

SPORTS

Happiness is only losing by one

by Cam Cole

Bears 6 - Huskies 2
Bears 5 - Huskies 4

You have to wonder how happy Dave Smith would be if his Saskatchewan Huskies ever won a game.

Following Saturday's 5-4 loss to the Golden Bears, the Sled Dogs' coach was as pleased as if his club had just clinched the league pennant, instead of languishing in the CWUAA basement with 7 straight losses.

"Are you kidding?" gloated Smith. "With the experience they have on that team, and they only beat us by one goal on home ice? Hell, we played like champions!"

He might get some argument from Bears' boss Leon Abbott on that point - in fact, the two exchanged bitter words after Alberta's 6-2 win Friday. The game had featured a return to Huskies' familiar pattern of physical intimidation, particularly by league penalty leader Guy Spencer, whose assaults on Bears' high-scoring line of Jim Ofrim, Oliver Steward, and Clark Jantzie precipitated a third-period brawl in which four players were tossed out of the game.

Despite Spencer's efforts in that direction, Smith denied that intimidation was any part of Huskies' game plan. "It didn't get us anywhere last year (Huskies finished with a 4-20 record), so we've stopped running at people," he said. "This year we're just a hustling, checking team."

Smith's hustlers and checkers apparently had their minds on something else, at least in the series opener, when the Bears took advantage of Huskies' lackadaisical play and frequent penalties to fire a 54-shot barrage at starting goaltender Doug Spitzig.

Spitzig, battling pneumonia for a couple of weeks now, was superb in both games and proved to be the only obstacle in the way of what should have been two ridiculously easy wins.

Well, not the only obstacle perhaps - as usual, most of Bears' best scoring opportunities ended up wide of the net.



Oliver Steward's 2 goals and 2 assists Friday put him close to the top in league scoring.

After a scoreless, lifeless first 20 minutes Friday, Oliver Steward slipped between two Saskatchewan defenders and potted his fourth goal just 10 seconds into the second period.

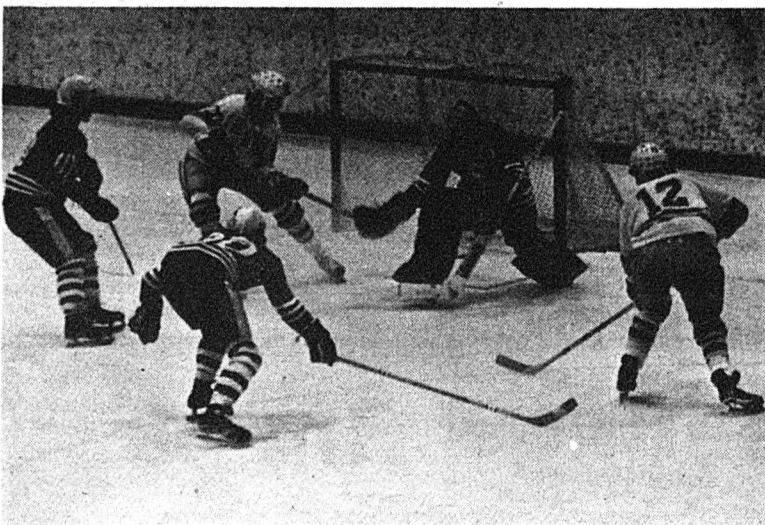
Halfway through the period, Rick Peterson sneaked in and swept an innocent-looking rebound past Spitzig, and Bears led 2-0.

By the end of 2 periods, Alberta already had a 40-10 edge in shots on goal.

Early in the final frame,

Huskies' Pat Rooney deflected teammate Doug Folk's shot past Craig Gunther in the Alberta net, but a moment later Steward took a pass from Ofrim following a faceoff to the right of Spitzig and his fifth goal, a low hard wrist shot proved to be the winner.

After Steward's tally, Bill Andreassen banged in Peterson's rebound to put Bears ahead 4-1. Huskies executed a 2-on-1 break at 12:15 perfectly, leaving Gunther helpless to stop Garth Hackl for their second marker, but Steward set up Ofrim and Crawford for late



Jim Ofrim (12) is robbed by Doug Spitzig's quick right hand, in Friday's 6-2 win over the Huskies.

goals to ice the win.

Bears won the war, but lost the battles, or at least one of them. In the outbreak of fisticuffs with 3 minutes left, Ofrim took a bad pounding from former Golden Gloves fighter Jim Rudrum, and Jantzie picked up a cut under the eye in his scuffle with Spencer - although in all fairness, Spencer emerged looking like he had been hit by a truck.

Abbott, trying to hide his disgust at Smith's tactics, commented that Bears would have to have better production from their other lines to prevent "opposing teams" from using any and every means necessary to stop the Ofrim line.

As if in answer, Bears' "other lines" connected for four of Alberta's five tallies on Saturday while the Ofrim line picked up only a single point, an unassisted goal by Ofrim one minute into the third period.

Saskatchewan scored the only goal of the opening period, a low shot from the point by Ken Loehndorf with Bears' net minder Jack Cummings screened.

Ota's Bears maul Pronghorns

by Keith Steinbach

Suichi Ota's volleyball Bears stumbled through to their first league victories here on Friday, defeating the undermanned Lethbridge Pronghorns 15-10, 11-15, 16-14, 15-9.

It should have been a walkaway for the Bears, but they had to come from behind in all but the last game. Consistency was again a problem, especially on defence - a difficulty which can probably be traced to experience, or lack of it.

Undoubtedly injuries to three key players didn't help the Bears' cause, but perhaps they were just a bit overconfident as

Kevin Primeau broke a skate early in the second period, and his replacement Rick Venance took advantage of a rare appearance to tie the score, converting a pass-out from Bruce Crawford.

Primeau returned and put Bears ahead at 9:52, but 20 seconds later Rooney's 20-footer from directly in front knotted the game at 2.

Kevin Bolton's weak shot from the point a minute later was picked up by Dale Hutchinson who fired the puck past Spitzig. Again it was less than a minute before Saskatchewan

Photo by Brian Gavriloff



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cole's notes

Fryer a deserving winner, but a year late

It doesn't exactly qualify as news, but there was an awful lot of adverse reaction to the selection of Bears' outstanding wide receiver Brian Fryer as the winner of the 1975 Hec Creighton Award.

Eastern schools are up in arms because they think the selection was made as an apology for not choosing Fryer last year, when his statistics were more impressive.

Well, maybe that's exactly the reason - but Fryer is just as good today as he was a year ago, if not better. The thing is - stats like those Fryer piled up last year are easier to come by when a team such as the 1974 Bears is playing out front.

This year things have been tougher, but Fryer hasn't been any less spectacular. He is easily the most exciting football player in Western Canada (which, for the benefit of you easterners, is just west of Toronto) and the proof of the selection committee's judgement will come in the next couple of years, as Fryer makes his mark in the big time.

Can he possibly do less than the majority of Hec Creighton winners who preceded him? Not without a couple of broken legs.

Poke me if I'm getting too cynical, but isn't the Grey Cup getting just a bit too Grey these last few years? I mean, how many sets of finger nails have you chewed down to the quick over the course of the past three seasons, only to have Eskimos' first Cup victory since '56 leave a taste in your mouth like Stop 'n Grow?

While on the subject, a poll taken by the Gateway among 800 students on campus has exposed the opinion that the most exciting play of Sunday's game was the play-action pass the female streaker made in front of the coin-toss ceremony at centre field. What action!

"He's got to be happy with the way his team played," said Bears' coach Leon Abbott of his opposite number, Dave Smith of Saskatchewan, after Alberta's 5-4 squeaker Saturday. "But we made our own problems tonight."

However much credit you're willing to give Abbott for the success Bears have enjoyed so far this year, give him credit for refusing to bad mouth the visiting coach. Involved in a brief but heated exchange of unpleasantries with Smith the night before, Abbott applauds the Saskatchewan coach for "seeing the light", presumably telling his players to play hockey rather than try to intimidate the Bears on Saturday.

Of costly mistakes and hard work: "I guess Saskatchewan played well, alright," said Abbott, "but our defence made some errors - inexcusable errors - that cost us some goals. That's something they haven't done for a few games."

"They (Huskies) have some players who can take advantage of those kinds of mistakes ... the goals they got tonight, I would call talent goals. We score goals by hard work. You'll get the odd talent goal, but you can't count on them."

Of winners and losers: "Half the reason we won that game tonight (breaking a 4-4 tie with just over a minute left) is tradition. There's a heck of a winning tradition here - these guys are winners, they KNEW they would win ... It's like the best goal scorers. They get the puck on their stick and they say 'Dammit, this puck is going into that net' and it does. The same is true of a losing (Saskatchewan) team - you get into that frame of mind and it's hard to break."

On the other side of the rink, Smith was less generous to the home team. "This isn't half the team they had last year," he said, "I have never, never seen an Alberta team stand with the puck behind their own net and not know what to do with it."

Smith also advanced the opinion that the going-over his team administered to the Ofrim-Jantzie-Steward line Friday slowed them down considerably the following night.

Being expected to prove he's tough just because of his size is taking the fun out of the game for Clark Jantzie.

The 6'3", 190-pound winger found himself in the middle of things again Friday, as Smith makes a habit of sending his biggest and toughest men out whenever Jantzie is on the ice.

Since fighting carries an automatic game misconduct, confrontations usually turn into wrestling matches, of which Jantzie wins more than he loses, but he doesn't enjoy fighting - in fact, it's a large part of his reason for leaving the Oil Kings as a promising junior two years ago.

Still, the problem isn't likely to diminish. As long as Jantzie continues to be one of the Bears' top goal-getters, he'll be the target of every "tough guy" in the league.