

# SPORTS

## The Wave from the West

by Tim Enger and Mark Spector

After seemingly endless hours of practice and an exhibition game or twelve, the two University of Alberta basketball teams finally begin regular season action tomorrow night at the Varsity gym.

On Friday night at 6:45 p.m. the Pandas take to the floor against the UBC Lady Thunderbirds. At 8:30 the Bears tip off with the T-Birds men's squad. Both UBC clubs are currently unranked in Canada.

Saturday night, though, will be the real tester for both Alberta clubs as the two University of Victoria teams come to town under the leadership of head coaches Ken and Kathy Shields.

If there is a more successful coaching couple anywhere in the world they must be something. Ken's Vikings have won the Canadian championship for the last six years running while Kathy's Vikettes have won the national crown four out of the last six years, while taking the Canada West conference an amazing eight of the last ten years.

Both teams are ranked number one in Canada.

The Pandas breezed into the Christmas break with a 69-54 humiliation of the Brandon Bobcats on

Dec. 7th. They continued their success over the holiday season, placing third in the Martlet Invitational at McGill. On the strength of their 64-63 win over McGill in the tournament semi-final, Alberta moved up in this week's rankings to number seven in Canada.

So, the question is whether the Pandas can continue the momentum that they have built up towards the end of the exhibition season as they begin to face their toughest competition yet. At least a split is necessary this weekend in order for Alberta not to find itself behind the eightball right off the start of the tiny, ten-game season. That means a win over UBC is almost imperative, as Alberta hasn't beaten UVic in several years.

As for the Bears, they find themselves unranked at the present time, but in much the same position as the Pandas.

But there's only one problem: "UBC is a bit of a mystery team because they haven't played any Canadian teams yet," says head coach Don Horwood.

UBC annually has been a doormat in Canada West, but worse than that their neighbours in Victoria have been a powerhouse. This year UBC's Athletic Department

went fishing for a new coach and their first stop was the Island. Word has it that they waved big bucks in front of the face of UVic coach Ken Shields, but he wouldn't bite. They then approached Lethbridge's Ken Olynyk and our very own Don Horwood.

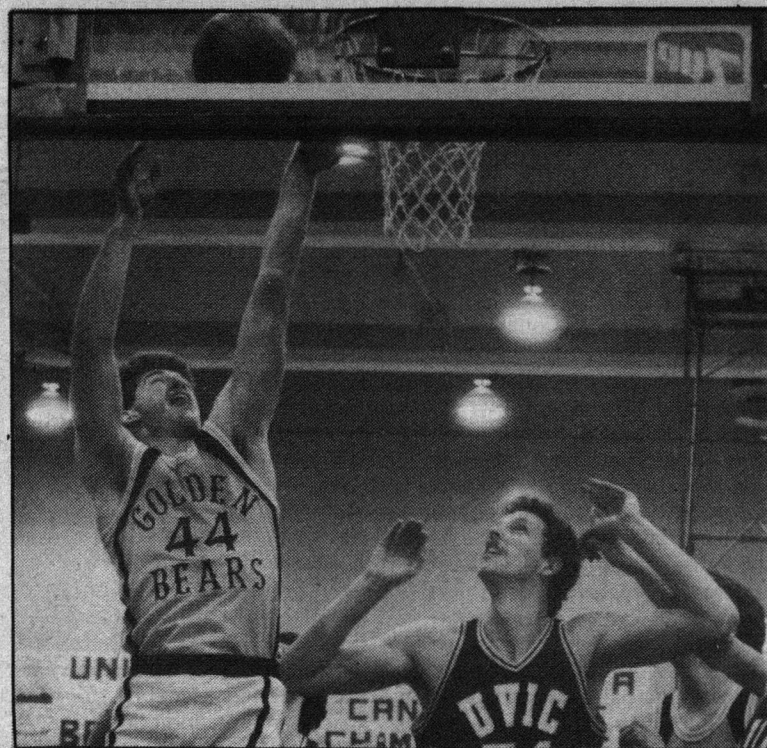
After neither of those men would take what was probably somewhat of a lesser offer than Shields received, UBC finally lured the 12-year veteran coach of the University of Winnipeg, Bruce Enns. With an unsettled situation to step into, Enns failed to set up any Canadian competition for his pre-season schedule.

But Horwood is wary of the T-Birds. "We can't afford to look past UBC to Vic," claims Horwood.

The heart and soul of the Vikings is seven foot post Cord Clemens. "We've got to keep Clemens out of the game," notes assistant coach Steve Roth. "He can virtually score at will inside. When you're seven feet tall there's a lot of room for error under there."

"He spent the past summer with the National team under (head coach) Jack Donahue. What we'll have to do is drop a guard inside to double team him and hope that he has to pass the ball back outside," said Horwood.

Whatever the Bears try to stop the man from the Faculty of Extension, Cord Clemens and the Vikings will provide a formidable opponent for Alberta come Saturday night...especially if the Bears' record is 0-1 going into the game.



Mike Suderman steals a rebound over 7'0" Cord Clemens in last year's stunning 89-76 playoff upset of UVic. A rare game and a rare occurrence for the Victoria centre.

Photo Bill Doskoch

## Gymnasts off to UBC

The Panda gymnastic team will travel to Vancouver Friday for a dual competition against last year's Canada West champions, the University of British Columbia. Veteran team members Heidi Ross, Donna Spaner, Shelley Spaner and Tracey Frith will join rookies Michelle Graham, Lara Edmonds and Diane Patterson to make up the team roster this weekend. Fourth year team members Margie Drysdale (knee injury) and Carrie Nawata (school commitments) will miss the trip.

Coach Sandy O'Brien is optimistic about the team's chances this weekend, but as she points out, the team's major goal will be to obtain CIAU National Championship qualifying scores for as many gymnasts as possible.

**On the mat** — The Pandas didn't compete over Christmas but instead trained right through the holidays. ... **Shelley Spaner** was ill and missed some training at Christmas but is ready to compete in B.C. ... **Stanford University** in California has invited the Pandas to a meet

which will also be attended by NCAA division I schools **Oregon State, Cal. State Fullerton, and University of California at Berkeley.** That meet will go Feb. 7th.

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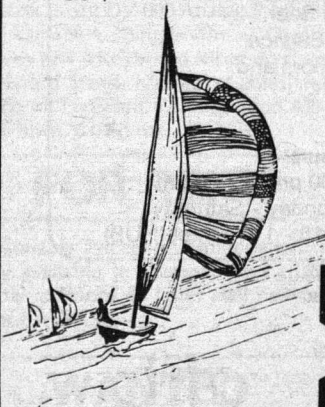
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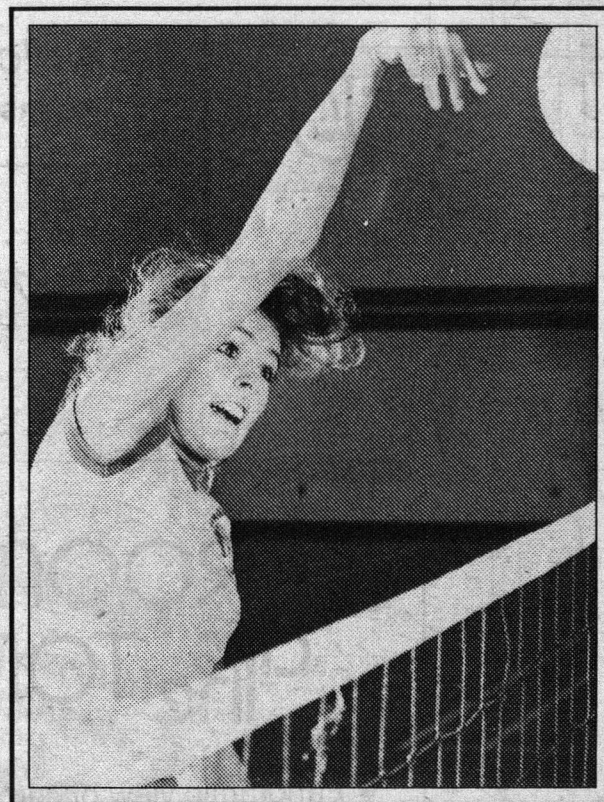
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