

WOLFPACK GOLF SET TO PLAY FIRST BCCAA TOURNEY OF 2009

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Kamloops, BC---The Thompson Rivers University WolfPack begin defence of their Canadian College Athletic Association Golf title this weekend. The WolfPack start their second season in the BC College Athletic Association by sending an eight man team to Castlegar for a 36 hole event which begins Saturday (Sept 19).

"We have lost a lot of individual talent but we might have more depth," said WolfPack head coach Bill Bilton Junior, the Kamloops Sports Council Coach of the year for 2008. Bilton Junior is referring to the loss of Shawn Vanderwal, Brett Martin and Riley Balson. The three helped the team win the CCAA Championship last October in PEI. Vanderwal transferred to an NCAA Division II program in Missouri. Martin and Balson decided not to return to school.

"I think two of our returning players, Geoff Fahlman (2nd year, Prince George, BC) and Rylan Nelson (1st year, Vancouver, BC) have both improved their games. Nelson, especially has really worked on his game," says Bilton. "He actually qualified fourth for this trip."

The WolfPack's top five golfers for this tournament will be the Gruber triplets (Adam, Brett and Mark), Fahlman and Nelson. Bilton Junior will take three other golfers: Brennan Arduini (4th year, Kamloops, BC), Kevin Ricalton (2nd year, Kamloops, BC) and Colby Cook (1st year, Chilliwack, BC) to this event as well. Their scores won't count towards the TRU fortunes this weekend, but the WolfPack coach is using their scores as a gauge as to which five golfers will represent the school the following weekend in Nanaimo.

Bilton says its too early to compare the WolfPack 2009 squad to that of the one which did so well last year. "But I will say that chemistry wise and commitment wise: they are very much the same."

Looking ahead to Castlegar, Bilton says the small confines (longest hole being 6600 yards) might hurt some of his big hitters. "When we practice at the Dunes, we are hitting off the back tees. In some cases, that's 7 thousand yards. We need our long bombers to gear down a bit and focus in on target golf."

CHIP SHOTS: Last year in this tournament, The WolfPack came second: losing the title by two shots. Adam Gruber shots rounds of 74 and 77 while Fahlman was 79-71. The WolfPack host a BCCAA tournament for the first time October 3-4 th at the Dunes. The team is still looking for sponsorship help. If you can, please give Bill Bilton a call at (250) 579-3300.