

## Futsal Championships on Rustler's minds

Written by By Jamie Harkins

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The Lakeland College Rustlers men's and women's futsal teams have started the second phase of their preparation toward hosting the Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference (ACAC) championships.

By Jamie Harkins  
[Meridian Booster](#)



[Photo Courtesy: Jaime Harkins / Meridian Booster](#)

Both Rustlers squads welcomed the King's University Eagles for a couple of exhibition games at the Lakeland College Gym on Saturday.

The contests provided a dual recruiting/competition event for the Rustlers, as well as a chance for the coaches and players to gain an early indication of what their strengths and weaknesses are.

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“We have to build on our systems and obviously build chemistry with our group,” said Rustlers men’s defender Mackenzie Longpre.

“For us to have success we need to play our style and execute at our style, which is a lot different than other teams.”

Longpre noted playing with a lot of pressure and speed while counterattacking and capitalizing on opponent’s mistakes is how the Rustlers must compete to succeed at the variant game of soccer, which is played with five players a side including goaltenders on a hard court.

He said both Rustlers futsal team rosters are mainly comprised of the players on the college’s fall soccer teams, which allows the athletes to build upon their touches and control, as well as get in some tough competition during the winter months.

“It’s pretty similar to our soccer season,” he said.

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“We still train four nights a week and we set our goals to win competitions, so we still have to train and execute in training to be rewarded.”

Kevin Wagner, head coach of the Rustlers men’s and women’s futsal teams, said the indoor season began in early November with the squads participating in exhibition contests and training sessions.

He said this past weekend’s games marked their first home competition of the season, and the hope is they can build upon their success when the teams head into Lethbridge College on Saturday for the annual Prairie Futsal Cup.

“The girls, this was an important weekend for us to build some confidence, have some success and that’s a good start,” said Wagner.

“On the men’s side, it looked a little more confident than I was expecting. They handled themselves well tactically and technically.”

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Wagner added upcoming events for the teams include a fundraiser/competition event tentatively scheduled for early next month, with the men's team also competing in the Saskatchewan futsal club championships in February.

He said they'll complement these games with a lot of training in preparation to host the ACAC futsal championships at Lakeland College from March 9 to 11.

"Every year we set goals for our program," said Longpre, who helped the Rustlers capture a bronze medal at the ACAC championships last season.

"Our training and our spirit within the group really allows us to pass this on throughout the years in the program."