

# Al Melnychuk—back in groove

## Bisons, Wesmen wrap up Bears' home schedule

By Ron Ternoway

Do you know the name of Hop-along Cassidy's theme song?

If not, ask Al Melnychuk, veteran guard with the cage Golden Bears.

For in addition to playing basketball, Al is an expert in trivia. One can find him on most road trips trying to stump Bob Bain with new irrelevant bits of information.

Basketball and trivia are just two of the many interests that keep Al busy when he's not at class. As he puts it, "You've got to have other things to do or you get in a rut."

Speaking of ruts, Melnychuk is just coming out of one that makes coach Barry Mitchelson and his Bear teammates very happy.

After a slow start, Al is back in the groove.

"Melnychuk has been playing some excellent ball in the last couple of weeks," Mitchelson said. "He's worked hard to lose weight and get back into shape. Lately his shooting has come alive, and he's running better."

"He's an excellent all-round team man, and has good court perspective."

Al concurs that he is back in shape for "the third time this sea-



**BARRY MITCHELSON**  
... explains strategy

son" and feels that he is playing his best ball of the year. He also realizes that being in shape affects all aspects of his game, especially shooting.

"When you run down court and you're tired, you tend to cheat a little on the shot and it won't go in," he said.

After a fine high school basketball career with Victoria Composite High, Melnychuk has become a veteran with Mitchelson and the Golden Bears. Now in his third season as first-string guard, his experience and consistent play are very im-

portant factors in the Bruins' race for the laurels in the Western Canada Intercollegiate Basketball League.

"The Bears this year are the most talent-laden team I've played on, but there's something missing," he said. There isn't the desire present that was there, for example, on the first Bear squad I played for."

Al put his finger on the single factor that has doomed the Bears to the role of an also-ran this year.

"We haven't won any big games. We wax all the poorer teams, but when it comes to good clubs like Manitoba and UBC we just wilt. There's no way that either of them should be beating us by 30 points. We're better than that."

### Break jinx?

But can the Bears break the jinx and come up with a solid game against a good team? A lot of people are asking this question. Al Melnychuk, for one, thinks that they can.

Al's prediction will be answered in part this weekend as the second-place Manitoba Bisons and the tough Winnipeg Wesmen visit.

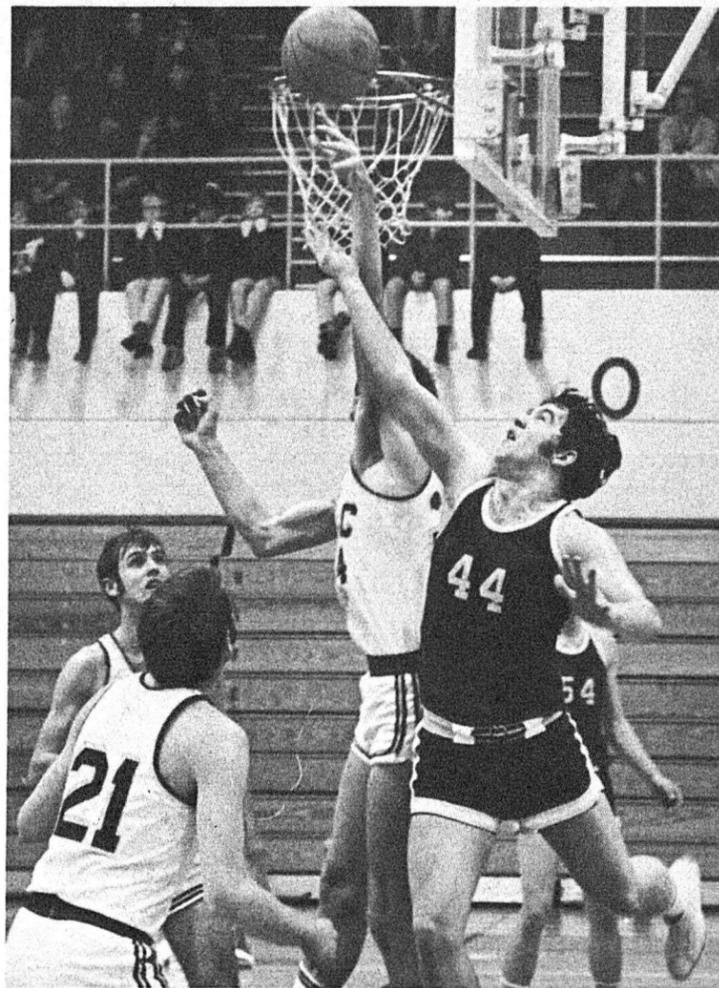
The Bears are currently drifting along a distant third in the WCIBL race, and this is the last league encounter with Manitoba. After this weekend, the Bears have four relatively easy games with Saskatoon, Regina, Calgary and Lethbridge, and, barring a total collapse, should finish third. With the playoffs arranged geographically, it is inevitable that the Bears will play UBC or Manitoba. If they want to acquire some momentum, this weekend is a fine time to begin.

Last time the Bears played the two Manitoba teams they barely came away with their uniforms intact. Manitoba whipped the Bruins 84-64, and only a sustained last-minute effort brought a narrow 72-67 victory for the Alberta squad over the Wesmen.

And it's not going to be any easier this time. Manitoba is rolling along with a 9-2 record, having dropped two games to UBC. The Wesmen, led by Negro guard Barry King, are 5-6 and trail the Bruins (6-4) by only two points in the standings.

Because the Manitoba teams must play all three Alberta teams, the games this weekend will be a rare Saturday-Monday series. The Bisons are here Saturday night, while the Winnipeg Wesmen visit Varsity Gym Monday.

Game times are 8 p.m.



**I FOOLED YOU ALL**  
... Al Melnychuk (44) on a pretty play

—Barry Headrick photo

## Wrestling tourney here

More than 80 wrestlers from across Western Canada will be at the University of Alberta this weekend for the third annual Golden Bear Invitational Wrestling Tournament.

And the host Golden Bear team will be seeking to retain the championship which it has won in each of the previous two tournaments.

It's one of the final wrestling meets to be held on campus prior to the Western Canadian Intercollegiate Championships and the Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union Championships. The WCIAA tournament will be held at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon,

Feb. 13 and 14 while the University of Alberta will host the CIAU Championships Feb. 27 and 28.

Matches begin Friday at 8 p.m. in the West Gymnasium, Physical Education Building. Others are scheduled for the Main Gym, Saturday at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m.

Teams from the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon and Regina campuses, the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology and Southern Alberta Institute of Technology; the Calgary and Edmonton Amateur Athletic Unions. Two Edmonton high school all-star teams, who will represent Canada on a European tour this summer, will also compete.

## Killy to test slalom course

VANCOUVER—The man they consider the greatest skier in history will give Grouse Mountain, site of the du Maurier International World Cup ski event, its first critical review on Wednesday, Feb. 10.

France's Jean-Claude Killy, who astounded the world by sweeping all three Alpine events at the 1968 winter Olympics, will test run the course for the slalom and giant slalom that will be used at the du Maurier International, Feb. 27-28, Mar. 1. 150 skiers will participate.

Killy, just 26, is already a skiing

legend. In 1966, he won the downhill and combined world title at Portillo, Chile. The following year he became the first male winner of the World Cup, establishing an incredible feat in doing so.

He won five downhill events, four giant slaloms and four slaloms. Racers only count their three best finishes in each section, so, Killy scored the maximum 225 points, 111 more than his closest rival.

Following on the heels of his brilliant Olympic performance, Killy came to Rossland, B.C., for the 1968 du Maurier International and won the slalom, salting away his second straight World Cup title. He had 200 points.

It was also at the same meet that hometown girl Nancy Greene (Raine) also clinched her second straight World Cup crown.

Killy now has his own television show, writes a syndicated ski column, endorses a host of products and is very much in demand for personal appearances around the world.

The du Maurier International is the third-to-last World Cup event, and only one of three held in North America.

It has been the deciding meet for declaring World Cup individual champions for two straight years. Killy and Mrs. Raine in 1968 and Austria's Karl Schranz and Gertrude Gabl last year at Mont Ste. Anne, Quebec.

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