

31st July, 2009

FOUR FORMER NSW JUNIORS NAMED IN OPALS TEAM TO FACE CHINA

Basketball Australia (BA) has selected the athletes that will represent the Opals in a three game series against China in August.

4 out of the 15 players selected are former NSW juniors- Eva Afaeki, Jess Foley, Alicia Poto and Jenni Screen.

Eva Afaeki, a former Parramatta junior is currently playing for the Sydney University Flames in the WNBL.

Albury junior Jess Foley is also playing in the WNBL for competition rivals, Adelaide Lightning.

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

Jenni Screen, a former Newcastle junior, is currently playing for Lavezzini Parma in Italy, after successful stints in Spain (Ros Casares) and USA (Seattle Storm).

Olympic Silver Medallists and reigning World Champions Australia will take on China in Canberra, Geelong and Dandenong on August 11, 17 and 21 respectively.

"There's no question that this is a critical part of our preparation for the World Championships and to get us ready for New Zealand," Opals head coach Carrie Graf said.

"We have a good chunk of Olympians and we're on home soil so we're looking to avenge our 2-1 series loss in China in May."

A team of twelve athletes will be selected at the conclusion of the three game series to contest the 2009 FIBA Oceania Championship for women against New Zealand on August 31 (Wellington, NZ) and September 2 (Canberra).

Australia's performance at that event determines qualification for the 2010 FIBA World Championship for women.

China, who finished fourth in Beijing, is preparing for the 2009 FIBA Asia Championship for Women and will also contest friendly matches on tour against three Women's National Basketball League (WNBL) teams; Bendigo Spirit, Dandenong Rangers and Bulleen Boomers.

Australian Opals Basketball Team for International 'Friendlies' against China:
(name / age / height / most recent pro club)

Eva AFEAKI / 24 / 184cm / Sydney Uni Flames
Elizabeth CAMBAGE / 17 / 203cm / Bulleen Boomers
Rohanee COX / 28 / 182cm / Townsville Fire
Jess FOLEY / 25 / 182cm / Adelaide Lightning
Hollie GRIMA / 25 / 190cm / Aix-en-Provence (France)
Cayla FRANCIS / 19 / 192cm / Adelaide Lightning
Natalie HURST / 25 / 163cm / Canberra Capitals
Jenna O'HEA / 21 / 187cm / Arras (France)
Elyse PENALUNA / 20 / 193cm / Bulleen Boomers
Alicia POTO / 30 / 166cm / Brno (Czech Republic)
Emma RANDALL / 23 / 188cm / CSS Targoviste (Romania)
Jenni SCREEN / 27 / 180cm / Lavezzini Parma (Italy)
Deanna SMITH / 28 / 179cm / Sydney Uni Flames
Marianna TOLO / 19 / 196cm / Canberra Capitals
Carly WILSON / 26 / 181cm / Challes-les-Eaux Basket (France)

Head Coach: Carrie Graf / Canberra Capitals

Australian Opals 2009 Program – Key Dates:

Aug 10-13 Training Camp, Canberra ACT
Aug 11 AUSTRALIA v CHINA (Gm 1), Canberra ACT
Aug 17 AUSTRALIA v CHINA (Gm 2), Geelong VIC
Aug 18-20 Training Camp, Dandenong VIC
Aug 21 AUSTRALIA v CHINA (Gm 3), Dandenong VIC
Aug 31 AUSTRALIA v NEW ZEALAND (Gm 1), Wellington NZ
Sep 2 AUSTRALIA v NEW ZEALAND (Gm 2), Canberra ACT

For more information please contact:
Andrew Tilley
Marketing & Communications Manager
Basketball New South Wales
T: 8765 8555
E: andrew_tilley@nswbasketball.net.au

