

**Bob Stauffer**

B-B-B-Basketball... What does it mean to you? I have to be honest with you. If it was not for Golden Bear basketball coach Don Horwood, I would probably still dislike the game.

I have many reasons for disliking the game. I'm 5'10", not short, but certainly not tall. Any guy who is 5'10" will admit that there is nothing worse than a strapping tall basketball player. For those of you who don't know, all basketball players are strapping—with the possible exception of Boston Celtic Kevin McHale, who looks like a giant ostrich.

Being brought up in a semi-Mormon family also led to some childhood nightmares concerning basketball. My father wasn't Mormon and believed that there was only one sport in the winter—hockey. I had to satisfy my mother, however, and this meant playing basketball with Mormon kids. All Mormon kids can play b-ball. I was like the proverbial fish out of water... but I could use my hockey background at times. Like hockey diction, for example.

"What the fuck are you talking about ref... since fucking when can't you body check the guy off the ball... you Fucking Homo... have to ref cause you couldn't play!"

"Just like you, son!"

At least he was right on something.

One more thing that always bugged me about basketball was that girls seemed to like the sport more than hockey. There are several reasons why I think this is the case... some of which may even be unprintable in *The Bridge*. But ladies, you must admit that only hockey players can blow snotballs twenty feet in the air by a flick of their nose. Now that's talent.

But my attitude for basketball began to change about six years ago. I'd be listening to John Short on Sportstalk, waiting patiently to talk to John about the Baltimore Skipjacks or how come the Oilers weren't playing the Dave Semenko-Kevin McClelland-Marty McSorely line, when some guy named Horwood would be talking B-B-B-Basketball.

Horwood has proven to be one of the best public relations men Athletics has ever had. His enthusiasm for the game has led to the very successful Golden Bear Invitational tournament as well as the increasingly popular Golden Bear basketball summer camp. The team may be the only one on campus with a solid fan base. Certainly a more solid base than the hockey Bears.

Now, Horwood may be having his finest moment, as his Bears are ranked #1 in the country, favorites to win the C.I.A.U. Championship.

As for me, I've been awakened to a new game. But Coach Horwood, I must ask you, what does it mean when I'm playing and guys put on hardhats and yell "Brick" when I shoot?

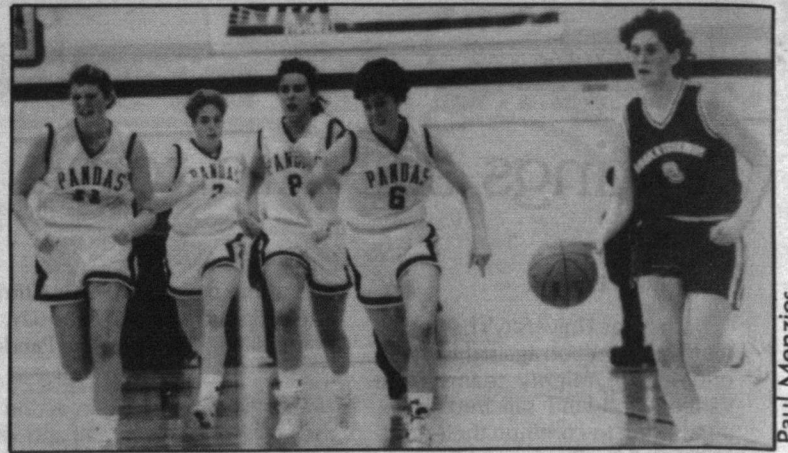
by Mitch Panciuk

After starting the season off on an impressive manner by coming in second in the GPAC Invitational tournament in Regina, the Panda Basketball team has collapsed, character wise, and are now in danger of doing even worse than last year's abysmal conference record of 4-16.

It's important to recognize that there is a lot of potential on the Pandas this year. The Pandas have been plagued thus far with injuries to key players—such as Tracy Cook, Lorna Stielow, and recently, Kelley Anderson. But as any good team will tell you, it's not the individual that makes the team a winner—it's the combined character.

This year's Panda basketball team is going to have to stop making excuses. "You can only use inexperience as an excuse for so long," coach Diane Hilko said. After that, it becomes a question of character. They're going to have to stop yelling at the refs for what they think are bad calls, and get on with the game. John Mandarich of the Edmonton Eskimos learned the hard way that players play with their bodies and not with their mouths. Some of the Pandas should perhaps learn from "The Juice's" mistakes.

After taking leads in both of last weekend's games against the Saskatchewan Huskies, the Pandas collapsed offensively and defensively. They barely hung on to win Friday's game by two points, and totally gassed Saturday's, losing by nine points. The nine-point loss flatters



Paul Menzies

A pack of Pandas track down a lone Huskie in last week's basketball action.

the Pandas' play on Saturday, because they were terribly outplayed by an even worse Saskatchewan squad, which is very young.

They were outplayed because Saskatchewan wanted the win more than the Pandas did. With the exception of a few players, namely

### Posting up

Celeste Bazinet, Susan Chalmers, and Tracey Henger—the Pandas didn't exhibit what it takes to win at the University level. That is, determination, drive, guts, and character. Throwing yourself after a loose ball in a desperate attempt to try and save it, not being afraid to get your "nose" in the middle of the physical action, and wanting to draw the foul and go to the line—this is what those four components are all about.

Determination. Drive. Guts. Character.

I don't think that this is too much to ask from a University basketball team. Playing for a University level athletic team is a dream for many people who never had the skills and/or opportunity to do so. Asking fans to pay to see a team simply go through the motions, is not only improper but it's also dishonest.

It seems to me that the Panda basketball team is going to have to re-evaluate their convictions. If they don't, then perhaps Hilko should begin to make appointments at the U of A hospital for a team-load of heart transplants.

This weekend the Pandas go against the number two ranked women's team in the nation, Victoria. We may not expect them to win either of the two games, but we should expect them to do their very best.



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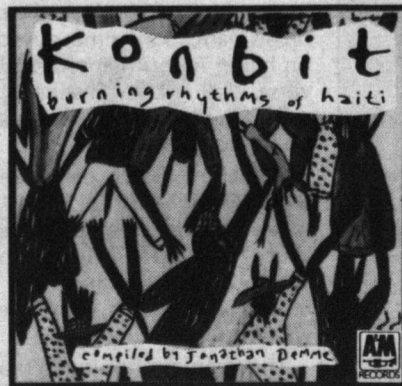
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