

# Esdale's magic dancing Bears

by Karl Wilberg

It couldn't have been spectator support that led to the soccer Bear's 4-0 and 2-0 victories against the Universities of Saskatchewan and UBC.

Instead it was overcoming an early unsteadiness and developing a practised attack that resulted in both wins.

The Bear's uncertainty and disorganization during the start of both matches was a result of the Bear's lack of experience. Still, as coach Peter Esdale terms, they managed to get "plugged in".

Plugging in involved using long goal kicks or backfield passes up the flank to speedy forwards, Ase Ayobohan and Rudy Bartholemew. The Husky and UBC defenses were "stretched out" and "traffic in front of the goal mouth" was avoided.

The Huskies tried to develop an attack but were unable to in spite of the Bear's loose man to man coverage.

The Bears pressured the Huskies twice in succession and Bartholemew, from a cross by Webb, scored on the second attack. This was to be the only goal of the half, in spite of the Bear's continued pressure. In particular Webb worked the midfield hard to provide the forwards with scoring opportunities.

The Bears used a 4-4-2 formation for both games. This formation uses four backfielders and four midfield players to feed the ball to two forwards. In this way states Esdale the Bears can use midfielders as "ball winners." The abilities of Ayobohan and Bartholemew allow a concentration on the midfield where, as Esdale mentions "the game is won or lost."

Unfortunately for the Huskies they could not duplicate the Bear's offensive tactics and had difficulty pushing up. They could not create scoring changes, like those of Bartholemew and Capelletto, late in the half. At the next half's start the Bears again looked shaky and did not hold the attack. Also, the Husky goalkeeper Schlopinski picked up Ayobohan's close range kick and Bartholemew's cross.

Through hard work and aggressive man to man coverage the Huskies controlled the half's first 15 minutes. However, the Bears broke loose and sealed the game with their stamp. The Bears pushed up into Husky territory and 24 minutes into the half, scored on a fine combination play. Franco Bruni sent a head height kick across the goal to Bartholemew who knocked it in.

At this time the Bears were creating several scoring chances by pressuring the Huskies. Consequently two more goals resulted, both scored by Mark Olivieri. His first goal occurred when Brian Wallace neatly knocked the ball to Olivieri.

The game ended shortly after the fourth Bear goal, but really had been decided after the second. Pat Johnson, a three

year veteran, stated they had practised bringing the ball out of their end. He also summarized: "We were really rusty at the start" but soon got "plugged in."

In any case UBC and the Bear's recurring early game uncertainty made the Saturday game a close contest. In fact the game was in balance until late in the second half when UBC threw the game away.

At first the Alberta squad seemed confident and pressed an attack that concluded with a kick bouncing off the UBC goalpost. Then the Bear's attitude changed, it seemed, as Esdale noted. At this point Esdale felt his team was "in awe" of UBC. This is a result of the coastal team's traditional domination of the Canada West conference.

Consequently, the Bears had trouble on the middle flanks and could not sustain an attack. For the first 15 minutes the ball remained in Bear territory. UBC was using the U of A's tactic of getting a long ball on the flank, stretching the defense, then losing a cross. In this manner UBC's Will Sluis nearly scored when his head ball skimmed the cross bar. UBC kept the pressure on and Sluis got a more accurate kick away that was deflected by goalkeeper Akam.

The Bears used a man to man defense in their end that was unable to completely tie up UBC. As a whole UBC was at least as quick and equalled the Bear's conditioning. At first, the UBC defense was tenacious and spoiled potential Bear attacks. Often UBC would double-team a Bear in front of the UBC net. Shortly before the second half

though, the Bears began to put long balls down the flank and thinned out UBC's defense.

The second half began with much the same close and hard fought play. By now the Bears had regained confidence and pushed into UBC's end. In particular Ayobohan, Bartholemew, and Mosele pressed UBC but the T-Birds broke up each attack.

UBC tried to respond but the Bear's coverage became more aggressive and halted their attempts to push up. Ayobohan and Bartholemew received long balls from their backfield but failed to change them into goals. Still, it became clear that the Bears had begun to make some opportunities.

Fifteen minutes into the last half the Bears swung the game into their favor and almost bottled UBC in their end. The real turning point came when Bartholemew picked up a back-pass intended for UBC goalkeeper Scott Macdonald. Certainly, the UBC team vowed not to repeat the costly error.

However they did and the score was boosted by Webb's emulation of Bartholemew's alert play. Twice UBC underestimated their opponents' aggressiveness. In such a close game small chances become the only chance for success. The game's last minutes were dominated by the Bears who made their weekend a most successful one.

UBC coach Joe Johnson reflected: "we'll be looking" at the "two mistakes within five minutes." Coach Esdale also

mentioned that fatigue from Friday's game made UBC tough to beat.

Still, he believed that the Bears had played well and made some "good steals."

According to Esdale, team confidence was a large factor in the Bear's play and eventual

success. After winning four games in the last two weeks one imagines that their confidence is high.

As yet, it seems the Bears will again be contenders for the western conference. Perhaps by then their early game unsteadiness will be conquered by experience.



## Terry Jonestown

**GOLLY WHAT A BUNCH OF SOREHEADS.** I guess the football Bears lost by a point Saturday. It was news to me because I was sitting with the Residence kids. They showed me how to recklessly adulter normally nutritious liquids with mood altering poisons. Anyway I heard about the loss while I was hanging on to the porcelain steering wheel in RATT. I overheard two football worthies muttering "There're going to be some heads rolling tonight." "Yeah," said his buddy "and you know what that means." I shuddered as I realised that the Jockstrap sports police would be having a midnight inquisition and rally. They're scary. Everyone wears white football helmets and they link hands around bonfires of blazing goalposts. Then the participants fire starting guns into the air and terrorize the campus onto customized exercise bikes.

**THEY'RE REAL VISIONARIES MAN.** I really dig the new ways the Athletic Services department dreams up to raise money. A spokesman told me that "We need a violent substitute for football when the season is over." That's why a revamping of the wrestling program is planned. Every Wednesday night in the West Gym there'll be a full card starring perfectionists like Abdullah the Butcher, Mr. Hito and the Cuban Assassin. "Midgets and lumberjack fights" are out though I've heard. Also, any student that wants to fight can sign up at the General Office. Foreign objects, salt shakers and popsicle sticks will be supplied for free. The staff matches too are expected to be big crowd pleasers. They include bouts between the Desenex kid, a phys ed professor, and Mr. Fredrick, a nasty commerce T.A. who has been known to pull an attache case out of his trunks.

**BOY, WILL THERE BE NEAT STUFF** to write about when the Pacific Gymnastics champs get here. Lots of well formed gymnasts leaping from place to place. Not to mention all the TV sportscasters who are my heros. 20th Century Fox is backing the meet and it's rumored the American team includes Luke Skywalker, and Mr. Ed the talking horse.



Loose Husky defense helped in Bears' 4-0 win.

photo Jim Connell

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