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## Mills Impresses at Olympics

By Mikaela Cowles





Patrick Mills this October Photo Tod Fierner

Patrick Mills turned heads with his 2008 Olympic performance, averaging a team best of 14.2 points per game while coming off the bench for each competition. He also posted 2.1 rebounds, 2 assists, 1.7 steals and 23 minutes on average to help the Australian Olympic team achieve a 3-3 record.

As the only collegiate basketball player competing in the Olympics, Mills scored an individual tournament high of 22 points against Argentina. Most memorable for Mills, however, was not his outstanding performance but fulfilling what he describes as his "ultimate dream goal, to wear my country's colors and represent them."

Mills says he was completely surprised to be chosen for the team. "I never thought I would be. It wasn't until I was back there, went through camp and sat down with the coach, and he told me I had a good chance, that I really thought it could happen."

A surprise for Mills was a logical conclusion for Saint Mary's head coach Randy Bennett. "After the season he gave us, I couldn't see it not happening. There just aren't two point guards in Australia who are better," he says.

What was a shock, said Bennett, was just how successful Mills was. However, with Mills' humble attitude and what he calls his "taking it one day at a time" outlook on his basketball career, his success should have come as little surprise.

Mills is not only Australia's youngest basketball player ever to compete in the Olympics, but also the country's most successful one with an indigenous background. Mills said his background heightened his experience because he is able to provide an important role model for the indigenous community.

He hopes that "being seen in the community and schools, where I can meet kids and they can meet me, will help them believe in the success they can have on the basketball court. If I can give them tips and let them see that they can make it, then hopefully they will try."

The upcoming season for the Saint Mary's Gaels brings much promise for the success of the team, and Mills as well. He believes the lessons he learned at the Olympics will help him immensely in his upcoming season.

"Our captain (Matt Nielson) was an amazing leader. I learned so much from him about how to lead the team," Mills says.

Catch this phenomenal young man as he once again dons Saint Mary's red and blue and looks to lead the Gaels in another successful season.



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