

Hail the queens

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Open division team, but she declined the offer. Not wanting to let this valuable resource slip through their fingers, though, the guys asked if she would consider coaching instead. They thought having a female coach might be an advantage.

"Most of the women grew up playing," Nunez notes. "Their knowledge of the game is better." Luckily for the lads and the whole team, Henley welcomed the opportunity to coach.

Henley grew up playing ball in the back yards of Portland. It wasn't until high school that she started playing softball, making an easy transition from overhand to underhand. The young dyke was named first team All-Metro three years in a row at David Douglas High School for her time served as pitcher.

Although she could have gone on to play fast-pitch in college, Henley chose instead to play basketball at Western Oregon State University (being, of course, an all-around killer jock). But never letting her love for softball die, she continued to play on recreational teams. "Softball is something that I could always get into and have fun with," she says.

Once all the players and coaching staff were in place, Scandals went to work, and, interestingly, the inexperienced players never slowed them down. Instead, this team came equipped with an unbeatable attitude. That may sound sappy, but the fact is: They want it. They love it. They're versatile. And most importantly, they're having a blast.

But what would winning be without a few rocks in the road? Namely, they had to start from scratch. According to Henley, they started the season by working on hitting and catching.

"By the end of the season, though, the players that started out with minimal ability were totally different," she beams. "The key to our success has been a matter of me being able to really work with them and them allowing me to do so."

In order to qualify for the World Series a team must finish first or second in their league. Heading into the last few games, Scandals was an underdog, but after placing third in the playoffs, they slipped into the biggest tournament of the year in second place in the C division.



PHOTOS BY JOE FENOLSON

J.R. Perez (left) and Victor Nunez strong-armed the best coach they knew to lead Scandals to the World Series

In addition to their intense work ethic and desire to excel, Henley says they've been able to achieve so much in so little time because of an innate camaraderie. "This team has a chemistry that really makes us gel and work together," she says. "That's what has gotten us this far."

From the very start, Scandals has been ready to make their mark and prove that slow-pitch is serious business. Going into

the tournament, team members hope the confidence and competitive spirit will carry them through a winning streak. Plus, there's so much more motivation to win the World Series for a gaggle of gay boys.

"I want the ring," Nunez smiles. ☐

COURTNEY PERKINS is a Portland free-lance writer.

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