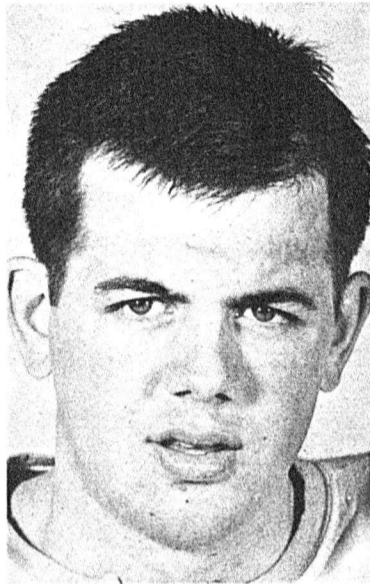


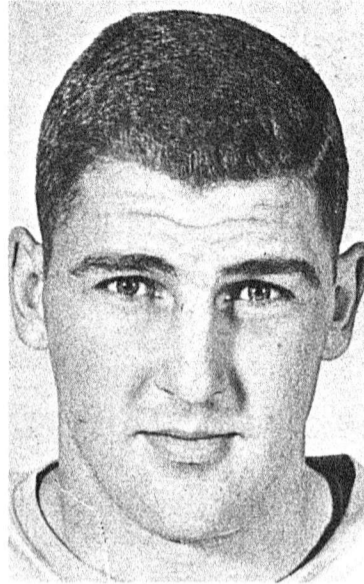
Tough series forecast for Sudbury bound Bears



AUSTIN SMITH
... bad back



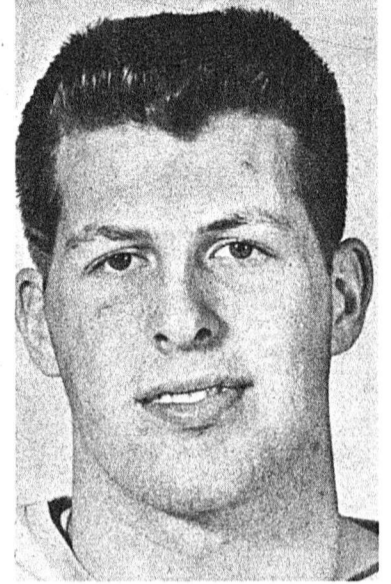
BRIAN HARPER
... cast hurts



MIKE "BASH" BALLASH
... bruised left shoulder



WILF MARTIN
... needs Sudbury goals



BOB WOLFE
... new rubber merchant

By **RICHARD VIVONE**

Sudbury is a dismal, dusty mining centre in southern Ontario which could provide the Bears with their brightest moment of the season.

Although most of the 50,000 citizens are employed in the iron or nickel works, the Bears won't be worrying about this—they will be after silver when they hit Sudbury March 4.

The University Cup will be up for grabs for the fourth time and the Bears will be looking for their second set of fingerprints on the mug, emblematic of intercollegiate hockey supremacy.

Laurentian University of Sudbury is host club and also a participating team.

Competing units include the University of Toronto Varsity Blues of the Ontario-Quebec league, St. Francis Xavier Xmen from the Maritimes, Sir George Williams

Maroons from the Ottawa-St. Lawrence group and our own Golden Bears.

Toronto and Sir George will open the event with a play-off at 8 p.m. EST, Thursday.

On Friday, St. Francis Xavier takes on the winner of that match while the Bears take on Laurentian. Game times are 7 and 9 p.m. respectively.

The two winners clash in the championship round 4 p.m. Saturday, while the losers play a consolation game for the towel trophy at 1 p.m.

According to Bear coach Drake, Laurentian, the Bear's first opponents, "Have to be considered the dark horse. We don't know anything about them and they will be playing in front of 5,000 hometown fans—this is bound to give them an extra edge."

"We can't take anything for granted, but the percentages are they won't be as strong as Toronto.

Of all the teams in the tournament, I think we're fortunate to play them first," says Drake.

The tournament is a sudden death deal. This means one loss eliminates a club from the championship round.

To come home with the riches, the champions must win two games straight, with the exception of the Blues and Sir George who must win three.

"The guys must be up for it," says Drake. "I'm counting on our veterans to come up with big games. They must provide leadership because there is a lot of pressure in these sudden death deals."

BEARS BRUISED

The Bears go into the east with a number of small hurts and a major injury.

Austin Smith, an amiable veteran who spearheaded the Bruin attack all season, has come up with a painful back and may be forced to pass up the series.

The most experienced of the Bear vets has what is termed 'a crooked vertebrae.' The injury also bothered him at this time last year.

"I've been putting off an operation until I finish school. The specialists want to do a spinal fusion on it."

Apparently, Smith has had the malfunction since childhood. He re-aggravated it after the Calgary series before Christmas.

"Some friends and I were playing on an open rink and I was pretty tired. Then the back started to act up. It was a silly thing to do but there's nothing I can do about it now."

The centre said, "I can't put any strain on my back and can't even pick up my daughter. If playing means risking permanent injury, then I won't play."

Smith won't know until early this week whether or not he can suit up.

But he is optimistic. "If I can play, believe me, I'll play because this is my last year of college competition."

A negative reply from the doctors would be a severe blow to the Bear cause.

"We'll really miss him if he can't play," says Clare Drake.

If Smith can not play, Gordon Jones will probably move into the centre slot with either Dave Zarowny, Fred McKenzie, Dan Zarowny, or Dave McDermid taking over on right wing.

Steve Kozicki has been bothered by a painful groin injury but is skating better in recent workouts. The super-charged portsider should be flying in his usual fashion by the weekend.

Brian Harper was racked up in Vancouver and has been sporting a cast on his right arm. The plaster extends from his elbow to the heel of the hand.

His shooting ability has been hampered but he has not lost any of his excellent puck handling talent.

Defenceman Mike Ballash was clobbered but good in the last game with the Huskies and bruised his left shoulder. His shooting has been sub par but looks to be coming back strong. By Sudbury time, he should be raring to belt a few.

Dave Zarowny has recovered

from a bruised spine suffered on the Vancouver trip. He missed the last Saskatchewan series and also several practices but played in Thursday's ill fated encounter with the Oil Kings.

The goaltending is as fine as ever. Bob Wolfe and Hugh Waddle, according to Drake, "are as good a combination as we've ever had."

The coach is worried about his defence corps. They have given him some hair raising experiences of late—especially in the last two Oil King clashes.

"We're going to have two tough practices next week (Monday, Tuesday) and we're going to stress defence. They have to improve if we're to win it all."

The Bears have been a potent scoring machine all season. They have averaged 5 tallies an outing not counting the Calgary fiasco—top notch power in any circuit—Martin, Harper and company have averaged 4 per game against the Manitoba Bisons who represented Canada in the University games.

Drake foresees strong performances from Martin, LeBlanc and Harper.

LeBlanc, a native easterner, will be returning with blood in his eye and a healthy thirst for the victory champagne.

Darrell was denied the toast in Kingston (1964) when he wore the colours of the University of New Brunswick.

TOUGH COMPETITION

Sizing up the opposition is a tricky task—somewhat tough too.

The calibre of play in any league is difficult to assess. Teams that are runaway champions in weak circuits die in mid flight when they meet high powered enemies. Some leagues have more tough teams than others and the winners will not have glorious records.

Drake feels that Toronto will be a formidable foe. And he could be all too right.

The Blues controlled the fine QAAA in the same fashion as the Bears dominated the west.

FARM EDITOR WANTED

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