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Her final chance

By Kristen Leigh Porter

Most WNBA players will get a break from competition for much of August when the league takes an Olympic break. Tully Bevilaqua aims to be hard at work in Beijing.

The Indiana Fever point guard, who will turn 36 in July, knows it's likely her last shot to represent her native Australia in the Olympic Games. She played with the Opals' national training squad before the 2000 and 2004 Olympics, and also in last month's Good Luck Beijing Tournament in preparation for this year's Games.

After not being chosen for previous Olympics, Bevilaqua hopes to be on the Aussie team when it's announced in late June. Until then, her focus is with the Fever, although she didn't make the trip for their final preseason game tonight in Seattle, due to fatigue.

"I'm sure they'll be keeping an eye on my progress with the (Fever), so that might form part of the decision," Bevilaqua said of the Australian coaches.

After playing in six games in eight days in Beijing last month, Bevilaqua went back to Australia to recover from an illness before arriving in Indianapolis on Monday. Still adjusting to the time change, she played in Wednesday's Fever preseason home game, but took herself out after four turnovers and no points in 71/2 minutes.

Fortunately for her, she left a strong impression on the Opals' coaching staff in Beijing. She scored Australia's final six points in a 65-61 win against Cuba in the third-place game, finishing with 13 points, five rebounds and five steals.

Still, Bevilaqua, a member of the gold medal winning Australian team at the 2006 FIBA World Championship, said a couple of other players are competing with her to be the backup point guard.

Said Fever coach Lin Dunn: "The fact that she has a chance to be on the Australian Olympic team and really challenge for a gold medal is really special, so we're going to support her in any way we can."

Etc.

The Fever signed 6-5 C Kristen Newlin, a 2007 Stanford graduate. Veteran F Allison Feaster, who sat out last season, arrived in camp and also made the trip to Seattle.