

25th August, 2009

FOLEY AND POTO SELECTED IN OPALS TEAM TO FACE TALL FERNS

Two former New South Wales junior representative guards, Jessica Foley and Alicia Poto, have been named in the Australian Opals team to face New Zealand at the 2009 FIBA Oceania Championship for Women in Wellington, New Zealand.

The Opals play the Tall Ferns in Wellington on August 31 before the return bout at the AIS Arena in Canberra on September 2.

25 year old Foley is a former Albury junior who is now playing in the WNBL for the Adelaide Lightning.

Former Sydney University Flames and Campbelltown representative, Alicia Poto, is currently plying her trade in the Czech Republic with club side Brno.

Two changes have been made to the Opals team that won the third and deciding game of a three match series against China last week.

Point guards Alicia Poto and Sam Richards make their return to the team, with Poto overcoming a hamstring strain and Richards gaining permission from her European club side to compete.

Qualification for the 2010 FIBA World Championship for Women will be on the line, with the winner gaining entry to the tournament and the loser out, with no second chance at qualification.

Opals head coach Carrie Graf has highlighted the importance of this series to her playing group and its significance in the Opals' long-term plan.

"The games in this series are the most important of our 2009 program and we will be putting it all on the line," Graf said.

"The games are absolutely 'must win' and are critical to our World Championship and Olympic campaigns. If we lose we will not be at the World championship.

"Our recent series against China was great preparation for this series against New Zealand and we're ready to go."

The Opals depart Australia* on Thursday bound for Wellington, New Zealand and will train every day in the lead up to Monday's match.

They return to Australia on Tuesday, September 1st, and will arrive in Canberra at 10:30am AEST.

Wednesday's deciding game at the AIS Arena in Canberra will tip off at 7:00pm AEST and will be broadcast in Australia by FOX Sports.

Australian Opals Team for 2009 FIBA Oceania Championship for Women:
(name / position / age / height / most recent pro club)

Jessica BIBBY / Guard / 30 / 168cm / Canberra Capitals
Elizabeth CAMBAGE / Centre / 17 / 203cm / Bulleen Boomers
Rohanee COX / Forward / 28 / 182cm / Townsville Fire
Jessica FOLEY / Guard / 25 / 182cm / Adelaide Lightning
Hollie GRIMA / Forward / 25 / 190cm / Aix-en-Provence (France)
Natalie HURST / Guard / 25 / 163cm / Canberra Capitals
Elyse PENALUNA / Forward / 20 / 193cm / Bulleen Boomers
Alicia POTO / Guard / 30 / 166cm / Brno (Czech Republic)
Emma RANDALL / Forward / 23 / 188cm / CSS Targoviste (Romania)
Samantha RICHARDS / Guard / 26 / 168cm / AZS PWSZ Gorzow (Poland)
Marianna TOLO / Centre / 19 / 196cm / Canberra Capitals
Carly WILSON / Guard / 26 / 181cm / Challes-les-Eaux Basket (France)

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