

Pandas drop pair at Hoopfest

OCTOBER 14, 2009 - 7:31PM

[Nathan Liewicki](#), Sports Staff



[PETE YEE](#)

REACH FOR THE TOP Despite their exuberance, the Pandas lost their final two matches of Hoopfest.

Sheer exuberance and a steady stream of energy filled the Main Gym in the minutes leading up to the basketball Pandas taking to the hardcourt in their 2009 Hoopfest Invitational opener, but that enthusiasm didn't sustain itself throughout the entire weekend.

The Pandas needed a fourth-quarter rally to take their opening game against Bishop's University, eventually holding off the feisty Gaiters for a 54–50 triumph. On Saturday against the defending OUA Champion Windsor Lancers, the Pandas found themselves behind early and were no match for the taller Lancer forwards, losing 65–47. Sunday's contest with conference rival Regina was eerily similar to the game against Windsor, in which the Pandas lost by a count of 70–57.

Despite Alberta' lopsided losses in the final two games of Hoopfest, there was one shining star: fourth year guard Emily Bolduc. A native of Calgary, Bolduc led all Pandas in scoring with 12.7 PPG in the preseason tournament and chipped in defensively as well.

“Emily really stepped up and showed some great leadership, and she was consistent with her effort all weekend long. She did not get down on herself after missing shots; [instead] she kept trying to knock shots down when she had the opportunity to. I am really proud of her,” Pandas head coach Scott Edwards noted.

Solid play from a few players is rarely enough to propel teams to victory, and the Pandas will need more production on the offensive side of the ball if they're going to be competitive in Canada West. At Hoopfest, the Pandas shot less than 35 per cent from the floor in each of their three games — a problem associated more so with shot execution than with shot selection.

“We were not knocking down lay-ups and we had a bunch of jump shots, but we couldn't hit them and everyone starts feeling like it's all their fault,” Edwards retorted. “This is not an experienced enough team to come and grind through these moments, so we have a lot of work ahead.”

Even though the Pandas squad struggled to put points on the board against three highly skilled and highly polished teams, Edwards felt that his team did an admirable job on the defensive side of the ball.

“Outside of the third quarter [vs. Regina], I thought we defended very well for this early in the year, and I felt we were consistent with our efforts and we rebounded well for a small team.”

Although they were being outplayed for a good portion of the weekend by the Lancers and Cougars, and trailing versus the Gaiters, the Pandas showed a lot of heart with their strong fourth quarter performances.

“Nobody likes to lose two games at their home tournament,” Edwards said. “They really want to grind and play hard for each other and they showed that they will battle through adversity and those are good things going forward,” Edwards explained.

The Pandas will round out their exhibition schedule October 23–25, when they will take on three more OUA teams at the Carleton Invitational in Ottawa.