

Calgary Scoreboard

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May 2018

National champions

Dinos triumph in
men's basketball

Having *fun*,
raising *funds*

2018 **Flames**
What happened?
What's next?

LGBTQ+
Softball
League



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2017-2018 Flames: What Happened?

They came into the 2017-2018 season with high expectations after trading their top three 2018 draft picks for immediate help that was supposed to put them into contention. Instead, the Calgary Flames' season ended with a whimper in early-to-mid March, and they didn't even come close to making the playoffs. Calgary Scoreboard asked Ramina Shlah and Tomas Oppolzer of Flame4Thought.com to break down what happened to this year's team. Answers have been edited and condensed for clarity and brevity.

Was there a single biggest reason the Flames missed the playoffs this year?

Oppolzer: A lot of people will probably see it as a cop-out, but the Flames just had awful luck at the worst times. It seemed like almost every game they had to get 10 really good scoring chances to score even one goal, while their opponents would seemingly score on any halfway dangerous shot on the Flames. That obviously wasn't the only issue though, the power play was also a huge reason they weren't good. Countless times the Flames would be up by a goal with a power play opportunity only to see it squandered and have the other team storm back.

Shlah: I don't think there was one single reason, it was definitely a factor of things. Like the power play, Mike Smith getting injured, their inconsistency with offence, player usage, etc. I think it was little things here and there, but not just one specific reason.

Related to above, but not necessarily the same: the team was in and out of playoff spots until mid February (the win in Nashville, I think, was the high-water mark of the season) then abruptly, completely collapsed throughout late February and March. Why did this happen?

Oppolzer: The culprit there was almost certainly goaltending. Mike Smith went down and with the spotlight suddenly on Rittich, it seemed like he couldn't stop a beach ball. On top of that, once Smith did come back he wasn't the same goalie that he was before he was hurt. Of his first five games back, four of them were lost on some really awful goals he let in, and after that the season was basically cooked.

Shlah: It's hard to say. I don't quite get why they completely collapsed after the bye week, but I think the big turning point in the season was probably the game against the San Jose Sharks, after they won 1-0 against Edmonton, [but] then lost 7-4 when they allowed four unanswered. I hate to blame it on goaltending, but I think the reason for the late season collapse had a lot to do with goaltending. Smith wasn't the force he's been all season and he'd been like that since early February, even before he got injured, and in those last couple of weeks, while he stole some games for the Flames all season long, he definitely cost them games since returning from injury as well.

Should any of the coaching staff be retained? If so, do you have any names you would like them to pursue?

Oppolzer: Paul Jerrard is the only member of the staff I'd for sure keep. Glen Gulutzan is another that I would if a good option doesn't become available



Coach Glen Gulutzan

"I don't necessarily think [Gulutzan's] that bad of a coach, but he's not that great at player utilization."



Sam Bennett

"I think we'll see at least two of Michael Stone, T.J. Brodie, Travis Hamonic, Sam Bennett, and Micheal Ferland moved."

(someone like a Joel Quenneville). Dave Cameron absolutely has to go though, the power play he runs is just awful and the Flames can't afford to have that again next season.

Shlah: I don't mind Paul Jerrard, I think he's a good penalty-killing coach and knows who to utilize on the PK. I also don't mind Gelinac since he gels well with the team. I would absolutely get rid of Dave Cameron. I don't know why he was even initially brought in anyways, since Ottawa's PP numbers were bad when he was the head coach. The fact that it took the coaching staff 51 games to figure out that Dougie Hamilton was their best offensive defenseman and to finally try him out on the first PP unit is baffling. He needs to go. I wouldn't mind if Gulutzan stayed (even though everyone on Twitter would have a fit). I don't necessarily think he's that bad of a coach, but he's not that great at player utilization. I have no opinion on him: if he stays, that's fine; if he goes, I'm good with that too.

What notable players do you think are likely to move in the offseason, and what kind of return do you expect?

Oppolzer: I think we'll see at least two of Michael Stone, TJ Brodie, Travis Hamonic, Sam Bennett, and Micheal Ferland moved. Ideally they'll use them to bring in a legit top-six winger and some draft picks in the first three rounds.

Shlah: I think we may have seen T.J. Brodie's last game in a Flames jersey. There are talks that the Flames may be trading for a first-round pick, but I'd hope to get some sort of top-six winger instead. I don't know how much trade value they could get for Brodie after this past season, but I don't think he'll be staying. Some people think Sam Bennett's also done, but I think he's going to stay for at least another season.

Any positives from this lost season?

Shlah: We found out some positives about some players: Mike Smith got back to his old habits, Micheal Ferland is a great player but is quite inconsistent, Sam Bennett is much better on the wing, Matthew Tkachuk is great in front of the net on the PP, and Dougie should be on the first PP unit. I think the Flames not making the playoffs may have also been somewhat of a blessing with all the injuries. I don't think the Flames would have been as successful in the playoffs without Sean Monahan and Kris Versteeg.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

U of C Dinos celebrate first national basketball title



U of C Dinos play-by-play man and event emcee Lucas Meyer celebrates with the national champion men's basketball team during a campus celebration on March 23.



Guard Lars Schlueter lifts the U SPORTS national trophy.



Tournament MVP David 'The Light' Kapinga speaks.

A dramatic last-second, game-winning layup, an unexpected tournament MVP, an 18-year head coach finally winning the highest trophy. Could the University of Calgary Dinos' first national championship in men's basketball have come about in any more fitting fashion?

In Halifax, N.S. on March 11, the Dinos erased their demons of the last three years at the tournament.

With just nine seconds on the clock in the U SPORTS national championship game, the Dinos were tied at 77 with the Ryerson Rams. Coach Dan Vanhooren drew up the play. All-star guard Mambi Diawara got the ball,

drove left to the hoop past his Ryerson defender, and layed the ball up with his left hand.

The ball spun on the rim for one agonizing second before falling through the hoop with exactly two seconds left; no time left for Ryerson to attempt anything significant. Diawara had done it for them again.

And with that, the Dinos were national champions for the first time in their 53-year history in men's basketball.

Diawara's heroics would not have been possible without fellow guard David 'The Light' Kapinga, who continually elevated his game during the playoffs on his way to being named tournament MVP in Halifax.

Until this season, he was largely known as a great defensive player, but Kapinga upped his scoring significantly with titles on the line. Although he averaged 11.8 points-per-game during the regular season, he scored 20.6 PPG in Halifax to earn MVP.

"The Light" spoke at the campus celebration on March 23. Before his speech, he was singled out by U of C president Elizabeth Cannon for his "remarkable personal story." Kapinga was born in the war-ravaged Democratic Republic of Congo, and his family eventually came to Canada as refugees. When he was 12, the family moved from Montreal to Calgary.

Kapinga said that he was very



An emotional Coach Vanhooren.

thankful his coach from the U.S. told him to return home to the U of C.

"I wouldn't be a champion without that," said Kapinga.

His superb U SPORTS performance was foreshadowed by his dominant Canada West championship performance against the rival University of Alberta Golden Bears on March 3, scoring a career-high 32 points in an 84-77 win.

The Dinos became champions by winning 11 straight games from late January on. At the campus celebration, Dinos play-by-play man and event emcee Lucas Meyer singled out their last loss of the season (a 91-89 overtime loss against the Lethbridge Horns on Jan. 25) as effectively the turning point of the season.

The road to the championship included five playoff games against Canada West opponents the University of Saskatchewan Huskies, the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds, and the Canada West championship against their provincial rival University of Alberta Golden Bears on March 3.

The Canada West playoffs were largely a cakewalk for the Dinos: they dominated the Huskies and Thunderbirds, sweeping both three-game series. Only the second game against UBC was close (87-84).

The Golden Bears presented the first real test on March 3. They were up 41-40 at halftime before the Dinos outscored them 45-36 in the second half for a 84-77 win, and their second Canada West title in three years.

At the celebration, however, an emotional Vanhooren was not reflecting on the recent history of the Dinos basketball team, but the 50-year history.

He said that he owed much to his predecessors.

"Everybody is celebrating us, but I'd like you to think about the group of people we have built on who built the foundation of the program," he said.

Still, though, Vanhooren could not help but reflect on his own historic role first.

"I got here 18 years ago, as a 29-year-old, green behind the ears, truthfully I would call it a mistake hire," he joked.

The national championship is the capstone in a highly successful year for U of C athletics. The Dinos won Canada West championships in football, women's rugby, men's cross country and women's volleyball.

Cannon also recognized those teams at the celebration.

"I'd like you to think about the group of people...who built the foundation of the program"

- Dan Vanhooren



Showing off the trophy to members of the women's team.

Inclusive league ready to play ball

This spring in Calgary, a new LGBTQ+ oriented softball league will debut, offering players the chance to have fun, make friends and learn a new sport in a safe environment.

The league will be run by the Calgary Apollo Softball Association (CASA). The organization was started last year.

According to CASA president Logan Chinski, the league is the first of its kind in Calgary.

Last year, the project started with two LGBTQ+ tournaments: one in June, followed by one during the Calgary Pride festival. Chinski said "100%" of people participating in these tournaments expressed interest in a league.

"The [LGBTQ+] community was looking for something like this to be organized," he said.

Although CASA is open to players of all skill levels, the main goal is a fun, inclusive experience. Chinski said that a large number of LGBTQ+ people "wanted to do something outside the bars."

The initial trust level with an LGBTQ+ league is crucial for players, according to Chinski.



building towards greater inclusion of LGBTQ+ for several years. One of the most notable organizations with this goal has been the You Can Play (YCP) organization, founded in 2012.

players per team.

Chinski hoped to also have a summer league, and repeat the Pride tournament that got the league started.

"The [LGBTQ+] community was looking for something like this to get organized."

"It gives people the chance to be who they are and meet friends," he said.

Chinski himself had never played softball until five years ago in Vancouver. Once introduced to the sport, he met a lot of new friends while staying active.

In Vancouver, he said, the LGBTQ+ league "gave the community the chance to experience something new, and have a positive experience with sports."

The Apollo organization is also attempting to build LGBTQ+friendly leagues in other sports, including curling. Chinski said that he "really wants to build capacity."

Momentum in sports has been

CASA hosted the official after party for the Calgary Roughnecks' You Can Play night on April 14. The event served as a fundraiser for CASA. Chinski hopes that CASA will be able to host more YCP events.

However, CASA's main local partner has been the Calgary Sport and Social Club (CSSC), which has booked field times at Crescent Heights starting in May. According to Chinski, this is the first LGBTQ+ centred league they have promoted.

The spring league is slated to run for eight weeks starting in May. A week before the sign-up deadline, Chinski said that around 70 players had signed up. CASA was planning four to six teams, with around 15

Having Fun, Raising Funds

Another year of Gordie Howe C.A.R.E.S. Pro-Am

A little less than two years since Gordie Howe's death at 88, the Calgary pro-am tournament bearing his name continues to raise money for dementia research.

NHL alumni old and new played teams from Calgary-area companies at the Gordie Howe C.A.R.E.S. Pro-Am Tournament, raising funds and awareness for Alzheimer's disease.

C.A.R.E.S. stands for the Centre for Alzheimer's Research and Education Society.

The tournament took place at Win-sport from April 7-8. It was preceded by a dinner and draft night, where one alumni was drafted for each team. The first-place team, the Prime Suspects, drafted the legendary Lanny McDonald, drafted the legendary Lanny McDonald first overall.

By raising the most money (\$122,927) the Prime Suspects won the honour of facing the NHL Alumni in the championship game. Other featured alumni included former Flames Robyn Regehr, Colin Patterson, and Chuck Kobasew. The alumni won the game 9-4.

Simultaneously, the Brookfield Residential team, including former Flame and Colorado Avalanche Stephane Yelle, played the ATB Loan Rangers, who boasted former NHL ironman Gary Roberts.

Roberts' career spanned six teams and 1,224 games, but his first NHL home in Calgary, where he won the Cup in 1989, remains special. He re-



Lanny McDonald and Robyn Regehr (right) suited up in the championship game.



"...an event like this is an awesome opportunity [for NHL alumni], and we're all happy to do it"
-Gary Roberts

turned to the tournament after missing last year's.

Roberts said he was involved with a similar Alzheimer's-centred program in Ontario, which raises money for the Baycrest Centre.

"It took us awhile to understand the effect Alzheimer's was having on our nation.

"For us ex-hockey players to have an opportunity to get out in the community and support an event like this is an awesome opportunity, and we're all happy to do it."

The tournament has been an annual event since 2014. This year, teams had to raise a minimum of \$25,000 in order to play.



Regehr and Randy Cunneynworth share a laugh on the bench.



Matthew Barnaby and Mark Napier (Habs jersey) in action.

Landing buckets and funding meals



A playful taunt while defending



With Claude Vilgrain (left) and Kansas King (right) in pursuit, Abu Khan drives to the basket.



Harvie Pocza (middle) sharing a laugh on the bench during a break in the action.



Former NHLer Claude Vilgrain lobs the ball down the court.

A motley crew of former NHL players, local basketball players, Miss Calgary 2017, a local hip-hop artist and volunteers came together at SAIT March 10 to raise money to feed children worldwide.

Former NHL players at the event were Claude Vilgrain (89 games with the Canucks, Devils and Flyers, 1988-1994), Russ Romaniuk (102 games with the Jets and Flyers, 1991-1996), Tony Stiles (30 games with the Flames, 1984), and Harvie Pocza (3 games with the Capitals, 1979-1982.)

Other local participants included Miss Calgary 2017 Kansas King, local hip-hop artist Zach Taylor, and Breakfast Television's Amber Owen.

Local basketball players starring in the event included Aloysius Callaghan and Gavin Tang of Calgary Selects, college players Ryan Cunningham and M.J. Richie, and Abu Khan.

The fundraiser was put on by the Calgary-based Mary's Meals Canada. Mary's Meals is an international charity founded in 1983. It operates in 16 countries and its largest programme is in Malawi. The organization says that just \$16 is required to feed one child for a year, and their overall goal this year was \$18,208. The event raised \$4,172.

It was the charity's first event at SAIT, but event organizer Jill Mowser said it was a natural fit.

"A lot of us are basketball fans and love Mary's Meals," said Mowser.

42 Calgary Locations

