

## SPORTS

# UPEI PANTHERS WOMEN'S B-BALL COACH RESIGNS

Josh Lewis  
Sports Editor

Something had to give. That, says Reagh Vidito, is why he suddenly resigned as head coach of the UPEI Panthers women's basketball team just two weeks before the start of the regular season.

"I came to the conclusion over the last few weeks that in order to be as successful as I want to be coaching, I had to offer more commitment than I was currently offering. My availability based on my commitment to my full-time job (teaching at Colonel Gray) and my family was too much. The final decision had to be coaching had to go. The other two things had to come to the forefront."

UPEI athletic director Ron Annear said that while he didn't see it coming, he understands Vidito's decision.

"Over the past year he's gotten busier with his job and his family. The coaching position is considered a part-

time job, but it's very much a full-time mandate. You know where (he) should be."

Assistant coaches Chris Annett and Brian Chambers also resigned, but accepted an invitation from interim coach Dave McNeill to return to the fold. (see page 15) Vidito said speculation that a falling out with the two led to the mass resignations is false.

"There really was no situation. I think people have blown it out of proportion. The coaching staff never had any meltdown. After the Dalhousie tournament (Oct. 20-22), Chris decided he was going to step down. He and I just had differences of opinion. I resigned before Brian, so I don't know why he did. But no major issues led to it."

Vidito said that while the timing is unfortunate, he didn't have much choice.

"In my experience, there's never a good time (to resign). If I had announced my resignation and then played out the season, it'd be hard for the girls to play for me. If I waited till March, the new coach might not have time to recruit. It's better to do it now, two weeks before the season, than in the middle of the season."

It was an extremely difficult decision for Vidito.

"I have good relationships with the players on the team and it's definitely tough to step away from some of those kids that I've known for a couple of years. But I'm confident that Dave McNeill, who I respect very much, can step right in and settle the ship."



Photo: Dylan Taylor  
Former UPEI Womens Basketball coach  
Reagh Vidito

## Taylor optimistic about new-look Panthers

Josh Lewis  
Sports Editor

The UPEI Panthers men's hockey squad added 13 new recruits this off-season, including three towering defensemen. That, says head coach Dylan Taylor, bodes well for a Panthers team that missed the playoffs last year.

"We knew we had to upgrade our defense core. Last season, we played the majority of the season with three or four forwards playing defense. We did our best as a group to collectively play defense, but we knew going into this year that defense was an area we needed to focus on."

With that in mind, Taylor went out and lured 6'5" Aaron Dawson, 6'4" Erik Lundmark, and 6'3" Tyson Gimblett to the UPEI program, along with former P.E.I. Rocket defenseman Travis Mealy and blueliner James Cooley of the Pictou County Weeks Crushers of the MJHL. Despite the

number of newcomers, the second-year coach isn't concerned about team chemistry.

"From the very beginning that's something we worked very hard at, bringing our returning group and our new group together. We have a lot of quality people on this team, a strong leadership group, and we work very hard to make sure we bring in good people. There's lots of good hockey players, but if we're going to have any success long-term it's got to be built around good people."

Taylor says the team win games with its defense, not by outscoring opponents. "We will be a team that plays sound defense, forechecks hard, and commits to our end first. We have strength at all three positions, but we're not going to be a team that tries to one-up everyone. We're going to stay with our

style of play. A win by one goal is as good as a win by five goals."

The Panthers sat at 2-3-1 heading into weekend games against Saint Mary's and Acadia, good for sixth place in the eight-team Atlantic University Sport conference. Taylor sees positive signs thus far in the young season.

"I'm happy with our work ethic. I'm happy with the collective desire to improve daily in practice. I think we have to improve with our adaptation to the new rule standards, which our penalty totals prove. I also believe we need to work on generating some more offense, doing that collectively as a five-man unit. When you work hard and get pucks to the net, that will happen."

Most importantly, Taylor doesn't expect to be on the outside looking in at playoff time for the

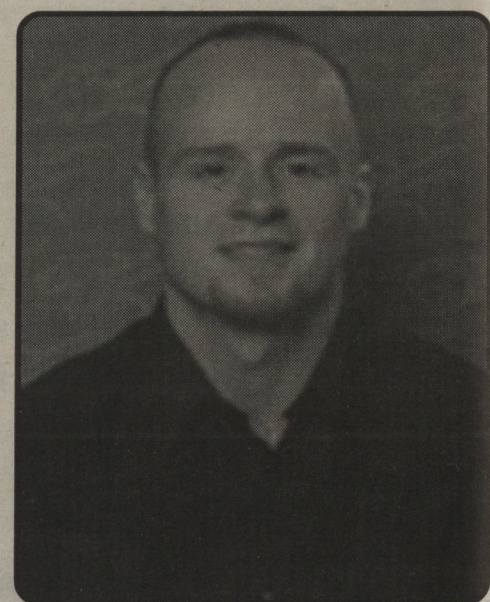


Photo: Dylan Taylor

second consecutive season. "I expect this team to be in a dogfight throughout the whole year. Our goal day in and day out is to improve, and at the end of the year position ourselves to be in the playoffs and to compete for the same trophy everybody else is out for."