

Funds helped in Calgary

Belanger, still calls Best Ever a "godsend."

"For any sport, turning three medals out shouldn't be the standards for the future," he says. "The thing is, that the period that has served us now has established a case for the future."

The association has gone from one qualified elite coach to five, including two full-time coaches and one for the junior national team. Research is now conducted within the association and the training season has been increased by a further six weeks, thanks to a world-class speed skating oval in Calgary. Belanger says a further five ovals are planned across the country.

The Canadian Amateur Hockey Association reports the establishment of five regional under-17 teams and a national under-18 team. The biathlon has hired two full-time coaches. And the cross-country ski team has established, among other things, a junior national team and a "jack-rabbit ski program" for six to

"This time round, we've made sure that we got the money out on time." — Pat Reid.

12-year olds.

Malcolm Hunter, executive director of the national cross-country ski team, credits the Best Ever program with the rise of his team from "the bottom of the pack of European nations to being number seven in the world." The association budget increased from \$700,000 a year in 1983 to \$1.6 million this year. "At least half of that came from Best Ever," Hunter says.

"In the early years what we were

doing was trying to produce the system rather than going for results," sums up Reid. "That was more the priority. After they got that system going, they began an accelerated program to be competitive in Calgary."

As for what would satisfy Reid as a final point tally for Canada over these two weeks, "we have to have five medals and more top-8 and top-16 placings to show the depth of the system," he says.

Canada won two silvers and three bronze medals at the Calgary Olympics.

Reid estimates Sport Canada will need around \$10 million to maintain the newly developed sports system.

Whether the program ultimately lives up to its name has become unimportant to the national sport organizations. "No question there would be less of a chance we'd be having the results we're having," says cross-country skiing's Hunter. "The support of the athlete has been so excellent, it'd be very different."



Photo: Robert O'Leary

CIAU women's hoop champions, Manitoba Bisons.

Bisons win upset final

continued from P19

"Our goal was to be in the finals," Bison forward Kim Bertholet said. "Anything else was a bonus."

Dino coach Donna Rudakas was disappointed, but said that Manitoba is "an experienced team." By contrast, the bulk of Calgary's starters are in their third year of university eligibility. Next year, Calgary

may even be more formidable.

In their quarter-final game, the Bisons, who were the number three seed at the tourney, easily defeated the Laurentian University Lady Veas 82-62.

Calgary, the number two seed defeated the hometown Lethbridge Pronghorns 65-59 in the quarter-finals, and knocked out the UPEI Panthers 73-69 to advance to the final.

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