

College Sports

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UH NOTEBOOK

Penders enthusiastic about format of CBI

Coach welcomes chance to host game, play on TV

By MICHAEL MURPHY
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The Cougars are off to Tulsa for the semifinals of the inaugural College Basketball Invitational, and coach Tom Penders is positively giddy about his team's progress.

The Cougars eked out a win at Nevada (80-79) and then blew out Valparaiso (91-67) at home Monday.

Now they hit the road once again for a shot at the best-of-three championship series, a format Penders finds innovative.

"When we were invited, I loved the thought that we might be able to host a game or two," Penders said. "If we are lucky enough to go to the next game, (we) are in a two-out-of-three series. It is something different and on the cutting edge.

"This is the tournament of the future."

With the two wins in the CBI the Cougars have improved to 24-9, the most wins the program has had since winning 25 in 1992, the last year they were invited to play in the NCAA Tournament. Penders thinks the decision to accept the CBI's bid was a wise move on the part of athletics director Dave Maggard.

"It is a great opportunity for us and I thank Mr. Maggard so much for having the foresight on the Saturday before Selection Sunday to make the commitment to the CBI," Penders said. "He is a genius to do it.

"We had another chance to play at home and we are going to be written about, talked about and have a chance to play on national TV again (today).

"It is a win-win situation for us."

All-Americans

Three divers — freshman **Lacey Truelove**, freshman **Courtney Forcucci** and senior captain **Ginni van Katwijk** — earned All-America honors on the platform Saturday during the NCAA Championships at Ohio State's McCorkle Aquatic Pavilion.

Hot bat

After batting .500 and delivering a grand slam in the Cougars' 13-2 victory over Southern Mississippi, junior third baseman **Christa Raley** was named Conference USA co-Hitter of the Week. Raley had five RBIs, went 5-for-10, had a 1.000 slugging percentage and a .545 on-base percentage.

Softball exhibition

The U.S. Olympic softball team, led by **Cat Osterman**, will play an exhibition game against the Cougars at 7 p.m. April 8 at Memorial Park Field No. 1. Tickets and programs may be purchased by contacting **Paula Haydel** at pfh2007comcast.net or by calling 281-655-7300.

Bouncing back

Senior first baseman **Bryan Pounds** saw his career-best 19-game hitting streak snapped Saturday in the middle game of the Cougars series at No. 23 East Carolina.

Pounds came back to go 3-for-4 to help lead the Cougars to an 8-5 win in the series finale. The Cougars host No. 12 Rice at 6:30 p.m. today in the second game of the Silver Glove Series.

Strokin'

The Cougars finished sixth (874, 10 over par) in the National Invitational Tournament at the Omni Tucson National Golf Club in Arizona. Junior **Ben Moser** finished in a three-way tie for first place, shooting 7 under in the final two rounds.

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