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UBCO shocks Mariners, wins gold

Lakers heading to nationals; Okanagan players sweep MVPs

By Daily Courier Staff

The Okanagan Lakers are the 2008 B.C. Athletics Association champions — just not the Lakers squad everyone thought would win.

The unheralded men's team battled through a hellacious playoff draw and a five-set marathon against the Malaspina Mariners, Canada's third-ranked team, to capture the gold medal at the provincial tournament.

The Lakers, who finished the regular season at 10-8 and in fifth place in the standings, played mostly in the shadow of their female counterparts this season, as the women's team went

16-2 — losing only twice to top-ranked Malaspina — and racked up numerous awards.

The women also played in the B.C. championship game, also against Malaspina, and lost 3-0 (25-15, 25-19, 25-20). Penticton's Tammy Thomas, the tournament MVP, was named player of the match for UBCO, and finished with 11 kills and six digs.

The men will head to the nationals at Humber College in Ontario from March 7-9. All is not lost for the lady Lakers, who still likely have a shot at a wild-card berth for the women's nationals, from March 6-8 at Mount Royal College in Calgary.

The men's team upset B.C. No. 1 seed UCFV in the semifinals, and carried the momentum against the Mariners.

"We came out strong, winning the first set, (before) Mal took the next two set off of us," said coach Greg Poitras.

ing experience, with Malaspina having seven match points in the fourth set. The teams went back and forth getting huge kills, big serves, amazing digs ... you name it, it happened."

In the fourth game, up 32-31, it was poetic justice as graduating senior Chris Major of Penticton fired the biggest ace of his career. That boosted the Lakers in the final game, and they rolled to a nationals berth for the first time since 1986.

Major finished with five kills, two aces and a mind-warping 58 assists for the Lakers, and was named the tournament MVP.

Other key contributors were Riley McFarland with 23 kills, and Kyle Westgate with 12 kills. McFarland and Jeff Cundy were named to the all-star team.

Eleven out of the 12 members of the team saw the court versus Malaspina.

ALL-STARS

WOMEN'S

UCFV	Delayne Peters
CBC	Cheyli Reader
UBC-O	Tammy Thomas
Malaspina	Leigh Dreher
Malaspina	Aileen Holder
Malaspina	Laura Littlejohn

MEN'S

Douglas	Beau Spencer
UCFV	Dary Wiebe
Malaspina	Maverick Hatch
Malaspina	Scott Weninger
UBC-O	Riley McFarland
UBC-O	Jeff Cundy

"This set the stage for the best set of the tournament. Mal started the set by being up by as many as eight points at 15-7, (but) the boys fought back to get back into it pulling even at 22-22.

"The next 20 minutes was a nail-bit-