

Bears hope to topple #1 Huskies

by Alan Small

It's put up or shut up time for the Golden Bears basketball squad. They face CIAU number one ranked Saskatchewan Huskies this weekend.

That's what it looked like in practice Tuesday when head coach Don Horwood acted more like the Sergeant in *Full Metal Jacket*.

There's no doubt that this weekend's games with the number one team in the country are important. Horwood was just making sure that was written in stone, instead of being written on Magic Slates.

"It's our big test, our Christmas exam," said Horwood.

Horwood's Bears are counting on the health of post Scott McIntyre and guard-small forward Chris Toutant. Since they are the most experienced players on his squad, they are the most important. They are also injured. McIntyre is hobbled by a bad right knee, while Toutant has a back problem.

"Toutant and McIntyre are cer-

tainly the keys," Horwood said. "We need him (McIntyre) at 100%. But if he's only available for five or six minutes a half, it would take the pressure off guys like Mark Baker and Rick Stanley."

Pressure they will have as they have to face the formidable Byron Tokarchuk of the Huskies inside. At 6'10" and 250 pounds, Tokarchuk may be the closest thing to the immovable object.

"Byron has been very consistent this year," Huskie head coach Guy Vetrie said.

"We know what they're like," said Horwood, whose team has played the Huskies three times already this season, losing all three times. "We can play them tough in our own gym."

Things look promising for the Bears as they have cut their deficit with the Huskies down to eight points. Horwood promises no blow-outs this weekend.

"We haven't been able to send both McIntyre and Toutant at them at the same time. One of them was

always injured," Horwood said.

"We don't have as much flexibility when they're not in the lineup," Horwood said.

Horwood will then go with Rick Stanley, a freshman post, in place of McIntyre. Horwood has been quietly happy over the play of young Stanley.

"He's only had one bad game all year," Horwood said, "in the long run. Scott's injury might be a blessing in disguise."

"Stanley looked like a good ballplayer when they played here," Vetrie said.

The Huskie lineup is deservedly number one in the country. They're 3-1 in conference play so far, and boast a starting five that are all in their final year of eligibility.

"We have a lot more balance this year," Vetrie said, "one of our weaknesses last year was that we put too much emphasis on the inside. We'd end up taking too many fouls, or with someone not playing well."

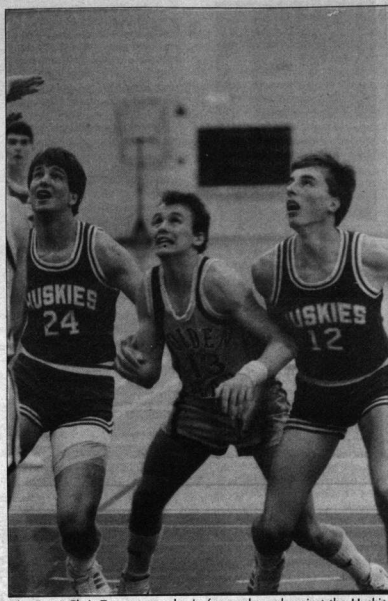
Vetrie though is wary of the number one ranking his team has.

"The ranking is a nice token," Vetrie said, "but they're for controversial media attention."

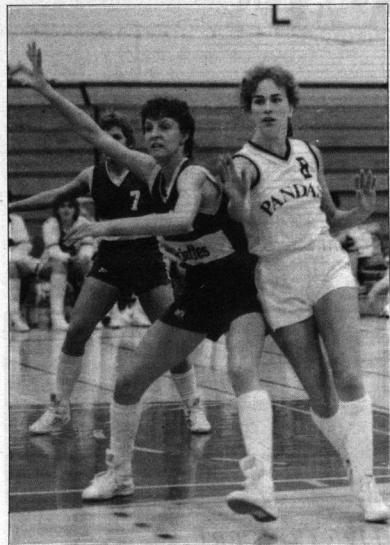
Horwood's game plan is direct.

"We'll have to play inside," Horwood said, "the posts have to score or put the other team in foul trouble. They allow our guards to play the perimeter game."

Games go Friday and Saturday in Varsity Gym following the Panda/Huskiette battles, approximately 8:00.



The Bears Chris Toutant muscles in for a rebound against the Huskies. Coach Don Horwood hopes that his back problem won't hurt their chances against the CIAU's #1 club. Games go in Varsity Gym at 8:00 Friday and Saturday.



The 0-4 Pandas take on the U of S Huskiettes Friday and Saturday at 6:30 in Varsity Gym.

It's gut-check time

by Alan Small

The Panda basketball team has their backs against the wall. They have to win both games this weekend against the University of Saskatchewan Huskiettes or their playoff hopes would be slim and none.

"There's no question that we have to win both games," Panda head coach Diane Hilko said.

The big reason why they have to stem from a couple of losses at the hands of the Huskiettes earlier in the month. A couple of wins over the U of S will give the Pandas a fighting chance in the new year.

"We didn't do many things well against Saskatchewan," Hilko said. "We didn't play a full twenty minutes in each half."

"We'll have to play 80 minutes of basketball this weekend."

Hilko has also said that her young squad has had letdowns that have put the team behind, especially after a bad call or a mistake.

"We've been letting little things get to us," Hilko said, "when they make a mistake, or make a good play, they let up. They still have to keep playing."

The Huskiettes, who are 2-2 this season are led by Catherine Stack, who has averaged 10 points per game and is ninth in conference scoring. Sandwiched around Stack in eighth and tenth are Panda guard Michelle Durand and forward Linda Mrkonjic, who are averaging 10.5 and 9.2 points per game respectively.

"Last time we played them, they came out in full court press," Hilko said, "they're a bit better than they were last season."

The Huskiettes were 2-8 last season and were dominated by the Pandas in the three games they played.

Panda games go at 6:30 on Friday and Saturday nights in Varsity Gym.

Struggling Bears face Regina

by Alan Small

The Golden Bear hockey club is 7-4-1.

Usually for any hockey team, that isn't a bad record, but for the Golden Bear hockey program, there's just something missing.

"We haven't really played well," said defenceman Gord Thibodeau, "the team hasn't really jelled yet."

The Bears head into this weekend's home games against the University of Regina Cougars coming off a split against the Manitoba Bisons. Head coach Clare Drake looked frustrated over the whole road trip.

"We had a lot of power play chances in the first game," Drake said of the 7-4 loss, "but (Manitoba goalie) Larry Dyck played well. We outshot them 37-34. We weren't very sharp offensively."

The second game against Manitoba was one our best over sixty minutes all season. The team's intensity stayed at a high level throughout," Drake said.

In the second game, they held the Bisons off the scoresheet on the twelve power play opportunities they had. It propelled their penalty killing to number one overall in the conference.

The statistics cloud the fact that the Bears have lost three of their last four starts, and are struggling.

The Regina Cougars may be the team to get the Bears out of their slump. Then again they are in the position to spoil the Bears season. Two weeks ago, they swept the Bisons twice at home in Regina.

The Cougars have been perennial cellar dwellers since their entry into Canada West hockey play. Last year, and the year before, only the Lethbridge Pronghorns have been lower in the standings than the Cougars. Last season, the Cougars came up with a record of nine wins, eighteen losses, with a sister-kisser.

Things don't look very bright this year, as the 3-9 Cougars have been on the losing side of some very lopsided scores. They lost a 17-2 decision to the Saskatchewan Huskies to start the year, and last week lost 8-2 and 9-2 to the red-hot Calgary Dinosaurs who are running away with the Canada West conference. They are last in the league in goals against, as the goaltending tandem of Mike McLean and Jim Nadon have let in 82 goals in 12 games. They have scored the least as well, as their 38 goals scored is far from the rest of the league.

"Regina is more like UBC, in that they are a big physical club," Drake said of this week's opponents.

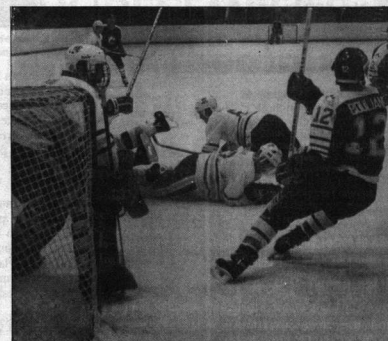
The Cougars are led by their captain and leading scorer Brent Marinov, who placed second in team scoring last year, with 52 points.

The Cougars have lost many a player to other clubs. Their leading scorer last year, Todd Elik, is now with the New York Rangers IHL club in Colorado. The goaltender from last year, Rod Houk, is playing with the junior Regina Pats this winter. They are a team depleted.

The Bears hope that these games put them over the brink.

As Gord Thibodeau says, "We're definitely the best team in the league."

REBOUNDS: Thibodeau is doubtful for this week's games, as he is one of many Bears hobbled by back problems. Forwards **Jack Patrick** and **Todd Gordon** also have bad backs. Forward **Bret Walter** will be out until the new year with a knee injury. Friday's game starts at 7:00 p.m., while in a smart move, the Saturday game goes at 2:00 p.m. in a rare afternoon start, so as to not compete with basketball.



Goalie John Krill and the Bears must not take the U of Regina lightly this weekend.