

# National title for gymnasts

The Panda's gymnastics team captured the 1985 women's national gymnastics championship team title Friday March 1, in Vancouver, British Columbia. In a very close and hard fought competition the girls came out ahead of ten other universities, accumulating 100.95 points to narrowly out distance the University of Calgary (100.70). Team members Heidi Ross, Margie Drysdale, Shelley Spaner, Carrie Nawata and Janice Neill brought the National title back to the U of A for the first time since 1979.

Coach-of-the-year Sandra O'Brien sums up the team perfor-

mance: "I knew that the girls had the talent to win the championships, but there were seven very good teams competing, and to come out on top they really had to perform their best routines of the season."

The girls team score of 100.95 points is a record score, and reflects the consistency of all five team members. In fact, of the twenty routines performed, only two were not personal best performances. As well, all of the girls' scores were extremely important, as each contributed to the team total. Ross states "All of us hit the first even

t(balance beam) and that just seemed to set the pace for the rest of the meet."

Individually, four of the Pandas finished in the top 15 of the 37 woman field. Leading them was Ross whose fifth place finish earned her All-Canadian status for her third time in four years. Heidi also qualified for Saturday's event finals in three events (beam, floor, and vault). Nawata finished seventh overall, narrowly missing All-Canadian status, and qualified for the uneven bar finals. Drysdale finished fourteenth overall and also qualified for the uneven bar finals, and

Shelley Spaner finished fifteenth overall. Also competing for the Pandas was Neill, whose twenty-second place finish was very impressive considering the serious knee injury she has been recovering from.

Saturday's event finals saw the Panda's capture four more individual medals, as Ross captured two silvers (beam, vault) and one bronze (floor exercise) and Drysdale took the silver medal on the uneven bars. Nawata narrowly missed a bronze medal on the uneven bars, as she wound up fourth.

The excitement and emotion of

the National Championships was unbelievable. According to Donna Spaner, an alternate for the championships, "we've been working since last May for this one day, and to actually realize our team goal of becoming National Champions just seemed to be a dream come true."

Coach O'Brien was also very pleased with the many comments that the girls received concerning their sportsmanship and friendliness. "The girls were not only winners, but they were also great ambassadors for the University of Alberta."

# Pandas victorious in final

by Mark Spector

The Pandas basketball team did not improve their position in Canadian women's standing over the weekend, as they finished fifth at the CIAU championships at Bishops University in Lennoxville, Quebec.

Pre-tournament seeding had Alberta ranked fifth.

No. 1 ranked Victoria surprised nobody in taking their fourth national title in six years. The only upset to occur this year was Laurentians' second place finish over third place Toronto. The two teams swapped places from pre-tournament predictions.

The tournament was structured with a championship side and a consolation side, with a teams' opening match placing them into one of the two pools. For the Pandas, that game killed any chances that they may have had of playing for the national women's crown.

Alberta opened up against the

fourth ranked Concordia Stingers. Both teams started the game quite tentatively, but Concordia opened up before Alberta to take a 32-19 half-time lead.

Alberta enjoyed the height advantage, but didn't capitalize on it at all. Throughout the game they were forcing the ball underneath, and playing a sluggish brand of basketball as opposed to their successful running game that got them to the tournament. Concordia had an easy time of it, as the Pandas never did come out of their shell, losing by a 63-54 score.

So knowing that they could do no better than fifth place, Alberta venture into the land of the also-rans—the consolation pool.

They met the host Bishop's Lady Goiters in their second game, the losers facing elimination.

"We've got a lot of pride on this team, and we weren't going to get beat by an unranked team," said Toni Kordic, who was the games' high scorer with 18 points. And that pride was evident, as Bishops took Alberta to overtime, but were overpowered in the extra period, bowing out of the tournament after a 57-51 loss.

In the consolation final Alberta took no prisoners, thoroughly trouncing the Lakehead University Nor'Westers by an 80-57 score. Along with Laura Cabott, it was Sue Tokariuk's last game as a Panda; neither one is eligible next year.

"Our motto for this game was run, gun, and have some fun," said Tokariuk, who proved that when she received a flashy behind-the-back feed from Shelaine Kozakovich for a bucket in the second half. Every player saw floor time, as the Pandas held a comfortable margin throughout the game, and to the one, the second team played excellent.

#### PANDA POINTS:

Toni Kordic was named a second team all-Canadian, and led the tournament in rebounds, averaging 11 per game... Lethbrides' Louisa Zerbe won coach-of-the-year honors, while Laurentians' Carol Hamilton is MVP... tournament MVP was Victorias Lori Clarke who missed only 10 shots from the floor in her first 10 games—Victoria easily handled Laurentian in the final 71-52.

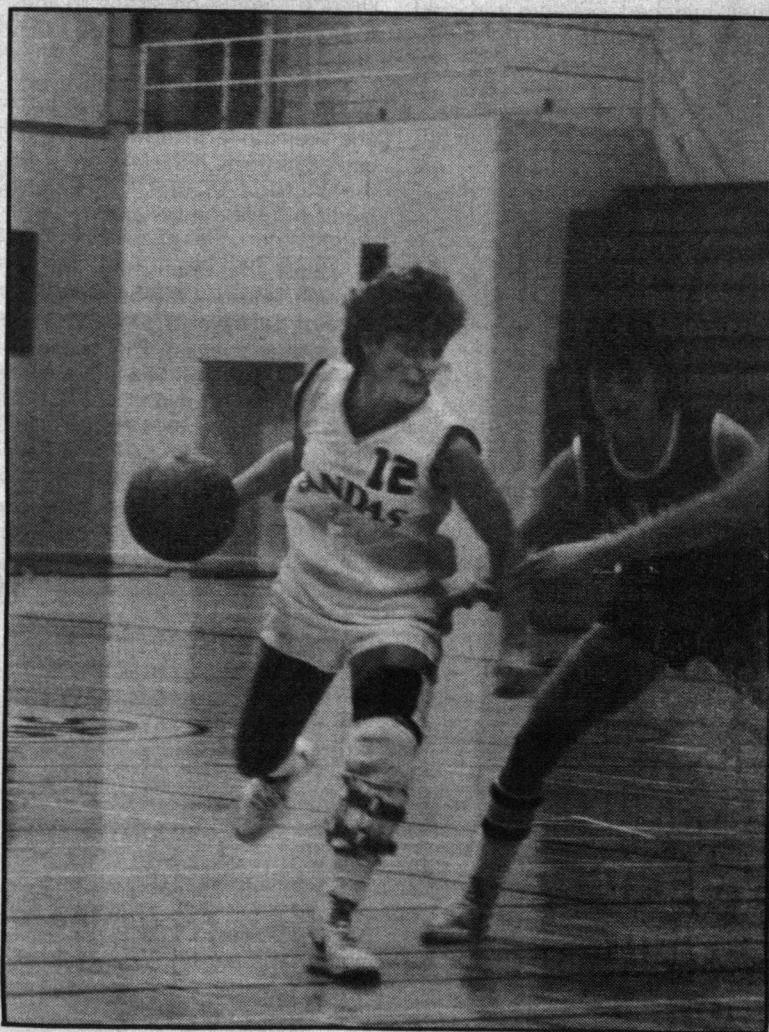


Photo Tim Hellum

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