

MCCUDDEN GOING TO SOCHI WITH WOMEN'S OLYMPIC TEAM

By Lindsey Willhite & Justin Skelnik, Chicago Wolves



Chicago Wolves skating and skills coach Kenny McCudden, who has served in the same role for the United States women's hockey team for the last two-and-a-half years, will continue to aid the team's pursuit of the gold medal at the 2014 Sochi Olympics.

McCudden departs on Thursday morning and, after 37 hours of plane rides and layovers, will arrive in Sochi on Saturday morning hours before the USA's opener against Finland. His primary role during the Olympics will be as the team's advance scout. He will provide reports on every other team for USA coach Katey Stone and the Olympians.

"I'm there to do a job," McCudden said. "I'm honored. I'm privileged. It took a lot of hard work to get to this point, to be part of the program and to keep on moving on within the program."

McCudden already has received a gold medal as part of the USA Women's National Team's victory at the 2013 International Ice Hockey Federation Women's World Championship. The United States women's team last won an Olympic gold medal in 1998, which was the first time the women were included in the Games. The 2014 team features 11 players who were a part of the 2010 Team that earned a silver medal at the Vancouver Games -- as well as two local newcomers in defenseman Megan Bozek (Buffalo Grove) and forward Kendall Coyne (Palos Heights).

"(We have) phenomenal goaltending," McCudden said. "I like that our 'D' can shoot the puck. I like that the 'D' can join the play in numbers. But most important out of this team, if you really wrap it up, is their speed. The team is built on speed. When all cylinders are hitting, it's really fun to watch because their transitional game is so quick from the back end out."

McCudden has spent time thinking about what he'll do if and when the United States wins the gold medal on Thursday, Feb. 20.

"My daydream is watching the women celebrate, knowing what they've gone through," McCudden said. "If they have a chance to wrap this up and win a gold, I will be so proud to watch them. And on that stage? Holy cow. That's my big dream: To have them have their dream come true."