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## Bai has eye on Australian Open wildcard after guiding Canberra Velocity to APTL final

Jon Tuxworth

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Alison Bai still remembers the day she gave Alicia Molik a fright with an Australian Open wildcard at stake and wonders "What if?"

Bai was level at a set-all with the former world no.8 in the semi-final of the 2010 wildcard play-offs before her dream ended when she tore the tendon off her left wrist.

Four years later she will have a chance to atone for that missed chance when she joins Canberra Velocity teammate Alex Nancarrow in the 16-player field at this year's play-offs, beginning on December 16.

But first the 24-year-old has business to take care of with Canberra Velocity when the women's squad defends its Asia-Pacific Tennis League NSW-ACT conference title in the final against University of Technology Sydney on Friday.

Velocity heads into the decider undefeated after routing South East Smashers 6-0 and Sydney University Lions 4-2 at Lyneham on Sunday.

It means Nancarrow and Bai have two chances this week to book a ticket to Melbourne Park, with the APTL finals to take place in the second week of the Australian Open.

Bai hasn't played at the wildcard play-offs since her misfortune against Molik as more injuries, particularly plantar fasciitis in both feet, have stalled her progress.

But she believes she is capable of a first Australian Open berth after going through the IPTL preliminary rounds undefeated.

Born and raised in Canberra, Bai returned to the capital this year after moving to Melbourne for university.

"I played it [wildcard play-offs] from 17 to 19 years of age and got quite close a couple of times. I played Molik and got close playing her," she said.

"After that I had a few injuries and starting going to uni, I couldn't make it. It's been a tough road the last few years but it's good to be back and playing well.

"I'm definitely feeling quite confident with my form for Velocity, I'm ready to go."

Bai has been in outstanding form for Velocity despite still battling a few niggles.

"I was playing really well on the Australian pro circuit and tore my shoulder the last week," she said.

"The last few weeks I've had to back off serving, and I've had quite a few problems with my feet.

"I read somewhere [Sam] Stosur had the same injury, so that made me feel not too bad."

After winning last year's NSW-ACT conference the Velocity men's title defence ended with a 6-0 loss to Manly Waves and a defeat to Sydney University Lions on set countback after they won three ties apiece.

*This story was found at: <http://www.canberratimes.com.au/sport/act-sport/bai-has-eye-on-australian-open-wildcard-after-guiding-canberra-velocity-to-apil-final-20141207-12212c.html>*