



Saskatchewan Wheelchair Basketball Report 2014-2015

This season had a main focus on preparing for the 2015 Canada Winter Games. Several events were added in this year that was specifically targeted at junior aged athletes for this reason.

In July 2014, SWSA was able to bring in Stephen Bialowas, the U23 Men's basketball coach, to host a three day (July 25th to 27th) Junior Centre for Performance Camp in Saskatoon. Fifteen athletes participated in the camp.

In October 2014, Alberta and Saskatchewan held a Canada Winter Games camp in Lloydminster. This was an opportunity for the athletes to train with athletes from another province and the first of many opportunities to play games as a group. The days consisted of training together and then playing official 5 on 5 games in the evening (Alberta versus Saskatchewan). Saskatchewan had thirteen Junior Athletes attend this camp.

December was a busy month for Saskatchewan Athletes with multiple trips to Edmonton, as our CWBL A team attended a tournament in Edmonton and then our Junior Athletes attended a three day Canada Winter Games Camp in Edmonton. The Canada Winter Games Camp consisted of three days of training with instruction by Stephen Bialowas, a 3 on 3 tournament, and 5 on 5 games against British Columbia and Alberta. We had fourteen junior athletes attend this camp and the same fourteen athletes participated in the Canada Winter Games Selection Camp after Christmas. From the fourteen, twelve were selected to the team to represent Saskatchewan at the Canada Winter Games in Prince George.

National Team Selection Camp also took place at the beginning of December and Saskatchewan was represented at these camps with one female athlete and four male athletes. Katie Miyazaki also attended the Senior Women's National Team Selection Camp as a coach. SWSA was very proud to have Nik Goncin named to the Senior Canadian Men's National Team for the third year in a row and to have Erica Gavel named to the Senior Canadian Women's National Team for the second year in a row, as well as the U25 Women's Team. Garrett Ostepchuk and Ekram Nabi attended the U23 Men's National Team camp and would continue to play with the team throughout the year.

January was continued preparation for the Junior squad, as Canada Winter Games were around the corner. With many teams travelling in preparation, the regularly CWBL A tournament hosted by Regina was instead turned into a Saskatchewan Basketball Series (SBS) due to lack of teams. It allowed further preparation for the athletes going forward. The Regina athletes also had an opportunity to be the half time show of the Regina Cougars Basketball Game on January 24th. The end of the month concluded with Canada Winter Games Team Sask day, filled with talks and the handing out of Team Sask clothing.

Also in January, the demo wheelchairs were sent up north to La Loche, where new Saskatchewan teacher Jonathon Busse used the chairs to teach children about wheelchair sports and wheelchair basketball. Jonathon had previously lived in New Brunswick where he played wheelchair basketball and was the manager of the Junior team. This was an added bonus to the 25+ school demos that happen during the year around the Saskatoon area.

February was another busy month, kicked off with the first Women's tournament of the year in Calgary. The following week, the Canada Winter Games team took off for Prince George. Saskatchewan would go 4-0 through pool play, which set up a semi-final match up against rivals, Alberta, for the second year in a row. Saskatchewan would come out victorious, setting up a Gold Medal match against Quebec, who they beat in the previous year to win Gold. The offence of Saskatchewan could not quite get going against the defence of Quebec and Quebec pulled out a 69-57 victory over Saskatchewan. The Silver Medal won by Saskatchewan was the best performance ever in Wheelchair Basketball for Saskatchewan at the Canada Winter Games.

In March, Saskatoon wheelchair basketball practices started to include Firefighters and Paramedics, as many of them were preparing to participate in a fundraiser game for Muscular Dystrophy. The Fundraiser on April 11th raised over \$5,500 and the gym was filled with many people who had never seen wheelchair basketball before. It was fantastic event put on by the firefighters and paramedics and they are hoping to make it an annual event.

In April, Saskatchewan was unable to find enough athletes to send a team to CWBL Finals due to the announcement of finals being very late in the season and with a couple players playing on an Academy team. It was an unfortunate situation, but we are optimistic that Saskatchewan will be sending at least one team to CWBL this coming season.

Women's Nationals were hosted April 17th to 19th, 2015 in Calgary, Alberta. Saskatchewan started the tournament off on a high note, beating BC and Quebec 66-43 and 71-58 respectively. The following day, Saskatchewan would lose two games to Edmonton and Calgary, 56-38 and 49-40. This would set up a bronze medal match against Quebec. Saskatchewan came out of the gate on fire and would go on an 18-1 run to take control of the game and eventually win 70-49. The bronze medal won was the first ever for the Saskatchewan Women's Team.

In May 2015, Saskatchewan athlete Shelby Harrower was invited to coach at the Open U19 Academy Camp in Toronto. She was one of four coaches at the camp. Shelby was also invited to Winnipeg in June for Centralization, where she was a "Red Ace" and practiced with the team to help in their preparation.

As part of the U23 Men's Team, Garrett Ostepchuk and Ekram Nabi made multiple trips to Toronto this summer to train and also compete against the Senior Women's Team. The U23 Men are training towards World Championships in 2017.

May, June, July, and August were very busy months for National Team Athletes Erica Gavel, Nik Goncin, and Coach Katie Miyazaki (who served as the Senior Women's Team's Manager). Erica would travel to Toronto in May, Winnipeg in June, Beijing in June/July to compete at the Women's U25 World Championships (where they would finish 4th), and Brock in July before heading to Toronto for Parapan Am Games. SWSA Executive Director Andrea Muir also travelled to Beijing as Team Manager. Nik Goncin would make multiple trips to Toronto for centralization in both May and June and travelled to Germany in July for more training and to compete in a tournament in Frankfurt. The Men also staged at Brock before heading to Toronto for the Parapan Am Games. Katie Miyazaki would travel to Toronto, Winnipeg, and Germany with the Senior Women's team, before joining the team in Toronto for the Parapan Am Games.

Nik Goncin on the men's side and Erica Gavel on the women's side would help their teams finish the round robin at Parapan Ams undefeated. The women would defeat Argentina in the semi finals and the men would defeat Brazil in their semi final to advance to the Gold Medal games against the United States. Both teams would come home with silver medals, but both teams qualified for the 2016 Paralympics in Rio.

SWSA would like to thank all the coaches who have assisted in developing Saskatchewan's wheelchair basketball athletes.

Respectfully Submitted,
Katie Miyazaki
High Performance Wheelchair Basketball Coach