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Denver Lady Bulldogs win 2010 Australian Rules Football National Championship

Louisville, Kentucky, October 10, 2010 — The Denver Bulldogs took three teams to the USAFL (United States Australian Football League) National Championship tournament in Louisville Kentucky. The teams included a Division 1 Men's team, Division 4 Men's team, and the Women's team. A first for any USAFL team, the Denver Bulldogs sent all three representative teams to their respective Grand Final matches. Although the Div 1 and Div 4 men's teams both lost their final matches to very skilled New York sides, the women reigned supreme.

The Lady Bulldogs played 4 exhausting and physical games in two days and made it to the Grand Final on Sunday to face Calgary/Montreal. The Bulldogs had actually played Calgary/Montreal on Saturday and lost to them 55 to 10, which made the victory over them on Sunday even more amazing. The final game was close, with a totaling score of 19 to 18, keeping both sides on their toes and playing hard the entire game. All women on the field played hard and walked away with bumps and bruises, but the Bulldogs were also able to walk away with their heads held high and a trophy in hand.

Australian Rules Football (aka Footy) is a unique sport that cleverly combines American football, rugby, basketball, soccer, and even volleyball. It's a fast-paced skill-driven sport that is exciting to play and to watch. The Denver Bulldogs have been around for 11 years, with the women's team joining just 4 years ago. The team consists of 20 women ages 23 to 38 and most are young professionals by day and footballers by night. The team even has a couple mothers on the team, who took last season off while they were pregnant, but played this year with full force. Many of the players grew up playing soccer, but several of us stuck to basketball, and others strayed away from sports all together growing up, but decided to pick up Aussie Rules Football (aka Footy) as an adult. When looking at these women it is hard to believe they play a full contact sport!

This unique sport continues to grow in the U.S. and Canada and the weekend in Louisville brought in around 1,000 players. When speaking to current players they all seem to agree that the game is so much fun that they find it a bit addicting. The Division 1 Denver Men's team has won a total of 7 National Championships and has always been one of the strongest teams in the league. The women are ready to match the expectations of the Men's team and can't wait to go after a second championship next year.

QUOTES FROM THE LADY BULLDOGS CAPTAIN: KELLI MODICA

“Winning a National Championship is an incredible feeling and it is still a bit surreal. My teammates are some of my best friends and when I look around at each one of us I think, “how did we win a championship?!” We aren’t all ridiculously amazing athletes, we don’t all train every single day; we are just normal, everyday people who happen to enjoy the game. But, I think our close relationship and our dedication to the sport and one another is what gave us the edge this weekend and ultimately won us the National Championship. We also are lucky enough to be part of one of the most tight-knit clubs in the league and have the support of all of the men on the team, who watched our games, cheered for us, and encouraged us to play our hardest even when we thought we had nothing left to give. Without the club, our coach – Bruce Durrell, and our strong friendships this would not have been possible.”

How do I prepare for the game: “Run, run, and RUN! Personally I run 5-6 days a week and lift weights at least once a week. As a team we engage in a strict and difficult sprinting drill throughout the season to improve our fitness, run hill sprints, and occasionally do distance runs to get our legs used to all different aspects of the game. We’ve had several injuries on the team from sprained ankles, to torn ACLs to a broken back, but every single one of the players who have been injured are back on the field as soon as they get the ok from the doctor. It’s an amazing group of women who are truly tough, but when you meet them and talk t them you wouldn’t guess in a million years that they play a full contact sport!”

“After any of the Bulldogs win a National Championship we engage in Medals Week, which consists of the winners wearing their medals every day, even to work, and then meet up as a team each night at a different pub/restaurant to reminisce about the game and enjoy our accomplishment.”

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