

Pandas Field Hockey set to host 4–0 T-birds

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FIELD FEAT The Pandas will need to bring their best against undefeated UBC.

The number-four ranked Pandas field hockey squad will return to action this weekend when they host the UBC Thunderbirds – the number-one ranked team in the nation.

The Pandas head into their weekend tussle with the T-Birds fresh off of a weekend split with their provincial rivals from Calgary. In both games against the Dinos, the Pandas came out of the gates quite sluggish and it took a while for

them to find their legs and intensity. The results were not what interim head coach A.J. Facendi had in mind.

“As much as we did not want to lose [to Calgary], hopefully that becomes a learning lesson for us because I think we lost to a team that we are better than,” Facendi noted.

Despite allowing the Dinos to score the winning goal in Saturday’s game in the final minutes of play, the Pandas put the crushing defeat behind them and turned in a solid performance against Calgary the next day, coming out with a 4–2 victory.

2008 Canada West Rookie of the Year Jacqueline Trautman played especially well against the Dinos, recording four goals in two games, including a hat-trick in Sunday’s win.

“Having gained national team experience this past summer has really helped Jacqueline improve her skills,” Facendi pointed out. “She is one of the stars on our team.”

Nevertheless, the Pandas must get contributions from everyone if they're going to continue to improve their standing in Canada West. The games versus UBC present a new challenge to coach Facendi and her players, in particular because the Thunderbirds have a perfect 4–0 record and have yet to allow a goal against this season.

“We have played everybody thus far except UBC, but we feel confident in knowing that we can match up against them,” Facendi explained. “The T-Birds play a similar style each year, so we know things about them: players, systems, etc. Adapting to what we have not seen from them will be important to achieving success.”

Throughout both games, the Pandas will need to compete and play hard for a full 70 minutes against the Thunderbirds' conference-leading scoring attack if they hope to hand them their first losses of the season.

“We have a great system and we like to play as a team that relies on an entire group effort for our wins,” Facendi said. “A big key for us, especially against UBC, is having consistency across the field. Against Calgary [last Saturday] our breakdowns were the result of simple errors that occurred at every position – simple errors that can be easily fixed.”

The Pandas and T-Birds will hook up at Foote Field at 1 p.m. both Saturday and Sunday.