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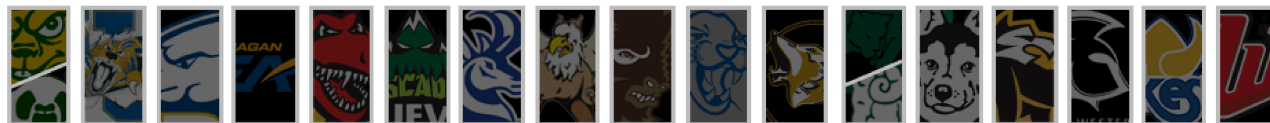
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Press'd for success: Canada West b'ball grads expand sandwich biz
Grand opening of new location, July 8-9

David Bandla, Canada West Athletics
6/27/2011 6:46:08 AM

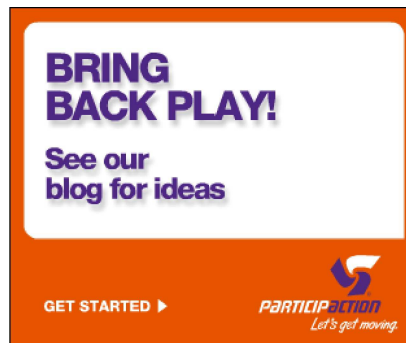
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Photo by David Bandla, Canada West

"Press'd - The Sandwich Company" has three former Canada West basketball players off and running in the business world.



EDMONTON – While some Canada West student-athletes jump through hoops looking for that first big break in the business world, a trio of former basketball players has decided to make a straight run to the rim with their own success story.

Former University of Alberta Golden Bears captain Scott Gordon and Academic All-Canadian Gavin Fedorak, along with Gavin's brother Grant, a 5-10 guard who played for the Simon Fraser Clan, opened their first location of **Press'd - The Sandwich Company** in a downtown Edmonton shopping mall on September 10, 2010.

Gavin was a member of Alberta's 2001-02 CIS title team, while Scott and Gavin won a Canada West men's basketball championship in 2004-05.

Having remained close friends since their days of Golden Bears b'ball, Scott and Gavin remained friends as they each pursued Chartered Accountant designation with their respective accounting firms after five years of education of athletics under the tutelage of long-time head coach Don Horwood. It was then that the pair began to discuss the possibility of working for themselves someday.

"A few years prior we had traveled to Phoenix for some preseason basketball games. During that trip we discovered **Dilly's Deli**, where the concept was largely driven by a single focus – fresh product," said Gordon. "This included freshly baked bread, freshly sliced meats and cheeses, and vegetables prepared fresh each day. We went crazy for these sandwiches, returning day in and day out for the entire trip."

And so, in time, friendly banter became serious potential and eventually a reality.

"Gavin and I are both geared towards healthy, quality food options, and as a result we were mindful of what was missing in our market," noted Gordon. "So when the idea of Press'd resurfaced we compiled a business plan, contacted the owners of Dilly's Deli and flew to Phoenix to meet with them in July 2009."

Dilly's Deli, established in 1993, started in similar fashion and now has five Arizona locations, including one near Arizona State University campus.

Gordon added, "Not long after that we reached out to Grant to see if he wanted to join the team. He did, and he moved from Vancouver to Edmonton in November of '09."

While the "Press'd" reference sounds related to basketball, it is actually a direct reference to the preparation process where each sandwich is made with a Panini-style press, giving it the look and taste of being right off the grill in very short order.

Not only does Press'd have a successful day-to-day on-site business, but it caters for many local business luncheons and parties. With the help of a new monthly e-newsletter and social media such as **Twitter** and **Facebook**, the operation continues to grow at a steady pace.

Now, less than a year later, a second location has just opened on one of Edmonton's busiest streets, with an official Grand Opening taking place the weekend of July 8-9. Their initial newsletter, on May 16, boasts a whopping 72,715 sandwiches through the first eight months of operation.

Which Canada West team has been the biggest surprise so far this season?

- Calgary men's hky (15-0-1)
- Sask. women's hky (11-3-2)
- Lethbridge men's bb (7-3)
- Calgary women's bb (8-2)
- TRU men's vb (8-4)
- UBCO women's vb (10-2)

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"From the very beginning our plan was geared towards aggressive, but strategic growth," noted Gordon. "Our second location opened in late June."

Adding to their City Centre spot, the second location is along the north side of 112 St. on Jasper Avenue in the heart of a busy west downtown business and residential district.

In order to accommodate the expansion, the company has hired a manager to oversee operations in the City Centre location and a manager from the onset of the Courtyard location. They are taking resumes for other prospective employees.

While the current focus is clearly on the Alberta capital, Gordon said that the future could see locations outside of Edmonton

"Our plan for this new store is to prove the Press'd concept outside a mall environment. We have to know that a single store can hold water in a strip mall environment. If we can prove this then we will be looking to expand further, first in Edmonton and then hopefully to additional Western Canadian cities."

The doors on Jasper Ave. opened June 24th, while the official Grand Opening for the new digs will be the July 8-9 weekend, where there will be entry forms for a chance to win 1 of 5 "Free Sandwiches for a Year" giveaways. For every sandwich sold at both locations July 4-9, a donation of 50 cents will be made to the Youth Emergency Shelter Society (YESS) of Edmonton.

There are no other Canada West or CIS student-athletes or graduates involved with Press'd, but Gordon said the company would welcome such an opportunity.

As one might imagine, being your own boss has its perks, but also big responsibilities and a need for motivation.

"It's nice not having to work for someone else. It's much easier to get out of bed each morning when you're doing it for yourself," Gordon said. "I find myself often applying skills that I learned in university or during my CA studies that had never been called upon before. I enjoy this challenge and I know Gavin and Grant do as well."

Product quality and overall organization are keys to success when you are judged instantly by every customer who comes through the door.

"I find the biggest challenge for me is ensuring that all the pieces are in place to meet our goal with every single customer. Unlike at an accounting firm, at Press'd you don't have the luxury of off days because the end product is up for judgement 300 to 500 times a day!"

With little prior food service experience between them, Scott gives this advice to any young entrepreneur thinking of starting a business: "Do your homework... business insight and forward thinking are the biggest assets in our early development."

"We performed market research, completed detailed budgets with everything from what each sandwich would cost to what our projected annual financial statements would look like. We also hired the Dilly's Deli team to help us refine our product and ensure it was ready to market. We focused on mitigating the risk of being unsuccessful by investing the time upfront into due diligence and planning."

Catering currently makes up about 15-20% of the company's business, from small office meetings to large corporate parties. They were responsible for providing dinner to over 300 people on consecutive days at The Singing Christmas Tree at the Jubilee Auditorium, just across from the University of Alberta Pavilion this past December and the site of the school's annual convocation ceremonies.

What makes a sandwich at Press'd so unique is its daily fresh, quality ingredients and a focus on good health, as noted on business cards available at the store's display counter with phrases such as, "be active", "challenge yourself" and "work hard, play hard".

"We have an in-house baker who bakes all our bread from scratch, each and every day, source the highest quality deli meats and cheese and slice these each morning. We also source fresh produce and prepare it each morning for service," Gordon proudly points out.

Aside from the expansion itself, Press'd has been... well, pressed for information by its customers, and so the company is working on a display that will note the calories and nutritional content in all of its menu items.

For Scott Gordon, motivation and success definitely run in the family. His mother, Kim, is a former Alberta Pandas volleyball player and Team Canada qualifier for the 1980 Olympics in rowing. Kim Gordon (nee Brown) was Manager of Government Partnerships for the Vancouver Organizing Committee (VANOC) for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games and now works at UBC as the Associate Director of Development and Alumni Engagement.

Scott's father was a two-time Olympian for the Canadian National Rowing Team, in 1972 and 1976. Like Scott he is a CA and got into business for himself in his late 20's.

In time Scott, Gavin and Grant hope to see the company's daily workload double, but just as they did in school and on the court, these Canada West grads are ready to take on all challenges with high energy and a positive attitude when Press'd into action.

www.canadawest.org / www.canadawest.tv

About Canada West Universities Athletic Association

Canada West is consistently the most decorated of the four conferences in Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS), winning at least 10 CIS national titles every year, 1997 to 2010. Comprised of 14 schools (15 on Sept. 1, 2011), from the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia, Canada West produces numerous major award winners and Academic All-Canadian student-athletes each year, with many going on to athletic success around the globe in pro leagues or events such as the Olympics, Paralympics or Universiade Games. Follow "cwuaa" on Twitter ".

A proud member of Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS).

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