

SPORTS



photo Bill Inglee

Manitoba goalie Derril Trakato looks on in disgust as the Golden Bears destroyed his winning average on Friday night. The Bears won Friday's game, 4-2.

Hockey Bears victorious

by Bernie Poitras

After a four year absence — and long overdue at that — the Golden Bears hockey team is headed back to the CIAU National Championships, held this year in Trois-Rivieres, Quebec.

By disposing of the U of Manitoba Bisons in two straight games in the western regionals that took place this past weekend at Varsity Arena, the Bears will be making their fourteenth appearance in the four team tournament.

Knowing that the road to the finals was not exactly going to be paved for them the Bears had to put up with a lot of clutch and grab, rough'em up style hockey from their GPAC foes. After all the obscenities and fisticuffs were thrown the home team came through with 4-2 and 7-1 victories.

Forty minor penalties were subpoenaed in Friday's match while 28 minors and six misconducts kept the penalty box doors fine tuned on Saturday night. The plethora of penalties came as

somewhat of a surprise. What was expected was a classic offense vs. defense matchup with the Bisons supposedly supplying the offense and the Bears supplying the defense. With Manitoba having two of the top fourteen scorers in the country and the Bears having the best defense, the stage was set, right?

Wrong. The Bisons left their offense back at the U of M campus and instead brought their samurai swords disguised as hockey sticks. In all fairness though, both teams were guilty of some Bunyanesque stick work and consequently paid for it by sitting in the sin bin.

In between stick-carving lessons the Bisons could only muster an average of six shots per period through the two games. No doubt, not the kind of statistic that will get you goals considering they lit the scoreboard up 23 times a week ago in the three game GPAC final series.

Friday's game did not go without its tense moments for the Bears' offense either. In fact, the

Bears trailed 2-1 as far as early in the third period and needed a Breen Neeser powerplay effort and two Dave Souch goals to pull out the win.

After the game Bears' coach Bill Moores was not too surprised that it turned out to be a low scoring contest. "Well, they knew our style of play so they had to play a tight checking game as well," explained Moores. "It was just a very tough, tough physical game."

Moores was not too worried about the Bears having taken an uncharacteristic amount (16) of penalties either.

"Both teams took a lot of penalties. We took a lot of penalties we don't normally take — retaliation ones," said Moores. "There's a fine line you have to walk between walking away and challenging a person. When you're in that type of situation, that's a difficult thing to handle."

Saturday's game proved that the Bears' offense was in fact not on an extended sabbatical as they built up a 5-0 lead and outshot the

Bisons 47-20. Not bad for a night's work, huh? A four goal splurge within a 4:12 span in the second period put the final nails in the Bisons coffin on a night where nothin' but nothin' went right for them. Staying away from 'dumb' penalties and scoring on powerplays when the Bears took their share were just some of the areas in which the Bisons came up empty.

The Bisons showed a big 0 for 8 on their powerplay including an extended version in the second period where the Bears took three consecutive penalties and literally gave the Bisons a 3:33 powerplay. The Bears managed a 3 for 13 powerplay efficiency.

After Saturday's game in an obviously disheartened Bisons dressing room, Manitoba forward Vaughn Karpan could only shake his head in disbelief. "Killing those penalties took a lot out of us. It just didn't give everybody on our team a chance to get going," said Karpan who recently returned to the Bisons after his stint with the

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