



sports briefs

BISON WOMEN'S HOCKEY TEAM READY FOR NATIONALS

The University of Manitoba women's hockey team has been seeded third in the the upcoming CIS National Championships, which begin March 10 at Wilfred Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont.

The Bisons, who won the Canada West title this season after posting a 16-5-3 record, are in a pool with St. Francis Xavier and the host school.

Manitoba will play the loser of Thursday's game between St. Francis Xavier and Wilfrid Laurier on Friday at 6:30 p.m.. On Saturday at 6:30 p.m., the Bisons will play the winner of Thursday's game.

After the round robin, the top team from each pool will play for the national championship on Sunday at 6:30 p.m.

This is Manitoba's fifth trip to the nationals. The school's best finish has been third place, which it has accomplished three times.

BADMINTON JUNIORS REACH SEMIS IN BIG TOURNEY

Two up-and-coming Manitoba badminton players reached the semifinals last weekend in the Calgary Junior Elite Series tournament.

Andrew Harrison reached the final four before losing to eventual champion Clinton Wong of B.C., while Kristy Beettam also fell in the semifinal round to the ultimate winner.

For Beettam, it was the best showing to date on the four-tournament national circuit. Harrison has reached the semis in every tournament thus far, and is looking forward to a deep run at the junior nationals.

POLICE NEED VOLUNTEERS

The Winnipeg Police Service Half Marathon and two-person relay have already sold out, but the annual fundraiser for the Canadian Cancer Society is still looking for volunteers.

Organizers are still in need of help on the day of the May 1 race and in the days leading up to the event.

To volunteer, call the Canadian Cancer Society at 774-7483 or visit www.wpshalfmarathon.ca.

Novice rower just beginning to scratch surface of her talent

St. Boniface

BY AVI SAPER

STAFF REPORTER

avi.saper@canstarnews.com

The first time Kaitlin Rempel tried rowing, she spent as much time in the murky water of the Red River as she did in her boat.

That was in the fall of 2009, when the St. Boniface resident decided on a whim to drop in to the Winnipeg Rowing Club instead of walking or driving past it the way she had every other day.

"The idea had always appealed to me," Rempel said, "but I never really knew much about it. I was always more involved with team sports through school."

At the time, Rempel was getting ready for another season as a forward for the University of Winnipeg's women's basketball team. She thought at the very least that rowing could be an effective way to get stronger and built stamina for basketball.

As it turned out — and even though she flipped her boat no less than eight times that first day — Rempel knew immediately that she had found the sport that would replace basketball after she graduated.

"I just loved it from that day," said the 23-year-old who is set to graduate in the spring with a bachelor's degree in kinesiology and applied health. "The people at the club were so great at helping me to get started. I told them I can't make any commitments, I can't sign up for any programs, but can you just show me the ropes."

What started as a couple days a week turned into three or four mornings a week during basketball season, and eventually — once the Wesmen were finished — twice a day, six days a week.

The woman who could barely stay in her boat the previous fall spent the summer of 2010 collecting outstanding results at a variety of meets. She took first place in singles and second place in quads at the Regina Sprints; won the singles race at the Duluth International;



Submitted photo

Kaitlin Rempel recently received a \$5,000 scholarship that will allow her to focus on realizing her full potential as a rower this summer.

was first in singles, doubles and quads at the Tops and Bottoms regatta in Kenora; and posted a first- and three second-place finishes at the North Western Championships, also in Kenora.

Those results earned her the Winnipeg Rowing Club's Peter Nykoluk Rowing Scholarship, a \$5,000 award named after a former club member who died in 1990 while coming to the aid of teammates in an accident en route to a regatta in Minneapolis.

"It's huge," Rempel said of the impact the scholarship will have on her training this summer. "Knowing I can devote time and energy to training is an incredible gift. Peter was a great guy and it's such an honour to be considered that I uphold the

same characteristics he did."

Once the 20-4 Wesmen complete their playoff run — which Rempel is hoping will take them all the way to a national title — her focus will turn exclusively to the water. She's already circled the national championships and the Royal Henley, two events that could see her racing alongside members of the Canadian national team.

Rempel plans to use those events to show her what she needs to do to reach the highest levels of the sport — something many female rowers don't do until their late 20s.

"I may have started later (than some elite rowers)," she said. "But it's not too late, by any means."