

The Bears -- part III

Murray Shapiro

For the past three weeks *The Gateway* has been running a series of interviews with retiring Golden Bear basketball players. In this, the last of the series, co-sports editor Lawrie Hignell talks with forward Murray Shapiro and coach Gerry Glassford about the team, the officiating, and the game in general.

A serious injury, suffered a month ago, has possibly ended Murray Shapiro's chances of ever playing basketball again, let alone in the university conference.

Shapiro suffered a severed Achilles tendon in a double-header series in Calgary, although the injury was not as a result of an accident—the tendon snapped as he was running down the court.

"I'd certainly like to play again," said Murray, "but it all depends on the leg, and if it comes around after the surgery I had performed."

Murray is a husky six-foot four-inch forward for the Bears, and is known for his aggressive rebounding and his ability to tie up any loose balls under the basket.

REFS TOUGHER

Shapiro played his high school ball in Lethbridge and feels "that the referees aren't as strict down there, when it comes to boxing out (on rebounds) and watching the stuff under the boards. Up here, if you are anywhere near the man on defense, they call you for slapping or holding, while down south you can check closer without getting called."

Murray also admitted, "being aggressive is something I have picked up over the years, and besides, I like it rough."

He also believes that "refereeing

is definitely better in the south. They have been exposed more to basketball because the top-flight competition has always come from the south.

"Basketball is a real participant sport down there, and kids learn it young—they produce the good referees along with the good ball players."

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

"The refereeing can be improved 600 per cent," Murray felt. "There must be a lot of politics involved in an organization like this—the referee will almost always give the home team the advantage."

"Films," as far as Murray is concerned, "are not really helpful. Your best improvement is in practice. Spending the money on films isn't worth it in the long run."

When asked about the Bears' problems this year Murray pin-pointed the nature of the offence. "It could work if the guys wanted it to, but they just didn't seem to have the desire to work it completely."

"Be patient," Murray emphasized. "Work the first part of the offence but don't look for the shot—don't gun it—see if somebody else is open or cutting towards the basket."

LIKED COACHING

Murray complimented this year's coaching style. "I really enjoyed playing for coach Glassford. His philosophy is ideal and really refreshing. You do the best job you can—hustle as hard as possible—somebody has got to win and somebody has to lose."

"I think if you go out there and give it an honest effort," he added, "that is when you get a real personal satisfaction from basketball."

"Varsity basketball hasn't improved—it is stagnant," said Shapiro. "I can't see it improving under the present system."

"You have to treat it as a business—hire a coach strictly for basketball and bring in players on scholarships. You also need the money behind it."

DIDN'T HURT

The absence of fans at home games has often been quoted as some of the reason for team failure this year, but Shapiro disagrees.



MURRAY SHAPIRO

"The lack of people didn't hurt the team—when you are out on the floor, you have no idea that the crowd is there."

Murray would like to try another year of varsity ball, as he feels that the season was not satisfying enough to end his career, but his chances are questionable. The Achilles tendon is the main tendon in the foot used in jumping.

Gerry Glassford

Gerry Glassford, in his first year as head coach of the Alberta Golden Bears basketball team, has brought to the job a new philosophy.

"I feel that the player should go out on the court and give all he has got," said Glassford. "If he does this and we still lose, then I can honestly say that we were beaten by a better team."

"Somebody has to win and there has to be a loser, and you have to realize that," added Gerry.

But the coach has by no means a defeatist attitude, and he has done a good job against a strong league this year.

The job has required a lot more than a knowledge of the game of basketball, and even in this aspect, Glassford is tops in his field.

COACHED ON COAST

Last year he acted as assistant coach to Jim Munro for the Bears and prior to this coached two years in British Columbia, as well as playing two years in senior men's leagues.

Gerry holds a degree in Physical Education and received it from UBC while playing basketball there. He also holds a masters degree and is presently working on his Ph.D. at Alberta while coaching the team.

Glassford also adds that, "there is a lot of psychology in this game. You have to get fifteen players up for each game and have to promote relations between players. After all, you can't expect fifteen individuals to click as a unit just like that."

BUILT SPIRIT

Glassford has done an excellent job of building a good team spirit,

and a good show of sportsmanship while on the court. Several times the Bears have been purposely provoked and tempted to fight, but they have held their temper at all times.

And the highest compliment that can be paid to a coach and his team was awarded last weekend in Saskatoon. The referees told the players that they were the most sportsman-like team that they had officiated this year.

Coach Glassford agrees that the team will be definitely weaker next year with the loss of three of their five first stringers. However he was quick to add, "But Calgary will be weaker next year also, be-



GERRY GLASSFORD

cause they should be losing Robin Fry and Hans Schamp."

GAIN EXPERIENCE

The coach feels that the team could gain a few experienced players next year, ones who did not play for various reasons this season.

The Bears could also gain the assistance of some of the best graduating high school ball players, and Glassford is enthusiastic about a new ruling in the league this year.

"Previous to this year, you could only recruit high school players from north of Red Deer. Starting this spring we can go into southern Alberta, although we can't go out of the province."

When asked why some potential players on campus this year did not try out for the team, Gerry replied, "It could be a number of reasons—the pressures of studies, they don't like a player on the team, they feel they can't make the team, or they just don't like the coach."

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

The coach definitely believes that the publicity could be greatly improved. "Radio and TV usage could be much better as well as the Gateway coverage. Fraternities could stage half time shows and competitions to draw crowds, and small gimmicks, such as cards on cafeteria tables in Lister stating up-coming games, would boost attendance. We also have to develop the tradition to support teams on campus."

Coach Glassford has to be congratulated on leading his team to a second place tie with the Dinosaurs this year, and his new philosophy could attract the best players to the team next year.



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