

# Volleyball Pandas out for redemption

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**JUMP TIME** Preseason action kicks off this weekend in Regina for the Pandas.

As the Pandas volleyball squad prepares for another season of action, there's an increased feeling of optimism around the team. Although it's a long way off, the Pandas will be hosting the CIS National Championship come the first weekend in March.

Last year, the Pandas wound up finishing first in Canada West conference play with a 16–4 record, but struggled mightily in the conference's final four tournament; as a result, they missed out on an opportunity to advance to Nationals. Nonetheless, 10 players from last year's team are back and with the

help of some new recruits, the team is intent on tackling the challenges of Canada West play.

“Everyone in the country is vying for a national title, but we really like the group we have moving forward,” said Pandas head coach Laurie Eisler. “Obviously, however, it is a little different for us knowing that we are going to be competing at [nationals], but there still needs to be a lot of attention to detail if we are going to win it.”

The departure of experienced fifth-year players Samantha Wojtkiw, Daryll Roper, Stacey Robertson, and Jocelyn Blair will have a definite impact, but that means that players on this year’s team will need to work that much harder to fill the void. Moreover, leadership will need to come from other players.

“We have never been a team that relies on one or two players and so I expect leadership to come from the entire roster,” commented Eisler. “Across the board, we have a great group of young players who are all very strong leaders and are going to bring what they have to the table.”

Expected to be one of the more dynamic players this season for the Pandas is Tiffany Proudfoot. A native of Calgary, Proudfoot is a master of kill shots and a standout whenever she’s on the floor.

“Tiffany Proudfoot is a fourth-year player that has been with us since day one and won a national championship in her first year. She knows what it takes to be successful and the process that produces success,” stated Eisler

Jennifer Restall, Meggie Moir, Alexa Berton, Kelci French, and Erin Walsh are also returning to the Pandas volleyball squad this season. Several Pandas competed in the Canada Summer Games this past August in Prince Edward Island, including Camille Wallace (British Columbia), Jaclyn Ellis (Ontario), as well as Caitlin Bucknell and Krista Zubick (Alberta).

“They are coming off of that experience [...] Any time you play in a national event, you learn a lot and can bring that with you to future competitive events,” Eisler remarked.

Experience is a key in Canada West, especially since it's always one of the most competitive conferences in the country. Last season, the top four teams – Alberta, Calgary, UBC, and Trinity Western – ended conference play separated by a mere four points.

“We have a very deep conference and so we know that preparing to go into every single match in Canada West is important to being successful,” Eisler noted. “We are going to be pushing ourselves as much as humanly possible between now and nationals because history would suggest that the better you are playing coming in from your season, the better chance you have at winning [nationals].”

The Pandas will spend three of the next four weekends playing exhibition matches in Regina, at home against the Dinos, and then at Université Laval, before beginning conference play against their rivals from Calgary on October 23.