

Sports

Women's rugby overcomes inexperience

By Jack Millikin
Emerald Contributor

The trend for most first-year teams in virtually any sport is to either flop, flop miserably, or break even.

However, with their recent success at the Maggotfest Rugby Tournament in Mizzoula, Mont., the University women's rugby team has done anything but that.

The tournament featured 34 teams from around the Western region, including teams from California, Washington and Canada. Those teams, according to player/coach Sandy Meredith, were considered more experienced than the University team. However, at the close of the tournament, the result was something for the University team to be proud of.

"We won it!" said player/coach Cassie Law. "Because we were new, we really didn't know what to expect. We knew we were a good team, but we weren't sure where we stood with the other teams."

From the outset of the tournament, however, there was little doubt as to how good they were. In the opening game, the University team walloped

Washington State 20-0, despite WSU's record of 7-1 entering the tournament. From there, the team rode a wave of confidence and intensity that carried them to the championship.

"We were just hoping for some experience," Meredith said. "To be honest, I really didn't expect us to be in the top two, much less champions. They were all very experienced teams."



While the team certainly came away from the tournament with experience, they got a little more than they bargained for. "We have really been doing a good job lately," said Meredith. "I have seen 100 percent improvement from the beginning of the year. After seeing the team's capabilities and how good they can play, I would say we were probably one of the top four teams in the region."

Team member Tiana Tozer voiced a similar attitude. "We

went out to do our best and to have a good time," she said. "In the tournament, we found we had a close-knit team."

The team's chances of participating in a tournament in the Canadian city Edmonton, Alberta have been dashed due to lack of funds. However, the team looks to the future with hope. "We will have a lot of experienced rugby players returning next year," said Meredith. "This year we tried car washes and raffles to raise money, but it wasn't quite enough. We'll just wait for the funds to build."

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Chris Chan, third place, semi-contact; third place, full-contact, women's lightweight black belt.

Jeff Chase, third place, full-contact, men's lightweight colored belt.

Dave Preedy, third place, full-contact, men's middleweight white belt.

Darrin Sonderman, second place, semi-contact; third place, full-contact.

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