

Hockey Bears looking for a good year

by Allyn Cadogan

There's an old adage that a coach hoping to build a good hockey team needs strength up the middle backed by skilful goaltending.

Some might say that Clare Drake is taking a pretty big gamble this year, when he bases his hopes on three rookie centremen and two relatively untried goalies.

Golden Bears have twelve returning players from the 1972-73 team. Goalie Craig Gunther saw little action last year as a back-up man to all-star Barry Richardson.

Drake admits that Gunther didn't have an exceptional

training camp but feels that he will improve with experience. Gunther, sharing the netminding duties with Dale Henwood in two exhibition games in Calgary last weekend, started slow but came across with some key saves in the second game.

Bears split the series with Calgary, losing the first 5-3 and coming back to win the second 5-4.

Henwood comes to the Golden Bears after two years with the Long Island Ducks, a semi-pro team in the eastern league. Paired with Gunther, Drake is hopeful that Henwood will give Bears the solid goaltending they need to repeat as Canada West champions.

This year the Golden Bear defence is being built around

two returnees, Bob Beaulieu and Ross Barros. Beaulieu came from George Kingston's U of Calgary Dinosaurs. Probably Bears' most consistent blueliner, Beaulieu capped his initial year with U of A when he was voted to the Canada West University Athletic Association all-star team.

Barros looked impressive in Calgary, displaying a shot much-improved over last year's.

Brian Middleton is the third returning defenseman. Although Drake feels that Middleton didn't have an exceptionally good year with Bears last year, he was one of the three Canadian college players drafted by the NHL last spring, and the coach expects a good season.

Four new faces are also vying for regular berths on the defensive team. Abby Hebert played last year in Vegreville.

Len Spratt is a transfer student from U of Saskatchewan where he played for the Huskies. Spratt can deliver a solid body check but needs work in other areas.

John Simpkin, a transfer from Red Deer College, played last year for the Red Deer Rustlers. Both Simpkin and Larry Wall, who spent the past season with the Drayton Valley Rebels, looked good in Calgary.

Bruce Crawford, voted the most improved player by his teammates last year, is Drake's only returning centreman. Crawford began his rookie year with the junior Bears but

quickly won himself a regular spot on the senior team.

Rick Peterson, 5'7", 140 pounds, centered one of Bearcats' most successful lines last year. What Peterson lacks in size he more than makes up for in skating ability and good puck sense.

Drake describes John Horcoff as "a bit of an awkward skater," but goes on to say that he is a good puck handler and passes well. He netted three goals in Calgary. Horcoff comes from Selkirk College in British Columbia.

Dwayne Bolkoway came to Bears during the second half of last season. He is not a fast skater but is very strong and handles the puck well.

Clarence Wanchulak played centre for most of last season but will be playing at left wing

Craig Styles, also at centre, played for the Edmonton Mets last year. Drake said that Styles and Horcoff were the two most impressive centres in training camp this year.

Judging from appearances, returning wingers Steve McNight and Jerry LeGrandeur are in for an excellent year.

McNight collected five points, two goals and three assists, over the weekend and was one of the most impressive players on the ice.

LeGrandeur, who played on last year's top-scoring line with Dave Couves and Rick Wyrozub, finished the season fourth in team scoring and tenth in the league with 31 points. The left winger gave Bears much-needed

strength in the corners and this year Coach Drake looks for more scoring punch from him as well.

Also returning for his fourth year is right winger Oliver Morris. An excellent skater and stick handler, Morris has incorporated some new moves into his act and Drake is hopeful that he'll snap out of the scoring slump that plagued him for most of last season.

Oliver Steward finished fifth in league scoring with 37 points and was voted to the second all-star team in his rookie year but was sidelined with pneumonia during training camp. He spent last week in practice with Bears, however, and is slated to make this weekend's trip to Jasper and Prince George.

Wyrozub, another returning winger who won't see action for a while, spent the latter part of the summer with his leg in a cast. Wyrozub, who finished first in league scoring with 25 goals and 24 assists, will begin practicing with Bears later this month.

Bears play their first home games against defending Canadian College champions University of Toronto Varsity Blues October 28 and 29 in Varsity Arena.

Soccer Bears winning but worried

The Soccer Bears went against the Edmonton Victoria Club, a first division city team, and the U of S Huskies this weekend here and continued their string of convincing wins, by shutting out both clubs 4-0 and 9-0 respectively.

In Saturday's match against Victoria, Bears played fairly well, dominating the mid-field for most of the game.

Sven Hage scored two goals with Phil Craig and Neil Fuge finishing the scoring.

In Sunday's romp, Bears showed flashes of brilliant soccer.

Sven Hage and Phil Craig scored a pair each. Jeff Salmon, George Lovell, Tony Msemaweli, and Frank Tassone had one apiece. A Saskatchewan defenseman accidentally kicked the ball into his own net trying to clear it away from two Bear attackers to make it 9.

Coach Robbins acknowledged the fact that Bears looked good at times in both games but he feels that they lack consistency. Easy wins do tend to bolster a team's confidence but can serve to wear them down as well.

The teams that they meet in the National Finals in Victoria, BC at the end of the month will be much tougher than those the Bears have come up against so far.

In spite of the 13 goals that the Bears managed this weekend, Coaches Robbins and Padfield noted about six changes that they missed. They seem to be a little slow shooting, that is, they tee the ball up before taking a shot. Against stiffer competition, this will give them trouble as a strong defense will not give them the chance to do so.

Another problem is the tendency showed by a few men to try and carry the ball instead of passing.

These are all simple faults that are not too hard to overcome with a good team, which the Bears are. There is a good deal of depth on this year's team.

They play their last exhibition game of the year against an All-Star team from the city league at Clarke Stadium this Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. The coaches feel that this will be a good test for them that should give them some rugged competition before they head out to Victoria.

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