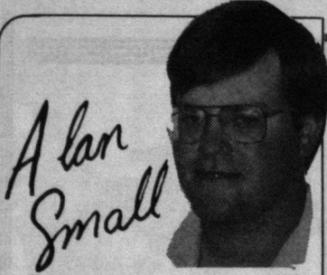


Sports

Special teams sweep the Bisons



Sunday marked the return of Guy Lafleur to Northlands Coliseum.

It amazed a lot of people that Lafleur's four assist effort against the Oilers was the most assists that he had totalled in one game in his entire career.

Of course, Lafleur was known for finishing plays, not for making them. Yes, he did have Steve Shutt, one of the league's purest scorers, to pass to, but when the Montreal Canadiens had to score a goal, it was Lafleur who did the scoring.

Lafleur's comeback has hid the fact that the Rangers did something good in the off-season. If you are a Ranger fan, you should be happy, since the Rangers are the number one club in the Patrick Division.

Last year, they could have gone for the playoffs and get smoked in the first round, but instead of forsaking some of their top notch defence, they decided to keep it in one piece. A defence of Brian Leetch, James Patrick, Michel Petit, all of which are graduates of either Canada's or America's national hockey programs, is a good future. Norm MacIver is another young prospect that can move the puck well. Add Ron Greschner, a defenceman who used to play their offensive style, to give them some leadership and experience, and you have a good young defence.

The Rangers have turfed the Kjell Samuelssons and the Willy Hubers — immobile pylons — who have dubious value behind the blueline. What they have now is better and could be the best all-around defence in the game, because they all move the puck so well. Look past the ten goals the Oilers scored on them on Sunday: they are and will be better than that.

Their forwards, like their defencemen are an interesting blend of young and old. Besides Lafleur, they also have Marcel Dionne and John Ogradnick. If both of these fellows can recapture past glories like Lafleur had, they'll be productive. They also have some young scorers like Kelly Kisio, Tony Granato and Tomas Sandstrom. Granato is one of the most surprising newcomers in the league this year.

The Rangers have a good nucleus. Will Phil Esposito, who's running the show, trade away the fine talent he has amassed? Will Michel Bergeron be able to pull rabbits out of hats like he did in Quebec?

Don't count on it. Maybe Espo can keep the team's nucleus together, but Bergeron is an overrated coach. The reason he has moved as far as he has is due to his media darling status. Bergeron is a pro at sound bites, just like Don Cherry was and still is. Talking in sound bites will keep the media hounds of New York off his heels.

by Randal Smathers
Alberta 6 Manitoba 2

The Golden Bears hockey team powered their way to a sweep over the U of Manitoba Bisons with a 6-2, largely the result of special teams play.

Manitoba coach Wayne Fleming blamed his powerplay for the loss. "We had our chances to score and didn't," he said. "Their powerplay skated better and took



the puck to the net better."

The Bisons were 0-5 on the man advantage when Alberta forward Stacey Wakabayashi scored a powerplay goal to give the Bears a 3-1 lead, on only the Bears second advantage. Wes Craig then got another goal with the teams playing four-a-side, only 2:07 later.

The powerplay struck twice more in the third to put the game away, before Manitoba finally cashed in a manpower advantage with just six seconds left. They were one for seven with the man



Doug McCarthy (R) watches the puck after he is dumped by this Bison defenceman.

advantage on the night; Alberta three for six.

The Bears first line of Wakabayashi, Sid Cranston, and Doug McCarthy scored four of the Bears

goals, and got all three powerplay markers. Coach Clare Drake said that he wasn't intending to go with just one unit. "We've got two units, but if they're rested, Sid Cranston's line goes out first," he said, "It just worked out they were usually rested just before the penalties."

Part of the reason for that is the play of the other lines, who are forcing the play. "I've been drawing a lot of penalties lately," said Craig, who was playing in his hundredth game as a Bear. "I could have been on the U of A swim team tonight," he added, referring to a couple of dives. Craig was disappointed by his lack of powerplay time, however. "They (Cranston's line) are out there so long, it would be nice if we could get two lines going on the powerplay."

Cranston, who had had a bit of a slow start by his standards, had his best home game of the year with a goal and three assists. "It felt so good out there. We had all the lines going tonight," he said. He pointed especially to the strong games some of the grinding-type players had: "Todd Gordon, Brett Cox, Rob Glasgow, all of those

guys played great."

Glasgow, who scored the first goal of the game, was also in his hundredth Bear game.

Blair MacGregor played goal in the Saturday game for the first time this year, and was strong especially in the first two periods, when the Bears were shorthanded five times. He remained his usual confident self after the game. "We weren't worried. We can beat anybody in the league," he said.

Everyone was happy to wrap up their last series before Christmas with a sweep. "We haven't swept in a month," said Craig.

"It was our best six periods of hockey this year," said Drake.

It is Christmas," said Cranston.

RED LINES — Wakabayashi, McCarthy, and Cranston were the three stars. Honorable mention goes to Glasgow, MacGregor, and defenceman **Gord Thibodeau**. The Bears are trying to arrange a game with the Canadian National Junior team between finals and Christmas. **Mike Rickert** and **Darryl Ingham** scored for the Bisons.



Bear Dan Wiebe (L) tries to jump over this Manitoba Bison.

V-Ball Bears finish fourth in tourney

by Alan Small

The Calgaryans ran the show at the North-Am volleyball tournament held this weekend at the university.

In the gold medal match the University of Calgary Alumni squad defeated the Older and Wiser team from the Calgary Volleyball Club 2-1 (10-15, 16-14, 16-14).

In the bronze medal match Calgary Fosters defeated the

Alberta Golden Bears 2-0 (15-11, 15-12).

"We took some big steps this past weekend," Bear head coach Pierre Baudin said, "we played great in the bronze medal match but they have the national teamers and they provide the extra court savvy our team didn't have."

The Bears did not fare badly in the tournament: they finished with a 4-3 mark and pressed the Fosters team on two occasions.

In the opening round, the Bears lost another 2-0 decision (15-12, 15-12) to the Fosters forcing them to use their national team members when the match was on the line.

"They pulled them off at the start," Bear coach Pierre Baudin said, "but they had to put them on at the end of the game because we would have beaten them without them."

Another bright spot for the Bears was a win over the Mad Dogs, an Edmonton based team that has preyed upon the Bears during local super league competition.

"We are starting to play at a higher level," Baudin said, "they have been beating us pretty regularly."

The Bears other wins came at

the hands of Keyano College, the Calgary Young Guns and CFB Cold Lake Hornets. The other loss the Bears incurred was at the hands of the silver medallist Older and Wiser club.

U of C Alumnus Randy Monks was named the tournament MVP on the men's side, while Bear middle blocker Todd Sommerfeld was named to the all-star team.

"He played extremely well. He was certainly the dominant middle blocker in the tourney," Baudin said.

On the women's side of the draw, the R.A.W. team from the Edmonton Volleyball Club won the gold medal with a 2-0 victory over the Red Deer College Queens (16-14, 15-9). Edmonton Red Wing won the bronze. R.A.W.'s Shelley Watson was the MVP on the women's side of the tourney.

Rob Galbraith

Paul Menzies