



Saskatchewan Wheelchair Basketball

Report 2015-2016

This season had a main focus on moving athletes up from minis to the junior and senior practices because of the turnover from the 2015 Canada Winter Games. This started year 1 of the new cycle towards the 2019 Canada Winter Games

During the summer months, we had some open gym practices times available for Saskatoon athletes. This was a change from previous years, as practices usually stopped when the season stopped. We adopted a change in hopes that come September, it would not be as long since most athletes had been in their chairs

In September 2015, practices officially began for both Saskatoon and Regina club teams. We had several athletes attend the Athlete and Coaches advance and had an opportunity to be involved in the Girls in Motion day the following day. The Girls in Motion "Active like a girl" day was an opportunity to have over 80 girls try wheelchair basketball. From this event, we had 5-6 girls join our minis program for the year. Wheelchair Basketball clinics in schools across the province also started up near the end of the month, as well as visit the impairments class the University of Saskatchewan.

Our first Saskatchewan Basketball Series (SBS) was held in October and was a first glimpse at some of our younger athletes competing together. Saskatoon was also host to a Canadian Wheelchair Basketball League (CWBL) B tournament that brought in Edmonton, Calgary, and Grande Prairie. Both a testing camp for senior national team athletes and a U23 men's camp was held at the end of October. We had three athletes at the senior national team testing camps and two athletes at the U23 men's camp.

November consisted of more wheelchair basketball clinics occurring in schools, another SBS session, and another B tournament for our athletes. NRG minis basketball also started up in Saskatoon.

Athletes involved in the national team program were invited out to Toronto for Carding camp, which replaced selection camp this year. Carding camp was where athletes learned about what kind of funding they would receive for the year, with the team to be picked in April 2016 for the Paralympics. Four Saskatchewan athletes received carding, with Nikola Goncin and Erica Gavel receiving senior carding, and Mitchell Bossaer and Garrett Ostepchuk receiving developmental carding. There was also another U23 camp for Ekram Nabi and Garrett to attend in the middle of the month. The last weekend before Christmas we had most of our Junior athletes make the trek out to Edmonton to attend a developmental junior camp alongside the Alberta junior athletes. This camp was run by Stephen Bialowis, much like previous years.

Athletes jumped right back into action after the Christmas break, with our CWBL B team attending a tournament in Calgary the first weekend back. After a one-year hiatus, the CWBL A tournament in Regina was back on this year with Calgary sending a team and Winnipeg sending athletes. Saskatchewan athletes were split up into Saskatoon and Regina teams and supplemented with Winnipeg athletes in a three team tournament. Another SBS session was

also held in between the CWBL B and CWBL A tournaments. Once again, our demo wheelchairs were sent up to La Loche for use in the school up north.

February saw several of our female athletes sent to Toronto as part of the newly formed Red Aces. Shelby Harrower, Chantel Scherr, and Sara Brown were all part of a team made up of mostly able-bodied athletes to play against the National Academy athletes. It was a great opportunity for our able-bodied athletes to play against some of our best National Team athletes. As well, the first Women's tournament of the year took place in Edmonton at the end of the month. Much like last year, 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 March 19th was once again a great success and a fantastic event put on by the Firefighters and Paramedics of Saskatoon.

In April, the women's team played in their final tournament of the year, going 3-1 with only 6 athletes. Unfortunately, the women's team was unable to attend Women's Nationals due to multiple reasons. After not attending last year, we were able to send a team to CWBL Finals in Kamloops, BC. This was the first year they decided to include a two-tiered tournament. Our team from Saskatchewan would go undefeated and easily capture the first ever Tier 2 CWBL title. Next year we plan on competing in the Tier 1 division.

On April 30th and May 1st, 2016, Saskatoon was host of the Junior West Regional Championships. Saskatchewan put in two teams in the seven team tournament and had a total of 11 athletes participate. It was the first tournament for 5 of the athletes and great for the development of wheelchair basketball for our junior athletes going forward towards the 2019 Canada Winter Games. Our teams finished 5th and 6th in the tournament and had two of our athletes named all-stars, Garrett Ostepchuk and Shelby Harrower. This tournament wrapped up the 2015-2016 wheelchair basketball season, with the only even to be held in the summer to be a U19 camp in July 2016 in Saskatoon and run by National Team coach Bill Johnson and U25 Women's coach Ross Norton.

May 2016 continued to be a busy month for wheelchair basketball clinics and started a very busy month for our two athletes and one coach named to the National Teams. Nikola Goncin was named to the Senior Men's team and Erica Gavel was named to the Senior Women's team, with Katie Miyazaki also named to the team as an Assistant Coach. Both teams spent most months centralized in Toronto and going on trips to the USA, Netherlands, and Great Britain for tournaments in preparation for the 2016 Paralympics to be held in Rio in September 2016.

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