

Bears boast best tourney in Canada

by Mitch Paciuk

Fans who went to the U of A main gym this weekend were treated to some of the best basketball this City will ever see. The fifth annual Golden Bear Invitational basketball tournament came around again, and it featured eight of the best teams in the country.

Last week I attended a press conference at which Golden bear basketball coach Don Horwood claimed that this is the best tournament in the country, and ranks up there with the National Championships.



Ranking up there with the National Championships? I can tell you that it wasn't only me who was a little skeptical about this statement. The National Championships is what the basketball season is all about — a team will work all year to get a shot to go to that tournament, and I was a little surprised that Horwood would make that comment.

But when you stop and think about where Coach Horwood has brought this tournament from in the past five years, it really isn't that far fetched of an idea. I spoke with all eight of the coaches whose teams participated in this year's GBI, and with the exception of one who hosts his own annual tournament, every other one that I spoke with thinks this is the best tournament in the country.



For people who never get a chance to go to the Nationals, this could be an easy thing to say. But when you get Brandon head coach Ron McCutcheon saying this, you know it's true. His team was in the finals of last year's National Championships played at Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Coach McCutcheon told me that the GBI is "a first rate tournament," and that he and his players are "treated better here than anywhere else." All this is attributed to Bear's head coach Don

Horwood who is considered one of the top organizers, and someone who takes care of the little things that the players like done. For that reason, the GBI is a players tournament where they only have to worry about playing.

Everyone who knows Horwood also knows that he tends to exaggerate a bit every so often, but then again, he wouldn't be doing his job if he didn't. The fact that he is so high on the potential and quality of his team is just a reflection of his attitude that if you don't think that you're good, you won't be.

Horwood thinks that the GBI is a good tournament. He thinks that it is the best in the country. However, while everyone associates the GBI with Don Horwood, he doesn't take all the credit for the tournament's quick road to success.

Horwood has always emphasized the work that the GBI committee members have done in the preparations to insure that this tournament is the best that it can be. Taking care of all of the

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logistics allows Horwood the opportunity to concentrate on getting his team ready to play. Having a good team and the best tournament in the country gives Horwood the important tools he needs to sell the team to the public.

In Edmonton you won't do well unless you have a good program, and you won't have a good program unless you do well. It's a vicious circle, and Horwood is the type of guy who can beat it. In order for the basketball program here at the U of A to improve, it has got to make money, and in order for it to make money someone has to be able to sell it. Horwood definitely knows how to sell basketball.

Horwood has recognized that the most important job he can do with the annual GBI tournament is to make it entertaining. Taking care of the little things that make players enjoy the tournament means that they will have fun playing in it. When players on the eight teams that were here are having fun playing, there is no better basketball to be seen in the nation. Not in any other basketball tournament, and not even at the National Championships.

Sure the GBI is not the National Championships, and winning the GBI won't make you National Champions, but there is a waiting list of Universities who want to play in this tournament in the next few years, and that's going to insure that the competition level of this tournament remains the highest of any other like it. With the exception of the Saskatchewan Huskies, any team that was here last weekend can be the National Champions. What this means is that the GBI is the best basketball that Edmonton is going to be able to see.

For the first time in the history of the tournament, the GBI was a success, financially. This year had record attendance, and everyone who came was entertained. They'll be back again next year, and Horwood is going to have to make the necessary changes to the basketball program in order to show them something new and keep them interested and entertained.

But that's the easy part. The most difficult challenge that Horwood must overcome is getting the first time fan to get out and see that first game. According to the 1989 GBI attendance stats, he's making some serious progress.

Bears/Pandas face the best

**Pandas vs Dinosaurs
Bears vs Dinosaurs
Friday & Saturday, 6:30 pm, main gym.
by Ajay Bhardwaj**

The unranked U of A Golden Bear volleyball team takes to the court against the number five ranked University of Calgary Dinosaurs, who also happen to be National Champions. The two squads square off this weekend in the main gym.

The Bears did not beat the Dinosaurs last season in any of their four meetings. "I think there's a lot of motivation, coach Pierre Baudin said. "Guys who've been here for three or four years are getting tired of losing to Calgary."

The Dinosaurs have lost all but three players from last year's championship team. However, Bruce Edwards and Tom Elser will provide Calgary with good leadership.

"They have a big team," Baudin said. "We've got to block really well. We have to stop Edwards. He's a good hitter but he's very predictable." Edwards is an Edmontonian and Baudin has coached him. "I know his idiosyncracies,"

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