

Soviet women cagers tower over OU team in tournament

By MARTY BUDNER

Two years ago most members of the Oakland University women's basketball team watched the Russian national women's team capture a gold medal at the Summer Olympics in Montreal.

Never in their wildest dreams did they imagine competing against those same gigantic women from the Soviet Union.

But when the OU team—playing as a national group representing the U.S.—took a recent trip to Mexico for a taste of international competition, that's exactly who it encountered.

"We knew we were going to be playing against the Russians—but we were stunned to find out that it was the Olympic team coming out of the locker rooms," said Oakland coach Rose Swidzinski. "They were just awesome."

Needless to say, the helpless Pioneers were mere ants against the powerful Soviets. Against a front line that averaged nearly 6-11, Oakland succumbed 109-42.

The Russians were led by 7-3, 280-pound Uliana Semenova. The 25-year-old Russian Olympic player dominated action, and kept the callow Pioneers just as far from the basket as they were from home.

"It's kind of a helpless situation when you play against a person like that (Semenova)," said Swidzinski. "It's difficult to penetrate."

"You couldn't move her at all because she was so big. She's massive and still plants herself. And, she was left-handed, which confused matters even more."

"But overall, I was very pleased with the way our kids handled themselves," she said.

BESIDES THE U.S. and Russia, two other teams participated in the tournament, which was Mexico's way of celebrating its 75th anniversary of basketball. The tournament was dubbed the Mexican Federation Cup.

The Oakland squad didn't win a game, losing to the Mexican Olympic Team (85-46), the Mexican World Uni-

versity Team (72-51), and, of course, the Russian national team. But, coach Swidzinski and the Pioneers came back with a court full of cultural experiences.

"The greatest benefit for us in that trip was the cultural exchange," said Swidzinski, who has guided the OU program from club status to one of the state's best in just three years.

"It's hard to believe, but the average worker down there earns about \$5 a day. It's a totally different world, but they were very receptive towards Americans."

Oakland University is one of the few colleges in Michigan which participates in the American Basketball Association of the United States of America (ABA-USA). It is a national organization which recruits players for international competition.

Swidzinski was more than happy when ABA-USA officials asked her to form a group of players to represent the U.S. in international competition.

"We could pick up anybody we wanted, but we decided it would be a good experience for our players if they could go," she said. "Of course, we didn't expect to be playing some of the top teams in the world, either."

"The chances of a college team as a whole representing the country are almost ridiculous," she said. "But, we were asked, and we were more than happy to represent the U.S."

Kathy Hewitt, a senior who will be completing her fourth year in the Pioneer basketball program this winter, was overwhelmed by the trip.

"It's an awesome experience—it's like a natural high when you represent your country like that," said Hewitt, a resident of Washington Township. "You look back on everything that happened, and it's hard to believe you were there playing against the number one team in the world."

Next year, with an experienced team returning, Oakland is hoping to contend for the state title and represent Michigan in the Midwest finals. At least Swidzinski knows her team won't be competing against any 7-3 giants if the Pioneers go that far.

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Oakland County Community Mental Health Services Board For Fiscal Year 1978-79

In accordance with the Michigan Mental Health Code, Sec. 226 (d), the Oakland County Community Mental Health Services Board will hold a public hearing on its proposed budget request for the fiscal year beginning October 1 next, for submission to the Michigan Department of Mental Health.

This hearing will take place on Friday, August 4, 1978, at 2:00 P.M., the next regular meeting of the Board, and will be held in Committee Room A of the Board of Commissioners Offices, Oakland County Service Center, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac. A copy of the proposed budget request will be available at the administrative offices of the Board, 1200 N. Telegraph, Pontiac, for public inspection during regular business hours.

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