



Mark Spector

So the second soap opera of the year has come to an abrupt end here in the land of the **Yellow Kodiac**. (That's slang for **Golden Bear**, in case you're puzzled).

After the hockey team basically said "In your face" to the CIAU, abandoning the **Canada West** playdowns to take part in the **World Universiade Games** in **Czechoslovakia**, it seemed only imminent that the **Alberta basketball** side would draw the short straw in the wildcard stakes that were on the table Sunday.

But if it were only that, then perhaps coach **Don Horwood** wouldn't feel quite as cheated as he does. When **Winnipeg** and **Western** were

Wildcard system to be tested in hockey

selected as the two wildcard representatives on Sunday, an old maxim of his was once again proven true.

"I've said this to my players before," explained the fiery hoop mentor who hails from **Carbonear, Newfoundland**, "we've got to win it on the hardwood because we're not going to get any votes."

Sound like sour grapes? Maybe — but he has a right to feel that way.

If **Canada West** isn't the best hoop league in the CIAU this year, then I'll drink an entire bottle of the dreaded **Newfie Sc reech**. The ironic thing is that the people that voted on the wildcards all but admitted that over the course of the year.

At the season's outset, **Victoria** was rated as the best team in **Canada**. As they stumbled through the regular season to a 5-5 finish, **Alberta** assumed the number one ranking for four weeks of the season. The **Bears** 7-3 record, along with the **Vikings** year long struggle, proved the **CWUAA** to be an exceptionally tough conference in

which to play.

Just ask the teams from the east who come to the **Golden Bear Invitational** every year only to lose out early. Ask **York**, perennial first round losers, or **Bishops**, or **Western**, who **Alberta** defeated in the final of the **Calgary Dino Classic** early in January.

In the past 12 **Dino Classics**, six titles have gone to teams from **Canada West**. Three of the other six have gone to **Brandon**. In that span, only four teams from east of **Man-**

place. The **Bears** tourney has been the same, with western teams dominating.

"When they used to just have the final four in **Halifax**," said **Horwood**, "two of the last three years there were two teams from **Canada West**. We're even stronger this year and they only take one team. It's frustrating."

Eastern bias? You bet. Especially when you look at the fact that the **Bears** beat **Western** head to head.

In the **Calgary** tournament final no less.

And it extends to the women's side. The final wildcard spot for the **ladies CIAU's** came down to two teams — **Lethbridge** and **Toronto**. It was extremely close, and even though **Lethbridge** had won the only game between them during the year, **Toronto** was awarded the berth.

They went on to lose their opener in the **Quebec City** tournament last weekend.

But alas sports fans, their moment of reckoning draws near. And ohh, how interesting this one could turn out to be.

The **Calgary** hockey team, ranked number one in **Canada** for virtually the entire season, lost their **Canada West** final series to **Saskatchewan** over the weekend in three hard fought games. The **Huskies** advance to the CIAU's along with their divisional foes, the **Golden Bears**, who enter as the host team.

With only one wildcard spot for

the rest of the country to fight over, it must certainly belong to **Calgary**. But there are already two western universities in the finals already.

In a field of only six teams. I can just hear them trying to justify not picking the **Dinos**.

"Gee, guys, if we pick **Calgary** that will mean that **Canada West** has a 50 percent chance of holding on to the **CIAU crown**."

"Yeah, but we've been voting them **number one** all year. Even after they lost two in a row to **Alberta** we left them in the top spot. How can we justify not voting them in?"

"Well, the finals are on **national T.V.** right? If we don't have another team from **Ontario** the ratings will be low. Let's pick -----."

(Fill in the blank with one of the four remaining **Ontario** teams.)

If the CIAU is going to salvage any credibility whatsoever from this, the year of the wildcard fiasco, they have to take **Calgary** as the hockey pick.

If they don't, I won't be at all surprised.

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Panda trio cops CIAU silver

by Mark Spector

The **Pandas** gymnastics team went to the CIAU championships at **McMaster University** in **Hamilton** last weekend knowing that a gold medal would be a pretty tall order.

But **Alberta's** only three representatives, **Michelle Hanneman**, **Diane Patterson**, and **Monica Kmech** gave it all they had, claiming the silver medal in the team event just 0.65 points behind the first place **University of Manitoba**.

Coach **Heidi Ross**, in her first year at the helm, was happy with the outcome. "After the beam event we were in pretty good shape," she said. "We just had to go for it, but the floor hurt us."

Whereas the **Pandas** placed at

least one gymnast in each of the beam, vault, and uneven bars finals, none of the trio was able to reach the final event in the floor exercise.

Hanneman would almost certainly have qualified but for a fall in her preliminary routine. As well as losing valuable points for the fall, she stepped out of bounds and was penalized a further 0.5. In what is a strong event for her, **Hanneman** scored 8.45, which wasn't even in the top ten.

But the **Edmonton** native more than made up for her floor miscue in the rest of the competition, as her overall score of 34.65 was good for the bronze medal in the **All-Around** standings.

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Western, Winnipeg take two CIAU wildcard spots

by Philip Preville

The **Alberta Golden Bears** basketball team had their last hopes of playing in the national tournament put to rest on Sunday. The two wildcard berths in the tournament, to be held in **Halifax, Nova Scotia**, were awarded to the **Universities of Winnipeg** and **Western Ontario**.

The former was no surprise;

Winnipeg was a top-ranked team throughout the year who lost to the powerful **U of Brandon** in the **GPAC** conference final. The **Western Ontario** choice, however, was totally unexpected, and **Bears' coach Don Horwood**, for one, was pig-biting mad.

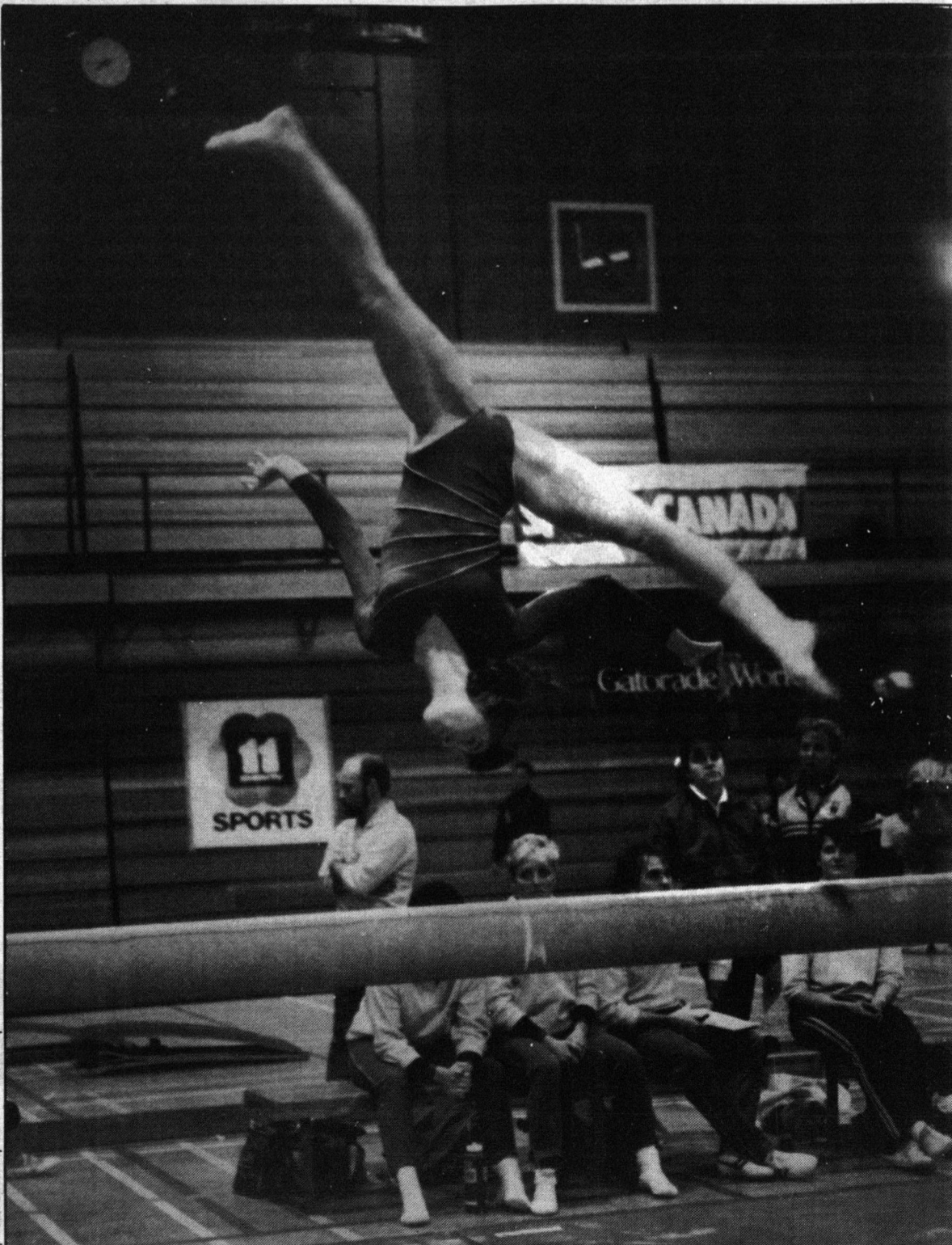
"Joke, joke, joke," said **Horwood** from his home on Sunday evening. "Canada West is undoubtedly the toughest conference in the country, and there was no wildcard selection from **Canada West**." It seemed a decent cause for a nationwide revolt, or a good excuse for western separatism.

"If **Victoria** had been chosen before us, I wouldn't be half as mad," continued **Horwood**, whose team has been practicing since last Monday in the hopes of having their prayers answered. "But we were both overlooked and that's ludicrous. I am very, very upset."

Western and **Winnipeg** will join the six **Canadian** conference champions, **UBC**, **Brandon**, **McMaster**, **Toronto**, **St. Mary's**, and **Concordia** in the tourney which begins this Thursday.



Don Horwood — "joke, joke, joke."



Diane Patterson flips out during her silver medal performance on the beam. She placed fifth in the **All Around**, while teammates **Michelle Hanneman** (3rd) and **Monica Kmech** (15th) helped the **Pandas** to second.

photo Stephanie Bishop