

V-Pandas deflate

Pandas volleyball coach Pierre Baudin was aghast at the chain of events in the Victoria Invitational meet last weekend. Baudin stated that "the whole weekend started off horrendously" and he added "somebody couldn't have told me a worse start to the weekend".

The Pandas, it seemed, were defeated mentally from the start and could not regain a winning attitude. The team placed 15th out of 16 teams.

Losing a match to the Edmonton Friars, according to Baudin, started the problems that were to recur. Baudin knows his team can play well and has beaten the Friars. He believes the team felt pressure not to lose and consequently apprehension and fear encouraged mistakes.

Baudin goes on to mention the Pandas were "unbeatable" when serve and serve reception was good. However, Baudin states they "lost the game on service and serve reception", that are "simple things we are normally good at."

After the opening match Baudin feels the team's pride was given a severe blow. In fact, he mentions the Pandas eventually lost confidence in themselves and "froze". Consequently, Baudin believes the solution "is a matter of relaxation".

However, the solution was hard to put into place without practise and the rest of the tournament mirrored the first game. The U of A squad lost to BC's Chimo 2-0 but was able to put up a struggle.

Baudin notes the Pandas have lost one starting line-up player and two others were playing injured. He believes "that was the difference between us and the Chimos". The Friday match, he adds, was the weekend's best performance.

Interestingly, once the team was out of the championship pool they soundly defeated the U of Winnipeg. The next match, against an experienced Club North-West, started well.

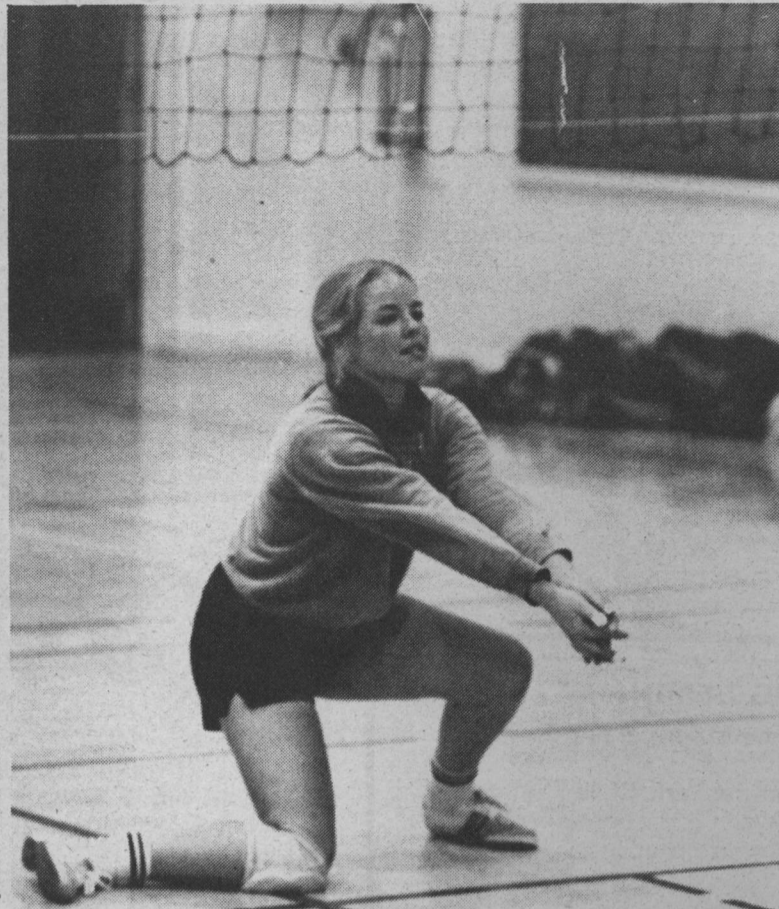


photo Brad Keith

Unfortunately for coach Pierre Baudin-Panda problems were tough to bump.

However, Baudin observed another "seize up" by the Pandas who lost a 13-6 lead as well as the match.

Finally, the team lost to the U of Washington, and later a Pandas team composed of rookies narrowly lost to the Club North-West Junior team. Again the team managed to defeat the Winnipeg squad.

Baudin emphasises the margin of victory in volleyball is narrow, and "if you start sliding it is hard to bring them back up". The 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. playing schedule does little to help a team that is losing confidence. Still, Baudin believes "we are a good team and put in a lot of time".

Needless to say Baudin hopes to concentrate on relaxation during matches and plans this weekend to play some easy teams in order to increase

morale

Fortunately, the meet was not CWUAA and in spite of poor team standings, Baudin points out Karen Sheritt and Debbie Shade played well. Sheritt provided consistent setting and Shade was named to the meet's second all-star team.

In any case the Pandas have time before the next CWUAA meet in Victoria to work on mental preparation. Solving mental problems can be the most difficult, but if they are solved the results can be great.

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