Winnipeg to a CIAU crown in '86. But she realizes that it will take a considerable amount of time and patience to lift this program out of the hole it is in. Not to mention a liberal helping of hard work.

"I don't think that you can just instill a winning attitude. You have to try to teach your players that winning is just a byproduct of hard work," says the rookie head coach. And that attitude has already begun to show, as the Pandas doubled their output from last year in their first tournament of the '86-'87 season.

Alberta opened up the Tri-U tournament in Calgary with a 3-2 victory over the University of Calgary, their first win over the Dinnies in four years. In that match team captain Brenda Kadatz had 27 kills, a Panda record.

The Pandas went on to defeat the University of Lethbridge 3-0 before losing 3-1 in the round robin, and 3-0 in the final to the Manitoba Games team, an all-star squad.

"That (Calgary) win was very important," admitted Kadatz. "The first thing that people look at is your past record, and ours hasn't been too great."

"Calgary wasn't ready for us, they were ready for the old Pandas. We shocked them. But they didn't shock themselves, or at least they shouldn't have."

"It was nice to come away from this tournament fairly successful. It helps the team make the connection that hard work pays off," said Smith.

And around Smith's team, hard

work is the order of the day — every day.

"I have to get the point across that three hours is fairly standard for a team that wants to win. I don't care if you are number one in the country, you still better work hard in practice."

"Football teams would never practice for three hours the day before a game. I want my players to know that this is standard for a team that wants to win."

"Wanting to win" on Smith's team means three hour practices all week, plus most Saturdays, if there's no tournament to be played.

"You won't find any more committed athletes on this campus. I've told them what to expect," says Smith.

"Suzi is really mentally tough on us," explains Kadatz. "Practice is a lot more game-like. She presents us with tough game situations, so that when it happens for real we're ready for it."

"Last year practice was much more lackadaisical."

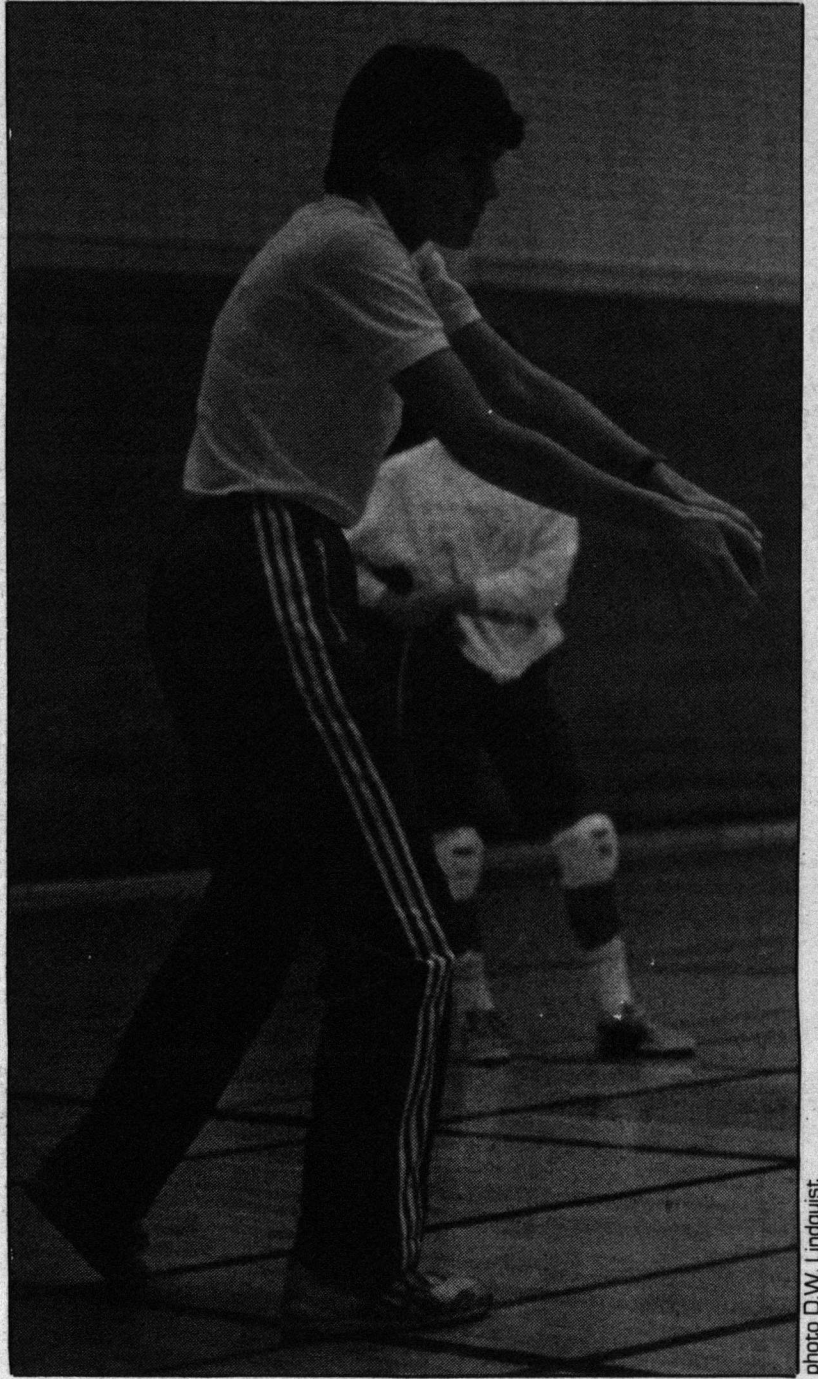
But, fortunately, last year is just an ugly memory now. And you can bet that there won't be very much about this team that will resemble last year's punching bag Pandas.

As coaches go, Suzi Smith is of the Vince Lombardi mold — tough, but a winner. Players that play for coaches like that often develop a competitive hatred for them; a hatred that is manifested into an all out effort on the field of play.

"When I played for the National team I felt that practice was too long. But the lessons that I've learned are solid ones. At the end of the year you realize that it was all worth it," admits Smith.

Says Brenda Kadatz of the player/coach relationship: "The possibility is there (of questioning the coach), because it's a lot tougher than last year."

And that healthy relationship is what this program has needed for a long time.



Suzi Smith is the new Panda volleyball coach, inheriting a program that won only one of 28 matches last season. Three hour practices, and plenty of 'em, are in order for the Pandas, as Smith asserts her my-way-or-the-highway approach.

photo D.W. Lindquist

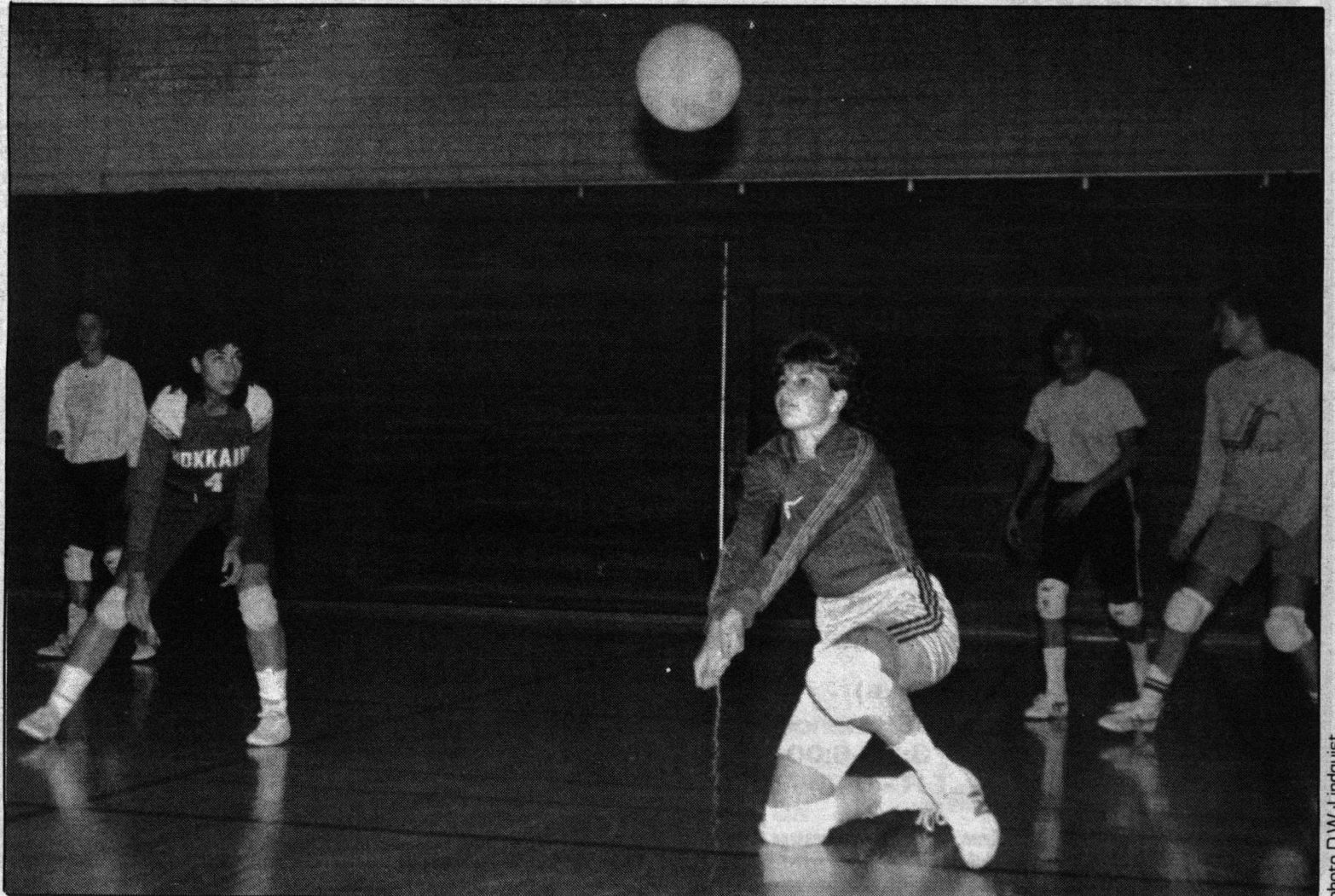


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