

Rooney's last game Basketball season history

John Younie

A nice quiet evening at home watching TV was not what Bear's basketball coach had in mind for this past Saturday night. Garry and his troops would have preferred to be in Victoria, taking on the first place Vikings in Canada West basketball playoff action.

But a Bear-Viking match-up isn't to be, as the host team lost their final two games to Victoria on the previous weekend; a 74-73 heart-breaker on Friday and a 73-68 on Saturday.

The double loss, combined with a Calgary sweep of the playoffs and Alberta is left with its collective head. The return trip to Victoria which was so certain the week before now wait until next year.

For one Bear, the two games ended a three year career at the club. Pat Rooney, who scored 39 points in the series and named to the league's first star team later in the week, hanging up his green and gold jersey in good after Saturday's game.

If ever there was a game where money and his teammates would have won, it was Friday's. Down 45-36 at the half, the Bears fought and clawed their way to a 58-57 lead with nine and a half minutes left, but couldn't hang onto the lead.

Alberta's second-half comeback was keyed by veterans

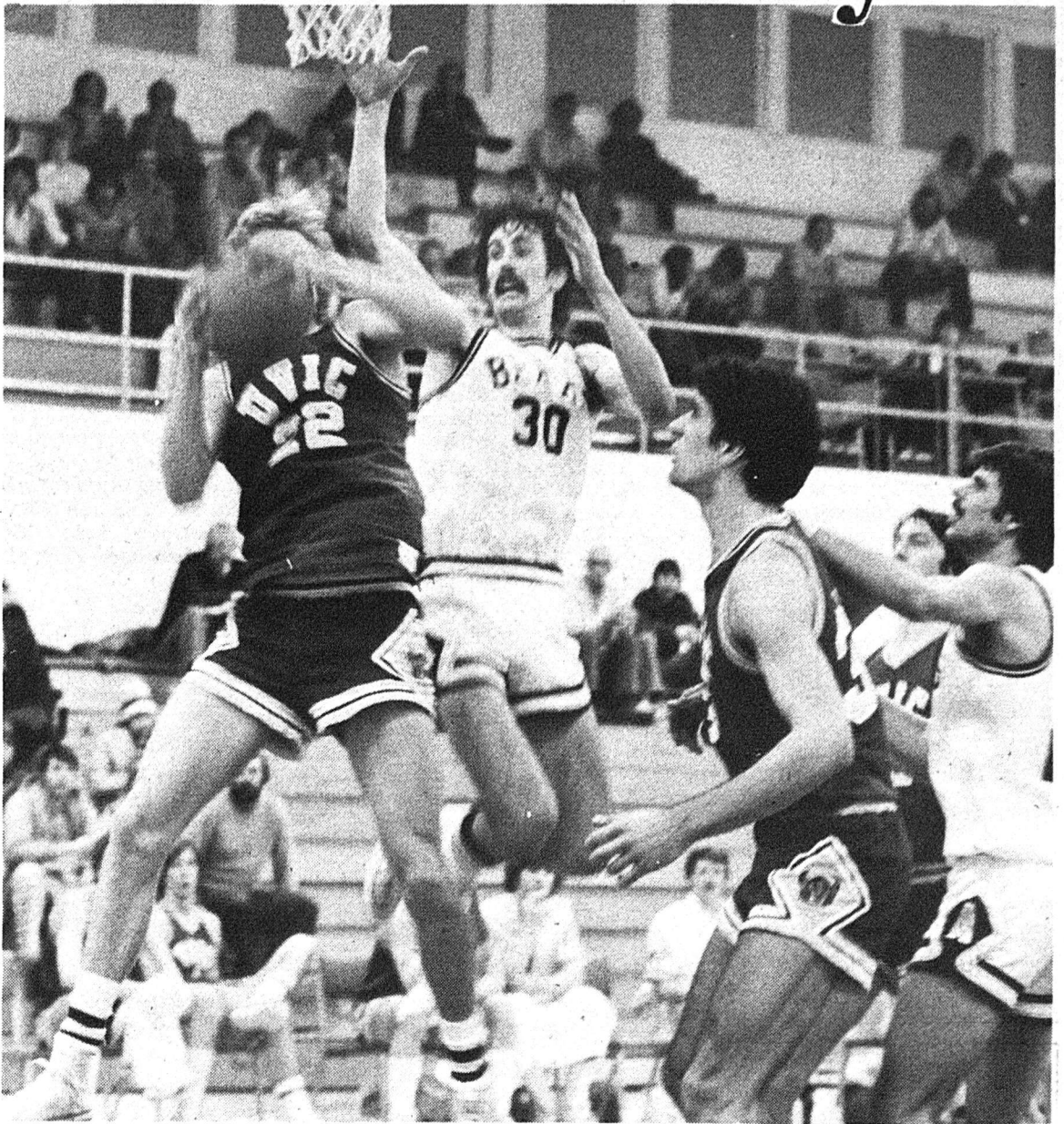
Brent Patterson and Colin Fennell. Patterson completed two three-point plays early in the second session to pull the Bears close, and Fennell came off the bench to put in ten points.

The last minute of play had the 2000 spectators gasping, as Bears' Jim Bonin put in two successive buckets to bring Alberta within one, 74-73. The last two points came with five seconds left. On the throw-in Bears' David Reich pressured Viking's Robbie Parris into turning the ball over. Alberta had four seconds to score, and gave the ball to their best shooter, Brent Patterson, whose 25 foot shot bounced off the rim at the buzzer.

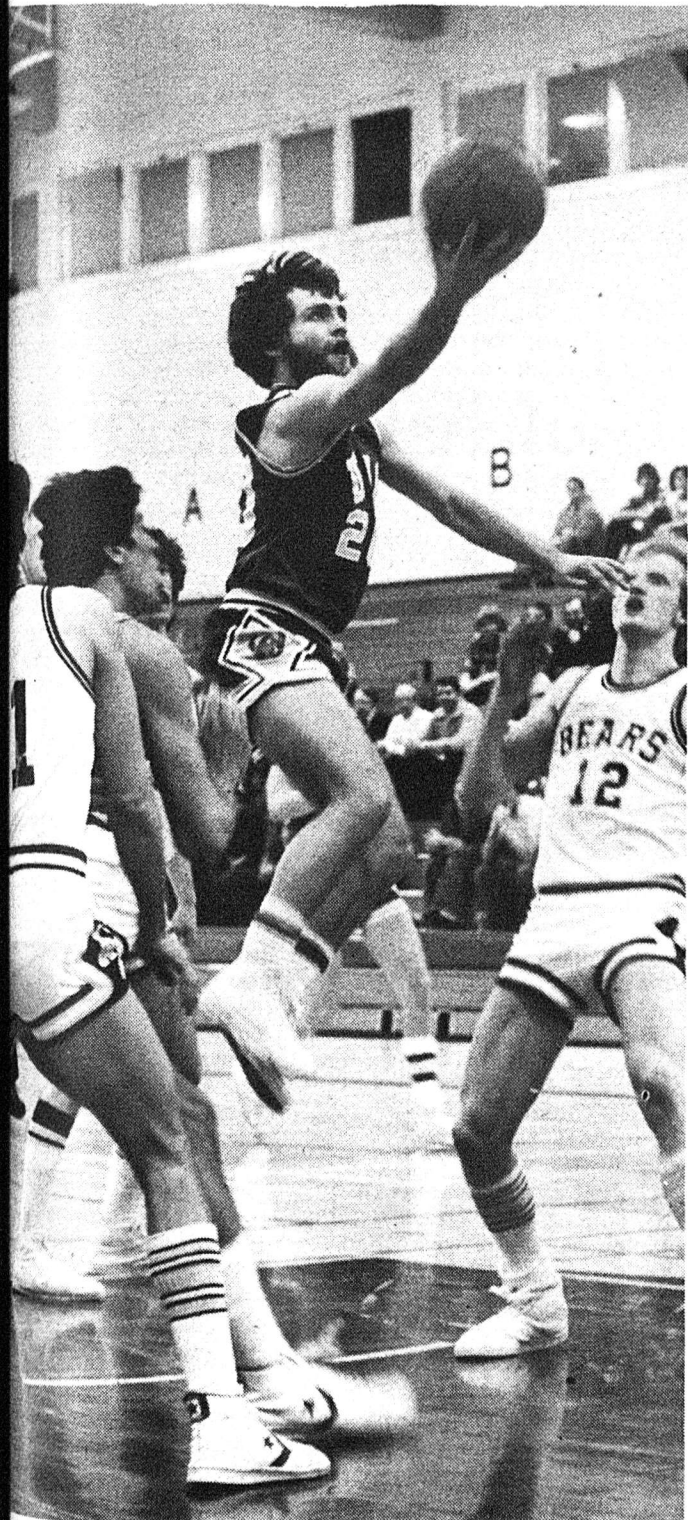
"I would've called a timeout if we'd had one left," said a dejected Smith later. "The idea would have been to move the ball inside and try and draw a foul... but that last shot was makeable."

In the final minutes, several of the Bears missed key shots. Rooney, Bonin and Jamie Thomas missed free throws, and Tom Groat missed a layup with two minutes left.

The Vikings had it all over the Bears in the first-half, thanks to some diligent offensive rebounding by rookie Gerald Kazanowski, and some lack of concentration on defence by the Bears. "Our defence seemed tentative in the first-half," Smith commented after. "They were letting their man get position on



Pat Rooney displays the reason he is destined to be an All-Canadian and why he will be missed next season. Photo by Shirley Glew.



Victoria's Robbie Parris. Photo by Shirley Glew.

them under the boards. We were lucky we weren't down by more."

Ted Anderson with 18 points, Robbie Parris with 16 and Reni Dolcetti with 14 points led Victoria. Bears received 16 points from Pat Rooney, 14 from Patterson and 12 from Thomas.

Saturday's game followed much the same script as Friday's. Alberta fell behind in the first-half, gave it the old college try in the second-half, but came up short.

Victoria had a hot hand in the initial period, shooting a torrid 60%, to Alberta's 28%. Dave Reich led the second-half comeback with ten points and a half-dozen assists. Bears closed the score to 59-57 with four minutes left, but couldn't get any closer. Down the stretch, Alberta's Tom Groat was, um, rather cold around the basket, missing two easy layups, two free throws and committing two fouls, which gave Victoria two points.

"You can't blame Tom," said Smith later. "He was playing hard when he was in there. Heck, he helped hold (Reni) Dolcetti to eight points."

Pat Rooney said goodbye to Bear fans with a 23 point effort. Dave Reich finished with 12 points. Robbie Parris was top man for the Vikings with 23 points. Ted Anderson netted 13.

Bears assistant coach Don Horwood summed up the double loss and the season. "It was the same story for a lot of our games this year. We get behind then try and come back and fall short. Right now, I feel like going home and kicking my dog... if I had a dog."

Last weekend Victoria swept the playoff series, on the coast, 2-0 against Calgary. The Vikings now travel to Calgary, March 9, to compete in the CIAU finals. The Dinosaurs will compete as the host team.

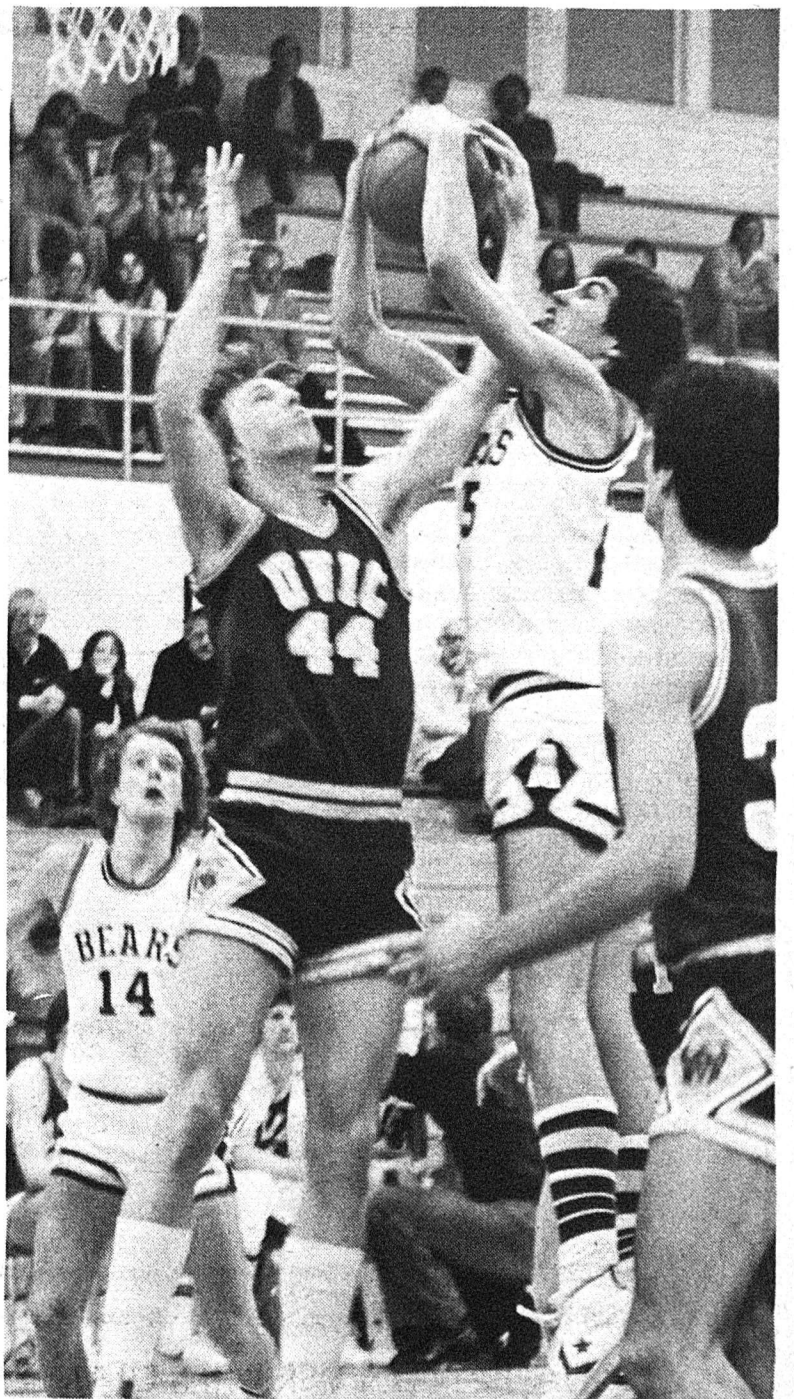


photo by Shirley Glew