

Volleyballers host Provincial championship

Campus sports experts and general knowledge freaks may be well aware of the fact that soccer is the most popular sport in the world, but few people probably realize that volleyball ranks second in world popularity.

Perhaps because it is an inexpensive sport to finance and perhaps because it is a game of physical strength and co-ordination, strategy, and cohesive team-play, volleyball enjoys a tremendous global following. Attendance for international matches in Europe and Asia often numbers between 30,000 and 50,000. In many countries pursuit of an Olympic gold medal in volleyball is a prime national sporting concern.

However, in most regions of North America, all but an enlightened few thousand souls regard volleyball as a good game for the beach or summer camp but hardly one worthy of serious attention from either a player's or a spectator's standpoint. For instance, while increasing numbers of U of A students recognize volleyball's recreational value (over 140 teams, representing about 1,350 individuals will participate this year in men's, women's, and co-rec intramural volleyball competition on campus) the Golden Bear and Panda volleyball teams still perform in near-total obscurity.

This is a most unfortunate happenstance, for the Bears and Pandas, along with teams sponsored by the Edmonton Phoenix Volleyball Club play an excellent brand of volleyball. The average person's conception of volleyball being a game where players simply serve the ball, set it up once or twice, and spike it

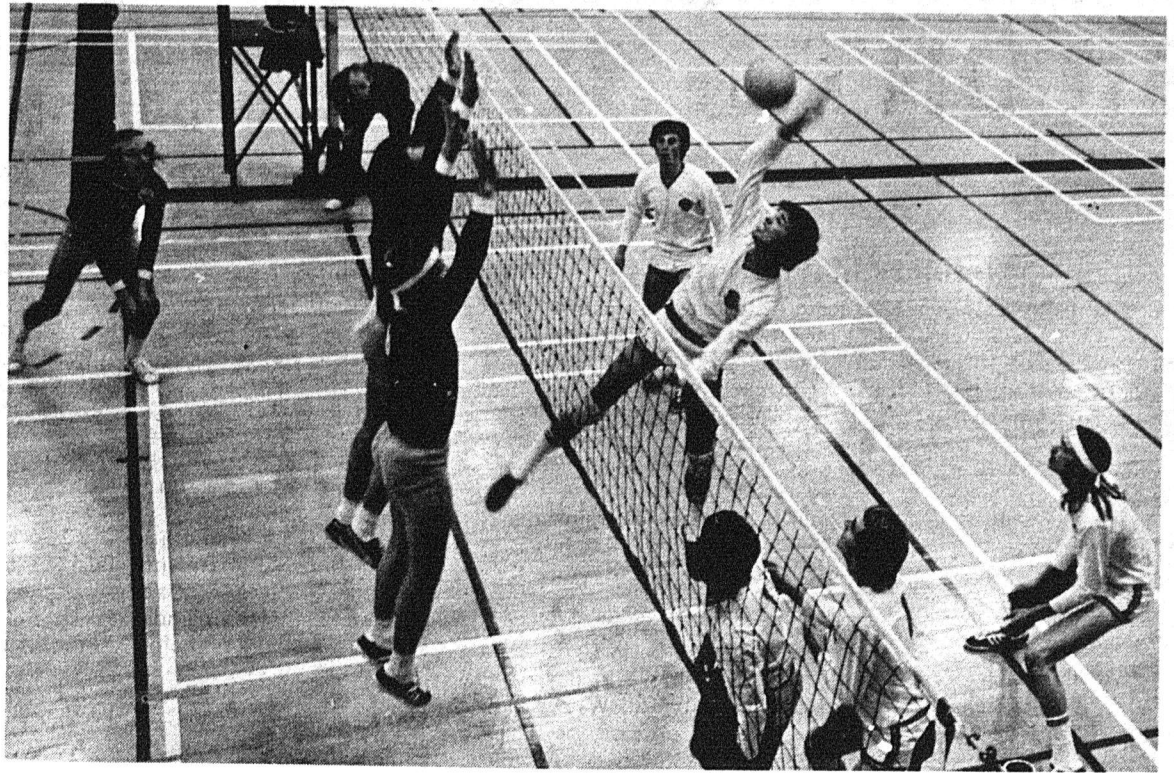
somewhere into the opposing team's court is a vastly outdated notion. Volleyball has evolved into a complex sport with intricate, patterned offensive and defensive systems, multiple spikers, fake plays, and so on and so forth. No longer can a tall individual who is able to hammer the ball over the net be assured of a spot on any good volleyball team; versatility is the key, as each player must be able to serve, set, spike, tip, block and dig balls out of the floor with accuracy and consistency.

Local sports fans will have an opportunity this weekend to see this style of volleyball played as the Bears and Pandas host the annual Alberta Open Volleyball Championships this Saturday, Feb. 5. A total of 32 Alberta teams will compete in four divisions of play that will utilize four campus gyms (Main, West, New Phys. Ed and Education) from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the one day tourney.

The Men's "A" division will feature eight teams: the Bears, Edmonton Phoenix Blues and Whites Senior A teams, the U of Calgary Dinosaurs, Calgary Senior A Premiers, University of Lethbridge Pronghorns, divided into two four-team divisions for preliminary round-robin play, after which the top finishers in each division will meet in a four-team round-robin championship pool. The club with the best record in this second round of play will be declared Alberta Open Men's winners. The Calgary Premiers, Phoenix Blues (coached by none other than H.S.D. "Hugh" Hoyles, Director of Men's Intramurals on campus) and the Bears (coached by Lorne Sawula and managed by Dennis Worobec) all rate as the teams to beat.

Ten teams, including the Bearcats, Phoenix Three, and eight other clubs from centres throughout the province, will compete under a similar format for Men's "B" Division honors.

On the women's side of the tournament, the "A" division will be a five team affair headlined by the powerful Calgary Senior Cals, perennial provincial representatives in Dominion Senior Women's championships. Other entrants include the Pandas, coached by Women's Athletic Director, Sue Neill and managed by Leola Palfreyman; Phoenix Women's, University of Calgary, and the



ACTION IN THE FRONT COURT

—Ed Lilley photo

...as Bear volleyballer spikes against a double block.

Calgary Jr. Cals. The five teams will also play a preliminary round-robin series, with the two top finishers meeting in a championship match. While the Cals must be considered the odds-on favorites in this division, Miss Neill believes that her Pandas can defeat the Cals if they play consistently to their potential. She points to veterans Sue Seaborn and Captain Janice Wotherspoon as keys to Panda volleyball success.

A further nine teams from across the province will compose the women's "B" division.

As is the case for almost all campus sporting events, students presenting their I.D. cards will be admitted free to any and all games in all four gyms on Saturday.

While Golden Bear volleyball continues to go largely unnoticed by the U of A student body (and, admittedly, the Gateway sports pages), which still generally regards football, hockey, and basketball as the only varsity sports worth attending, such isn't the case on all North American Campuses. For instance, at the University of Winnipeg, where football is nonexistent and the calibre of hockey and basketball is still mediocre, volleyball is the

prestige sport on campus. The Wesmen have won the Canadian intercollegiate championship for two consecutive years and are rewarded for their achievements with a hefty budget which enables them to participate in tournaments throughout Eastern and Western Canada and parts of the United States.

While it may be a couple of seasons yet before the Bears will be able to seriously challenge for CIAU championship laurels, Coach Sawula, a Ph.D. student in Phys. Ed. and a former Bear volleyballer himself, states that the calibre of volleyball on campus improves yearly.

"We're no longer at the point where most of our players choose volleyball as a second varsity sport after being cut from the basketball team. We're beginning to get a share of outstanding high school athletes who come to the U of A and pick volleyball as their major competitive sport."

Sawula, who also plays for Hoyles' Phoenix Blues when his coaching obligations do not interfere, cites young freshman Bob McGlashan, from McNally Composite High School, and sophomore Gane Olsen, a graduate of Harry Ainlay Composite, as prime examples of

the new breed of Bear volleyballers. Sawula rates the 18 year old McGlashan as a definite future hope for the Canadian National Team if he continues to improve at his present rate.

This year's Golden Bear volleyball squad, in contrast to Miss Neill's largely veteran Panda team, is a rookie-laden aggregation. Only Captain John Boorman and Pat Kane, both four year veterans, have long-term experience with the Bears. However, the team's fortunes have been given an invaluable boost by the transferral of Keith "Chief" Doan from the University of Winnipeg, where he played on those two C.I.A.U. champion Wesmen teams.

Saturday's Alberta Open Volleyball Championships will provide both the Bears and the Pandas with top-flight competitive preparation for the forthcoming WCIAA championships, which will be held Feb. 17, 18, and 19. The men's competition will also be held here at the U of A, with the women's tourney being played at UBC.

By Stu Layfield



ACTIVITIES

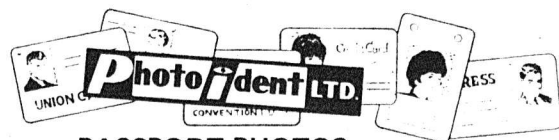
Our new "Athlete of the Week" is Larry Childs of the Recreation "C" hockey team. Larry knocked in two third period goals to help his team upset Deke "C" 4 to 3 last Sunday.

Agriculture "D" captured the Division III basketball title last Thursday evening with a relentless 43-17 assault over 7th Mac. In Division II action, Arts and Science "B" defeated 3rd Mac 38-24. 3rd Mac was still in the game at the end of the half but then A & S started pulling away. Theta Chi "A" could never get going and Law "A" easily defeated them 42-26. Arnold Loxam could not get his boys to put it together and they were down 26-6 at half time. Law "A" had bigger and more experience ball players and shot with a much better percentage.

Bob Brust of Medicine has emerged as the Top Aggregate winner after the second half of the Intramural Track and Field Meet held last Saturday. He came first in the 300 metres, 600 metres, and second in the 1500 metres. Selwyn Jacob of West Indian Society was the second best point getter.

The leading contenders for this year's Athlete of the Year are Glen Elliot, Roy Boettger, Ian Lamoureux all of Law, Lloyd Evans of Dentistry, John Vandervan and Ken Oleschuk of Kappa Sigma. One of these gentlemen will be presented with the Motors Car Supply Trophy March 29.

The deadline for curling is Tuesday February 8 at 1:00 p.m.



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Pandas fight for top

The fate of the volleyball Pandas will be decided in Vancouver on February 18th and 19th where they play the second half of the two tournament, total point Western Canadian Championships. They approach the tilt with the 2 points they picked up for their third place effort at the first half of the championships held here last weekend.

The Pandas toughest opposition will come from the UBC girls, who won the tournament here and collected the 4 points for the top honors. Also high on the list of priorities is defeating the University of Calgary, the team that swept the tournament only to fall to UBC in the finals.

The Pandas finished the tournament with a record of 2 wins and 2 losses. In their first game they lost to the U of C who showed up very strong to eclipse the Pandas in 3 games of the 4 played. The University of Lethbridge signalled a change in the trend as they succumbed to the Panda onslaught in 3 straight

games. The momentum carried over to the University of Victoria series where the Pandas once again came out on the top of the pile. In their last series of regular play, however, the alma mater lost in a hard fought battle that went the full five games before being decided.

The meaning of all this is that the top spot in the Vancouver tournament is a must for the Pandas if they want to advance to the Canadian Finals to be held here in the main gym on March 18th. Only two teams from Alberta and B.C. will be eligible.

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Sat., Feb. 5, 8:30 p.m.

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