SPORTS

Horwood: 'There is a God'

Gold medals for ball Bears

Bears 79 **Pronghorns 78**

CWUAA Championship Bears 89 Vikings 76

by Brad Clark

Maybe it was the positioning of the planets. Maybe Varsity Gym became part of the Twilight Zone. Perhaps Coach Don Horwood worked out a deal with Beelzebub. Whatever the scenario, the Golden Bears Basketball team came up with two miraculous performances, and then floated out of Varsity Gym with gold medals around their necks as CWUAA Champions!

"There is a God," exclaimed a relieved Horwood after his Bears finally came out the long end of a close one. Down by a point and with only four seconds remaining, Mike Kornak tipped in Dick Price's jumper to give the Bears the one point margin of victory and a berth in the conference championship

"We lost by one point to Victoria, and we lost by one point to Calgary. We've been walking a fine line all year," said Horwood. The Bears looked very confident

in the early going. They patiently

ran their offense taking only high percentage shots. Mike Suderman, his casual but consistent self, scored 16 points in the first half pacing the Bears to a 40-35 lead.

Lethbridge assumed command in the second half. Pronghorn guards Brent Maxwell and Ken McMurray seemed unstoppable shooting from the outside. A 15footer from Maxwell gave Leth-bridge a six point lead (74-68) with three minutes left.

But the Bears did not wilt. After Dean Peters had tied the game with a tip-in, Price sank one of two free throws to temporarily give the Bears a one point advanatage with just under a minute left. With only 32 seconds on the clock, Lethbridge's Dave Ross sank a couple from the free throw line giving his team the edge. Then the Bears came down the floor and ran 28 seconds off the clock before Kornak scored the deciding basket. Kornak preserved the victory with a last second stuff on Ross.

Horwood was impressed with his team's tenacious comeback, "I think it's really super that we sucked it up and came back after going down like that," he said.

In the other conference semifinal, ther University of Victoria advanced to the championship game with a come from behind 63-60 triumph over the Saskatchewan Huskies.

The timing was perfect. After eight years and 33 straight losses the Golden Bears could not have picked a more opportune time to end Victoria's reign of complete dominance over the U of A. The Bears displayed more heart than a Molson light commerical en route to an 89-76 victory and the conference championship.

For the Bears it was the perfect chance to prove that they are a much better team than their seasonal record of 2-8 indicates. "We wanted to show the country that we can play with the best," said an elated Kornak. Horwood expressed similar sentiments, "We deserve to be there, in the national tournament, not because of our record but because we're that good a team," he said.

As a result of the victory the Bears advance to the regional tournament in Victoria. From the outset the Bears exuded intensity. Tom Demeo was just ugly (in a figurative sense) under the defensive boards, hauling down 11 rebounds. Guards Gerry Couzens and Price drove hard at Victoria's

defense and consistently found Mike Suderman or Mark Baker standing alone, picking up some easy buckets.

The Bears led 42-32 at the half and increased their lead to as much as 22 points, before a rash of Alberta turnovers brought Victoria back to within 13. The Bears surged way out in front again, Kornak leading the way with several steal layups.

Unquestionably it was the Bears best effort of the season. As a team they shot 70 per cent from the field. Kornak led the scoring with 23 points and nine rebounds. Dean Peters had 16 and Mike Suderman added 12. Graham Taylor had 22

The final word on the championship tournament comes from Horwood, who grew a little weary of the media's focus on the Bears' 2-8 record. "These kids can play ball. This weekend proved it.'

Bear Essentials: In the consolation match Saskatchewan handed Lethbridge its second loss of the tourney, defeating the Pronghorns 85-72...Three Golden Bears were named to the tournament all star team; Suderman, Kornak and Demeo...The Bears will face the York Yeoman in the first game of the regional playoff.



Photos Bill Doskoch

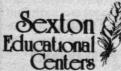
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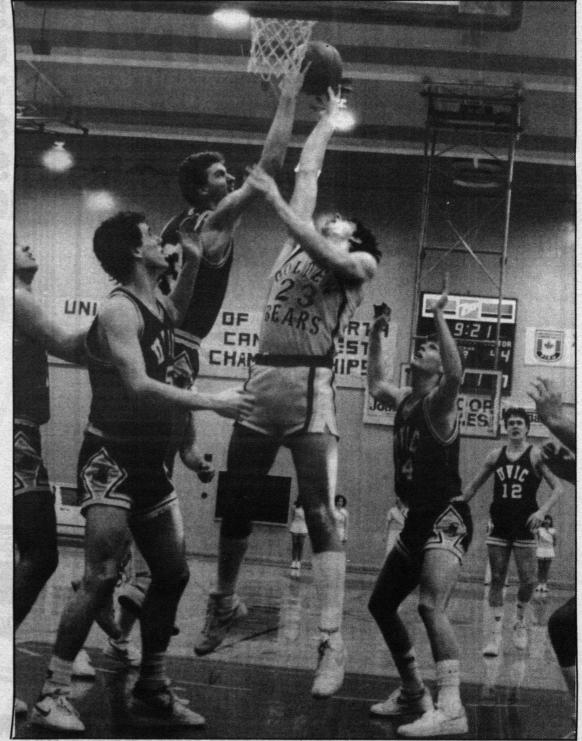
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Top: Guba the Bear generates excitement amongst the 1,000 fans in attendance at the CWUAA basketball championship. Above: Dean Peters was rejected on this play but still managed 16 points in the final.