

## **2004 CIS WOMEN'S BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIP UNIVERSITY OF REGINA COUGARS OUTLOOK**

The Cougar women's basketball team is back at nationals after a one year hiatus having previously played in the tournament five consecutive years. This year The Cougars bring a 22-2 conference record to Winnipeg in search of their second CIS Championship.

The Cougars entered the pre-season top ten poll ranked seventh in the country before dropping to number eight in week two. From that point on it was a steady rise to the number one position. The Cougars made that climb by going 10-0 before Christmas and 8-2 down the stretch to end with an 18-2 record, which was good enough for top spot in Canada West. They were 10-0 on their home floor with their only two losses coming on the road at the hands of the Simon Fraser University Clan (Jan 17, 55-83) and the University of Winnipeg Wesmen (Feb 7, 47-69).

The Cougars entered the playoffs as the number one seed and made short work of Calgary (2-0 52-37, 64-46) in the first round winning two straight, which gave the Cougars the opportunity to host the Canada West Final Four in Regina. They then defeated Simon Fraser in the semi-finals (75-51) before getting through UBC in the final (73-36) to take their first ever Canada West Championship.

This is Regina's tenth appearance to the National Championships where they have a 14-12 record with one Gold (2001 94-85 Alberta) and one Bronze (2000 66-53 Alberta) medal. The last appearance for the Cougars was in 2002 when they lost to the Winnipeg Wesmen (64-57) in the bronze medal game.

Three fifth year players that were on the National Championship team in 2000-2001 in Alberta lead the Cougars. Tara-Lee Crosson (White City, SK), Phoebe De Ciman (Regina, SK), Cymone Bouchard (Regina, SK). These players were all young when they won the championship but have the experience and they know what it takes to win a "Bronze Baby."

Crosson puts good minutes in for the Cougars on the bench averaging 3.2 points and 3.0 rebounds a game in 16.8 minutes. Phoebe took last season off to rest so injuries and is back for her fifth year of eligibility averaging 7.6 points and 4.8 boards a game and is an emotional leader for this Cougar squad. Bouchard who was referred to as "The Real Deal" in a publication this year is definitely all that. She is averaging 18.5 points per game which is good enough for tops in Canada West as well to go with her conference leading number of steals with 101 which is an average of 3.06. This was good enough to give her Canada West Most Valuable Player and is looking to win Regina's first Nan Copp since 1998-1999 when Corrin Wersta took home the top player in the country award. Bouchard was named tournament MVP in 2001 and is hoping to end her CIS eligibility on a winning note.

Other players to watch for the Cougars are #7 Jana Schweitzer (4th, Regina, SK) who averaged 14.1 points per game this season and leads the team in assists with 4.48 per game. Also look for 3rd year wing player Lara Schmidt (Regina, SK) to team up with Bouchard and Schweitzer to carry the bulk of the scoring. Schmidt is averaging 7.7 points per game and rips down 4.2 boards a game. The Cougars look to play a

perimeter game so look to their guards to carry them towards their “Bronze Baby” in four years.