

## THE BEAR FACTS

It's crazy to think of this Saturday's football game against Manitoba as the turning point of the season, but that's how important the game actually is. First place is staring the Bears in the face, while the rest of the teams are breathing down their necks and ready to pounce at the first sign of a weakness.

The Western Intercollegiate Football League is going to be so exciting this year that all fans with weak kidneys will be requested to wear 'pampers' to the games to ensure that the seats remain dry throughout the game.

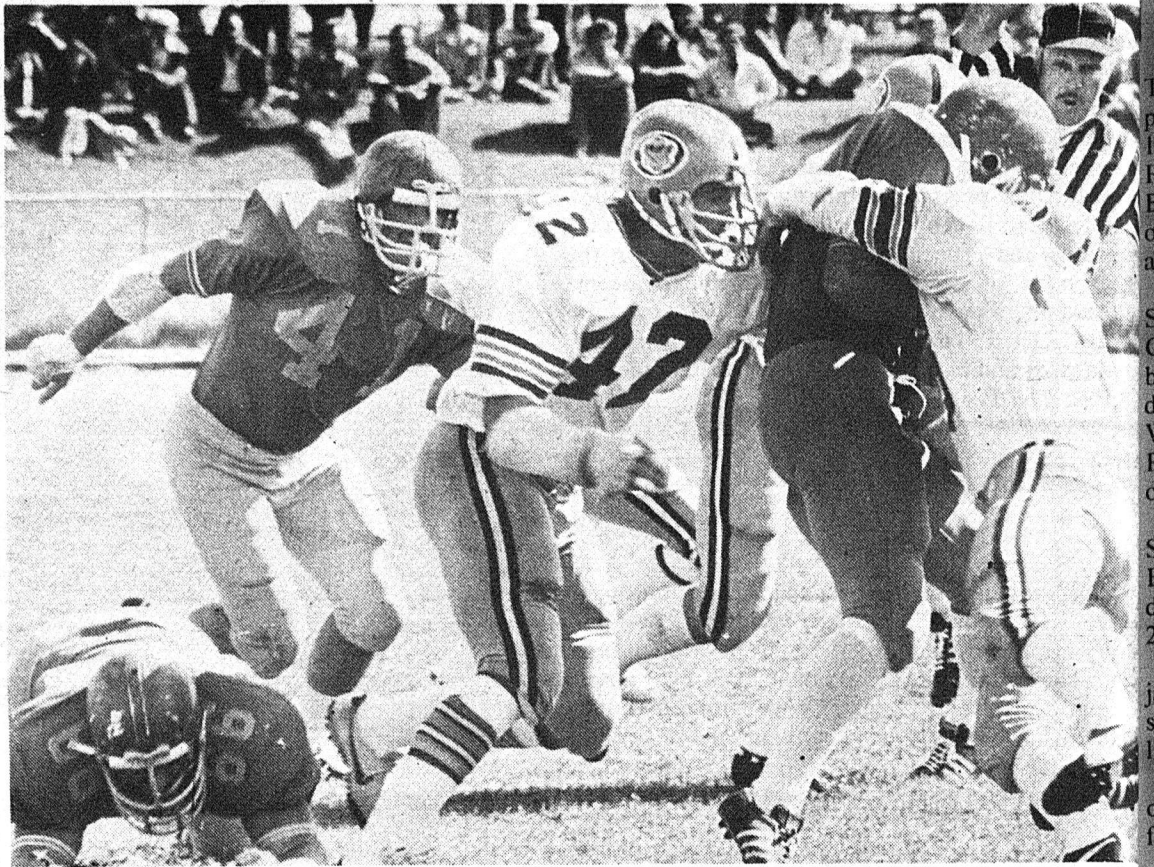
Speaking of excitement, Saskatchewan upset UBC last weekend in the "land of the gophers" with a 51 yard touchdown pass on a third and 22 situation and only 39 seconds showing on the clock. They must be taking lessons from the BC Lions who have inherited the knack of the "classic" last ditch throw it up and pray" method of winning football games that used to be the trademark of the Edmonton Eskimos during the past few seasons. You don't suppose the old offensive coach of the Eks, who is now head coach of BC actually had a play drawn up with that title, do you? Word has it, Vic Rapp took a playbook and a bible to the coast, and look at the Lions now.

The Hockey Bears have 15 players returning this year and a crop of transfers and various quality players that will make the work 'rookie' almost non-existent on this year's team. The vets had a little scrimmage against the rooks this week and they outshot them so bad, that Jack Cummings who was playing goal for the hopefuls says he wore out three sets of goalie equipment during the scrimmage.

Kevin Primeau will be joining a "cast of thousands" when he tries out for the Edmonton Oilers this week. Kevin has a lot of people to beat out for the job, but he is one of the best, if not the best skater in College hockey today and was the top scorer in the West last year, helping the Bears to a first place finish. "Cece", as his team mates call him, looks at the tryout as a chance for him to get good exposure to the pro hockey scene, and although he didn't really say what his chances were at making the club, he would leave the Bears if he could play regularly in the pros. Primeau is living high off the hog in a motel by the Coliseum getting paid twenty dollars a day for meal money. This must seem like a king's allowance after having existed on the eight dollars a day the UofA provides for its athletes. Word has it that Primeau is taking the whole team out for dinner, and he thinks he'll have enough left over for a movie or two.

Basketball coach Gary Smith cut 17 plays out of 35 after the very first training camp practise, so he must know what he is looking for. Team managers love this practice of mass cutting as the less bodies there is the less work there is. My ideal team is five guys who don't need their ankles taped, who are perfect "Felix Ungers", and can play a whole game without sweating or getting thirsty. A managers dream.

Attention trivia freaks, back by popular demand the famous Gateway Sports Quiz will return on Tuesday. Be ready for it.



The Bear hug.

Dave Morris and Dennis Blond crunch a UBC defender during the last home game.

photo Brian Gavril

## 76's tight battle...

stories by Steve Hoffart

The '76 grid campaign for the Bears was a question of so close but yet so far, and once again no big cigar.

Last year's Bears actually blew their chances for a playoff berth with more than two weeks to go in the season. They allowed the Saskatchewan Huskies to tie them in the last minute of the game on the frozen turf in Saskatchewan. The 16-16 score bolted the sled-dogs into a second place finish and the last playoff spot, while the Bears had to finish their remaining three games knowing that unless one of the top two teams choked, they would again be out of the playoffs.

### ...continues in 77

A strong second half finish saw the Bears wiping out opponents right and left, to go undefeated in their last four games, and finish off the season with a 27-13 victory over the Manitoba Bisons.

It's been a long time between playoff berths for the Bears who haven't gone to post-

ponship, defeating Waterloo in the prestigious College Bowl game.

The Bears slow start last year appeared to be the result of placing a lot of rookies in important slots, and an offensive line that had a lot of problems with personal changes during the season and so creating big gaps in the offensive structure.

At the end of the season last year, the Bears were acknowledged by the other clubs to be the most powerful team in the west. They just had a few bad breaks in a league that is considered by the experts to be the toughest of the four CIAU conferences in terms of overall

strength and the parity of all the teams involved.

At the end of last season J. Donlevy the head coach stated "We'll be competitive in a high competitive league next year. We have some holes to fill, and we've got to find ourselves some offensive linemen, and offensive linemen don't happen along very often."

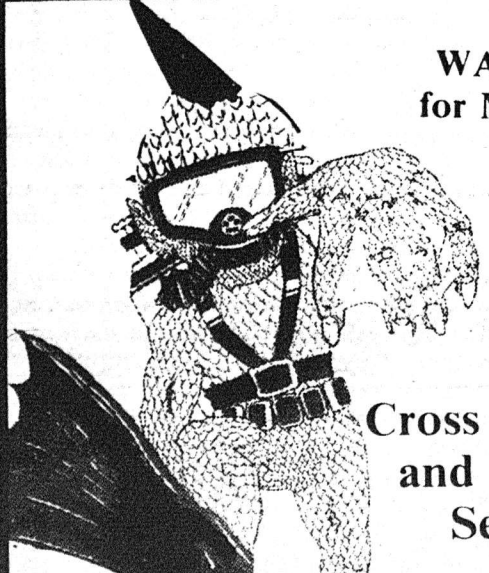
The magical crystal ball of a gypsy couldn't have predicted better, for the Bears are exactly that position except for one thing, a couple of good offensive linemen have just happened along, and the team is gunning for first place on Saturday.

the Manitoba Bisons, and we bluntly states that "The game is essentially a playoff game. There is no other way to look at it. They are as good as everyone else thinks, (ranked fourth in Canada), and the Bears are good as we know they are (ranked sixth), then it is time to prove it. Either we win and put ourselves out front, or lose and find ourselves somewhere down in the middle of the pack."

Glancing at this year's standings so far, it's evident to see what Coach Syrotuik means. The team this year has the offensive power to beat anyone in the league; their quarterbacks are quick afoot and like to throw the ball, especially rookie D. McDermid who has hit an excellent crop of receivers for a few bombs this year.

The running game is excellent. Rookie Sean Kehring, fullback Pat Barry and Ken O'Connor have proven they can hit the openings that the offensive line has provided.

The punting of Mark Cyncar (41.5) last game was a bright spot for the Bears. The only weakness could be the field goal kicking, but the Bears have not had a really good place kicker for five years, so there should be no obstacle to overcome.




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