

Women's tennis teammates share Canadian bond

By James Nicol
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

The cold weather Penn State is known for won't be bothering some of the women's tennis players this season.

The team features three players on its roster that hail from Canada, including two players that came to Penn State in this year's recruiting class.

Freshmen Marie-Fredérique Bedard and Carmen Sandor are in their first season for the team. Bedard is from Montreal, while Sandor is a native of Toronto.

The two have played doubles together so far this season and recorded their first milestone together at the Hokie Invitational earlier this month. They each

recorded the first doubles win of their careers by defeating Mirna Matic and Ivan Tomaic of Radford, 8-3 in a consolation bracket.

Sophomore Petra Januskova is the other Nittany Lion from Canada. Last year the ITA named Januskova the ITA Atlantic Region Freshman of the Year. She earned a No. 81 national ranking this preseason and became the first Penn State player to be ranked in the preseason top 100 since 1989, when Kelly Erven received the honor.

The three did not know each other well before coming to Penn State and did not compete together often. The closet the future teammates got was in Canadian junior nationals.

"We would see each other here

and there at national tournaments," Sandor said. "But I never really got to know them until now, that's the bond we really share."

The province of Quebec is home to both Januskova and Bedard and they shared some familiarity before coming to Penn State.

"I used to know Petra before I came here, Petra, Carmen and I use to play nationals when I was younger in 14s," Bedard said. "I knew them before, and I was excited to come here because I like them both."

Coach Dawna Denny said the familiarity between them is not much different than the familiarity players who are from the same state share.

The reason both freshmen cited for coming to Penn State wasn't

"But I never really got to know them until now, that's the bond we really share."

Carmen Sandor
freshman women's tennis player

their Canadian teammates, though. The academics offered were the deciding factor as well as the strength of the program.

"I'm incredibly grateful to just be a part of the environment here," Sandor said. "The academics are so good and the athletics are so good and there is just so much support from every aspect, the trainers, the fitness coaches, my coaches, the team, everything is great."

Denny said the new faces have brought energy to the team and

the addition of junior transfer Fernanda Perrotta should give another boost to the team's performance.

"It's always a challenge to have three new players in, for some teams that's not a lot but for us that is a lot," she said. "I think it's brought a fresh new dynamic and the girls are doing a great job of staying positive and the energy has been great at practice so I've been pleased."

To e-mail reporter: jsn5049@psu.edu

Women's golf coach St. Pierre reflects on season

By Katie Montgomery
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

With the fall season coming to a close, Penn State women's golf coach Denise St. Pierre is proud of her team.

With nine returning players, St. Pierre cites each player's stroke average improvement as her proudest moment of the season.

Each returning player has improved between three to five shots since last season, St. Pierre said.

"I think the best part [of this season] is that the team, when we got here on campus, they were ready to work hard and they did work hard," St. Pierre said. "They put in a lot of time and a lot of effort and focus, and a commitment to working together as a team."

"That resulted in what we saw when we went [to competition], there was somebody different that might have stepped it up. Whether it was Gia Fanelli or Emily Ransone, there were some people there that were key players who stepped it up one day or the other."

Another highlight of the fall season was jumping 67 places to finish ranked No. 66 after being ranked No. 133 at the end of last spring, St. Pierre said.

"That's a significant jump," St. Pierre said. "Those are the kinds of things I would focus on and say, 'That was great.' I don't want to get too hung up on what didn't work too well but I think there's a lot of things that we can be proud of that we did accomplish."

At the top of that long list of

accomplishments is winning this year's Nittany Invitational, a victory the Nittany Lions haven't seen since the 2006 fall season.

Penn State played host to 16 other schools, including last year's winner Rollins College.

After posting a two-round team score of 600 (295-305) to tie for first with Western Michigan, the Nittany Lions pulled ahead during the 18-hole third round to finish with a total score of 901 for 37-over par.

"One of the things that's been frustrating to me as a coach is that people don't understand how a golf competition is in college," St. Pierre said.

"We never go and play one team so it never looks like we beat anyone if we finish fifth. No one really understands the impact, like when

"They put in a lot of time and a lot of effort and focus, and a commitment to working together as a team."

Denise St. Pierre
women's golf coach

we won the Nittany Invitational."

The Nittany Lions' schedule is scattered with fourth and fifth place finishes, as well as a 14th place finish at the season opener, the team's seemingly worst performance.

"There were 21 teams [at the Cougar Classic] so when we reported that we finished 14 it doesn't sound great," St. Pierre said. "But first of all, all the teams that were there were ranked top 75 in the country. So beating

[seven] of those teams is a good thing but certainly there are areas we can improve on. We're moving in a really good direction with this group and I think we have a lot to look forward to in the coming months."

The Nittany Lions will have a chance to develop over the semester break before opening their spring season Feb. 6 in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

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