



Saskatchewan Wheelchair Basketball Report 2017-2018

This season had a focus on ensuring all our Junior athletes were in the Train to Train phase and gaining more experience. This started year 3 of the cycle towards the 2019 Canada Winter Games with the main event being Junior Nationals.

During the summer months, we had some open gym practices times available for Saskatoon athletes. The athletes did not want to stop practicing, so we wanted to make the gym available to them. It is great to see the enthusiasm from the athletes to be in the gym. Three Saskatchewan athletes participated with the Senior National programs, Nikola Goncin, Erica Gavel, and Garrett Ostepchuk.

In September 2017, practices officially began for both Saskatoon and Regina club teams. Several athletes attended the Athlete and Coach Advance, which is an annual event in Saskatoon for high performance athletes. Hoops for Hope, a fundraiser for Cystic Fibrosis, created a wheelchair basketball division this year to allow for our participation. We had 4 teams and a total of 16 participants take part in the event. It was a great event to showcase our sport and provide an opportunity for basketball athletes to try it out. The following day we held our first Saskatchewan Basketball Series (SBS) of the year. Wheelchair basketball clinics started this month.

To start October, NRG held their annual Basketball Sundae. Later in October, Saskatoon held the first Canadian Wheelchair Basketball League (CWBL) B tournament of the year. Following up on last year, instead of playing with teams from their own clubs, the tournament integrated players from Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Winnipeg onto different teams and played several games, switching the teams each time. Much like last year, this was met with positive reception.

November consisted of more wheelchair basketball clinics occurring in schools (with an attempt to hit up more out of town schools), two SBS sessions, and another B tournament for our athletes. The SBS session down in Regina was extra useful, as mental trainer Lisa Hoffart was able to meet individually with each athlete during the training sessions.

December started off with the annual CWBL A tournament in Edmonton. Another SBS was held the following weekend in preparation for a Junior tournament held the last weekend before Christmas. This gave our junior team a chance to play against BC, Alberta, and Manitoba.

The year of 2018 started off with Calgary's tournament being cancelled. This was unfortunate, but with a heavy junior focus this year, the athletes were still getting lots of chances to train and play. The CWBL A team held their annual tournament again, with Calgary and Edmonton coming out to play.

February started off with another tournament, this time in Lethbridge. Our CWBL B team attended and had a great showing. The women's season kicked off this month with a tournament, but only Edmonton was able to attend so we switched up the format with some 3 on 3 and 5 on 5. Another SBS session down in Regina gave athletes another opportunity to meet with Lisa Hoffart.

CWBL B Finals kicked off the month of March, but our team was unable to attend due to poor weather and driving conditions. For the CWBL A tournament, a short bench was taken to give juniors an opportunity to rest before Junior Nationals, which took place the following weekend. The CWBL A team went a flawless 4-0. At Junior Nationals, Saskatchewan finished second in pool play, losing tight fought game against Alberta to determine first in the pool. This set up a matchup against New Brunswick in the crossover, winning 71-38 to set up a semi final matchup against Quebec. A back and forth game, Saskatchewan would end up losing 62-54. For the Bronze Medal game, Saskatchewan took on a tough Ontario team and came out victorious, winning 69-51. This means that we will go into Canada Winter Games

ranked 3rd. Carding camp was held the last week of March, with 5 Saskatchewan athletes attending (Nikola Goncin, Erica Gavel, Mitchell Bossaer, Garrett Ostepchuk, and Kaelen Hoffmueller).

In April there was one final women's tournament in Calgary that featured teams from Calgary and BC. This was a final tune up before women's nationals the next weekend in Richmond, BC. At Women's Nationals, Saskatchewan started off with a win over BC, then lost a close 70-67 game to Edmonton. On the second day, Saskatchewan played Quebec to close out the round robin and then had to play them again in the Semi Final later that day, which Quebec won 65-55. Playing in the bronze medal game, Saskatchewan came out victorious, 70-48, over a relatively new BC team. Katie Miyazaki was named to the All-Star team. One final SBS session was held in preparation for CWBL Finals the first weekend of May.

We hosted CWBL Finals in Martensville the first weekend of May. There were two tiers with a Saskatchewan team represented in each Tier. For Tier 1, there were 5 teams and Saskatchewan finished the round robin 3-1, which set up a semi final with BC. It was a very tight match, which BC won 71-68, although Saskatchewan had a great comeback. In the bronze medal game, Saskatchewan held off the young Alberta Northern Lights team, winning 67-51 and captured their first CWBL Final medal (in tier 1). In Tier 2, the young Saskatchewan team went 2-1 through round robin play. In an exciting match up, Saskatchewan beat Manitoba in the semi final 47-39 to set up a rematch against the Cruiser Suns (who had beat them in their first game of the tournament). The whole team stepped up and won 48-39 to capture the Tier 2 championship. Saskatchewan is the only team to have ever won the Tier 2 division on the two years it has been held. In Tier 1, Nikola Goncin was named to the All-Star Team. In Tier 2, three Saskatchewan athletes were named to the All-Star team: Brady Arthurs, Sara Brown, and Tanner Bolianatz. This capped off another great season and should set Saskatchewan up for success for the 2018-2019 season, with the main event being the Canada Winter Games in Red Deer in 2019!

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Katie Miyazaki
Saskatchewan High Performance Wheelchair Basketball Coach