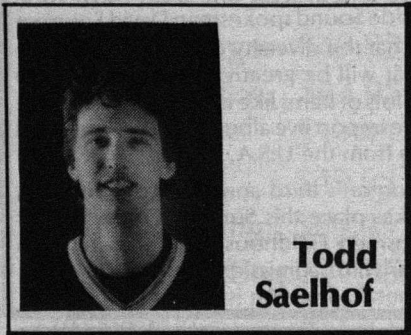


Bears place hopes in hands of rookies



Timothy Glowa — The Gauntlet



Todd Saelhof

Destiny brought the goal to Edmonton

It was destiny.

Destiny that not even the dismal day of August 9th, 1988 could change.

Destiny that not even fifteen to eighteen million in cold, hard cash could alter.

Destiny that not even a businessman named Pocklington could escape.

To the point. His 1851st. The one that moved The Great One past Mr. Hockey on the National Hockey League all-time scoring list. The one goal, number, that brought Northlands Coliseum down on Sunday night.

It had to happen here in Edmonton. It was destined to take place in Northlands.

And Wayne Gretzky did it his way. In dramatic fashion, the record breaking point came on his own goal with just 53 seconds remaining in regulation time of the Los Angeles Kings and Edmonton Oilers second 1989-'90 regular season clash.

The sheer matter of destiny was reflected in the way Gretzky

scored the goal. Typical Gretzky. Off Steve Duchesne's glove to his stick, a shot wide, off Dave Taylor's leg bouncing to the front of the net to where... Gretzky was. And Wayne (or was that Gordie) shoved the puck in. It was as if the puck had eyes. It was as if Gretzky had to score. And he did. At Northlands.

For ten years, diehard Oiler fans watched 99 perform magic on ice at Northlands. While some hated him, everybody admired his magnificence, his contribution, and his passion.

On Sunday, these same fans (some turned loyal L.A. subjects under King Wayne) cheered Gretzky on to one more record. I don't believe Wayne Gretzky wanted to register his 1851st point anywhere else but Edmonton, not even in the Great Western Forum in Glamourville U.S.A. Wayne Gretzky made it happen here.

Then, just when he had the city and our team buried deep in emotion, Gretzky brought us all

back down to earth by scoring the overtime goal to ice the night for the Los Angeles Kings.

The Great One renewed the fact that he is a villain, appropriately dressed in black and silver. Unfortunately, Gretzky doesn't work for the Oilers anymore. He wears 99 for the enemy. He knows it, we know it, and the Oilers have to live with it.

But it was nice to once again pay respects to a person who was the heart of Edmonton for a decade. It was only one night, one game of eighty. And for those who would rather have had Wayne pick up point 1851 elsewhere, it would not have happened. Gretzky was destined twelve years ago for Northlands, and once again Sunday night.

Forget the speeches. Forget the gifts. Because in one brief moment, the entire spirit of Oiler hockey was summed up perfectly Sunday. The moment Wayne and Mark, the two captains and life long friends, embraced at center ice.

by Jay O'Neill

Injuries have depleted the football Bears' offensive backfield. Therefore, the team has placed its playoff drive in the hands of two freshman quarterbacks and a rookie running-back for Saturday's home game against the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds.

A win over the T-Birds would guarantee the Bears their first playoff appearance since 1987. Leading the Bears will be rookie quarterback Robert Taylor and Mike Kolodnicki who will share the quarterbacking duties against the T-Birds because of the injury to starting quarterback Jeff Steinberg. Steinberg is still suffering from back spasms that occurred in the fourth quarter against Calgary on October 2nd.

Runningback Kris Thorsteinson hurt his knee and is questionable for this weekend's game. He is waiting to get the green light from team doctors, although he is doubtful he will suit up against the T-Birds. Before his injury, he was a mainstay in the Bears' running attack. He had 239 yards on 41 carries for an average of 5.8 yards per carry.

Thorsteinson will be replaced by another rookie, Robin Mead. Mead is currently fifth in rushing in the CWUAA with 245 yards on 53 carries for an average of 4.6 yards per carry. Head Coach Jim Donlevy isn't worried if Thorsteinson can't play because the rushing game won't miss a beat with Mead playing.

Receivers' Coach Gino Fracas is pleased with the progress that his two rookie quarterbacks, Taylor and Kolodnicki, have shown this year, but he didn't want to see them start so soon.

"Both have good arms and are

good athletes. Sometimes you have to throw people in too soon (and it's too soon right now for them. I wanted to see them wear into it slowly," Fracas said.

Although both freshmen saw action in last week's game against Manitoba, they were making mistakes that inexperienced players make. Fracas mentioned both quarterbacks had problems dealing with the blitz and this caused them to hurry their passes. The quarterbacks and receivers also had problems with their timing.

To correct these problems, the offence will be shaped around which quarterback is in. "We're experimenting and I think there will be a few little different things to accommodate their styles," Fracas said.

When Kolodnicki is in, the offence will cater to his strength. "We have a little more drop back stuff as opposed to rolling out because I'm more of a drop back passer," Kolodnicki said.

This drop back style is new to the Bears offensive thinking because the opposition has not seen the Bears use it this year.

The main part of their offence is oriented around a roll out type quarterback. Taylor will run this style of offence when he is at the helm. "Rob gives a little different complexion than Mike does," Donlevy said, referring to Taylor's ability to run.

Kolodnicki knows the importance of this game and what he and Taylor have to do. "If we win this game that pretty well guarantees us a playoff spot. So it's up to me and Rob (Taylor) and the offence to pick it up a little bit to make sure everything is executing," Kolodnicki said.

Hockey opener

**Bears vs. Bobcats
Varsity Arena, 7 pm Friday and
Saturday
by Ajay Bhardwaj**

The Golden Bear hockey team plays host to the University of Brandon Bobcats this weekend in what should be an easy four points for the Bears.

The Bears enter the series as the only undefeated team in Canada after one weekend of play.

"There's one thing that we've learned and that's that there is nobody in this league that you can take for granted," assistant coach Peter Esdale said. Even then, the Bears hammered the Bobcats 16-1 at the Empress Cup in Calgary earlier last month. "When you start playing for points it's a little different," Esdale said.

The Bears outscored the Bobcats 37-12 last year in four games. "That concerns me a little bit," Esdale said, referring to outscoring Brandon. "It might well be 11-1 for us in Lethbridge but it wasn't."

The Bears' major concern this weekend will be to do the same things they usually do. "We're not going to worry about Brandon," Esdale said. "We want Brandon to worry about us. We're going to go after them. That means shift in, shift out we have to be consistent."

On the bench: Defenceman Gord Thibodeau, who was diagnosed as having Hodgkins disease, may play this weekend against the Bobcats. He's been practicing with the team. "It's up to coach Moores," Thibodeau said.

Field Hockey squad gambling on wild card

by Todd Saelhof

Ranked sixth in Canada heading into the biggest weekend of the season, the University of Alberta field hockey Pandas look to hold position for the right to claim the second and final wild card invitation for the CIAU National Championships.

Basically, the top six ranked teams nationwide advance to the playoffs beginning November 3rd in Toronto. The Pandas plan to claw through the final four games of CWUAA competition this weekend in Victoria to retain at least a sixth place standing.

To accomplish that, Panda coach Dru Marshall is not scheming any

systematic changes from tourney two's strong performance.

"If we win two of four and play well, I would be 90% confident we would be the other wild card berth," said an enthusiastic Marshall. The room for doubt depends on perennially successful University of New Brunswick, currently ranked seventh, can outperform opponents in the Atlantic Conference. The number eight University of Calgary Dinosaurs and a ninth ranked University of Guelph team also have outside shots at harnessing the last playoff slot.

The two victories Marshall emphasizes as "needy" are again versus the unranked University of Manitoba Bisons and the pesky Dinos. Alberta battles both teams Sunday

before returning to Edmonton to await national results.

"If we don't win our two games against Calgary and Manitoba, we won't be going anywhere," Marshall said.

Indeed without those four points, the Pandas would have to come up with Herculean efforts against the two British Columbia hockey squads. Both the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds and the host University of Victoria Vikettes have all but received formal invitations to the National Championships in Toronto. The mail in question should arrive Monday following the weekend of hockey action.

"We play UVic and UBC for the

tie. We play a very defensive style," Marshall said.

The Pandas do battle with the Canada West leading Vikettes the second game Saturday following a preceding matchup with the T-Birds.

"Traditionally, the second game is our very best," Marshall said. Alberta once again hopes to give the host team a tough contest, similar to last weekend's last minute loss. Marshall, however, realizes UVic, along with UBC, will have the upper hand this weekend playing on familiar grass in Victoria. The Pandas may be the most disadvantaged team on natural surface, but Marshall is counting on two solid grass practices to prepare her troops.

Apart from surface difficulties,

though, Marshall is "excited about the weekend," realizing a trip to Hometown November 3rd could realistically be only four solid games away.

Panda captain Bev Wolfert also agrees that the Nationals are within reach, but understands that team discipline is essential.

"To be successful we have to play as a team and implement the game plan that the coach gives us," the Panda captain said.

PANDA PAST: The Pandas have not been in the National Championships since 1980. At the time, current Panda coach Dru Marshall was striker for the U of A squad. The same year saw Marshall lead Canada West in goal scoring.