

Two jobs for defenceman Draper

Alan Small



It's Kitzbuhel weekend, which mean "disaster-on-skis": people like myself can enjoy watching athletes who have skied a million times more often, and a million times better, go flying down the hill in reckless abandon, and often doing face-plants that would make mine pale in comparison.

You see, the Hahnenkamm (that's what the annual race is named) is on the toughest downhill course in the world, and makes these hot-doggers ski to survive. The one that can do so the fastest wins.

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It is interesting to see that the Calgary Dino hockey team has dug up Al Hryniuk to play goal for them in the second half. It seems every year, they pull up Hryniuk or a Grant McPhail, or a Ken Trousdell at the half-way mark from out of nowhere and he gets them to the finals of Canada West. Look for Peter Fry to do the lion's share of their goaltending however, for he has one of the quickest glove hands west of the Pecos.

Saskatchewan wishes it had Calgary's goaltending problems, for the only experienced goalie they had at the beginning of the year, Greg Holtby, has graduated and has hung up the pads in favor for some overalls. Looks like he will be helping out at the family farm.

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It's hard not to notice that the bookies have jumped on the NFC bandwagon and picked the 49ers to hammer the Bengals. The best line (or worst, it matters on your perspective) has the Bay boys a full converted touchdown ahead of Cincinnati.

One of the most ugly incidents of the NFL playoffs had to do with the Bengals' no-huddle offence. The NFL outlawed it for one game, and it nearly cost the Bengals the game, for they could only use a conventional offence.

When your offence isn't up to snuff, teams must employ every advantage possible or the whole team will end up in oblivion — or Kansas City, which ever is worse. They didn't curtail the forward pass when it was introduced. They didn't stop the Statue of Liberty play (whatever it is).

The no-huddle offence adds a wrinkle to the freshly pressed shirt of a game that the NFL is. If a team decided always to end a game with a play, the NFL would legislate against that too. It's always more exciting to watch the teams trundle off the field while the network rolls the credits.

I'll take the Bengals and the seven points, but I might not watch it. It'll be a boring game anyway. Oh ya. What is a 49er? Is it someone who keeps lying about their age when they pass 50?

by Randy Provencal

Every player on the Golden Bears hockey club has a job to do. Howie Draper figures he has two.

Number one: as a senior player, he should provide a certain amount of leadership and pass his experience on to younger Bears.

Number two: he is a defense-oriented defenseman. One of those guys people tend to acknowledge as 'a solid blueliner' and 'somebody who just does his job.'

These roles weren't cast on Draper by chance. They are duties he has taken upon himself over the years.

To some, a player who doesn't make the pretty play or score the hat trick... well, just aren't glamorous. To others who appreciate defensive gems, he's a diamond in the rough.

"I think that, sure, there's that

"I kind of realized that my hands weren't as soft as I thought they were." — Draper

aspect that the Golden Bears are known for their go-getters and the pretty guys on the ice," Draper said. "But I think they're also known for the attitude and the hard workers.

"As you look back at the guys like Jeff Helland and Jack Patrick, there were never guys who got a lot of points, they weren't on the powerplay that much. Yet they were just as important as every other guy on the team because they gave 110 percent everytime they were on the ice.

"It comes down to the roles thing in hockey. I'm not in the limelight by any means," he said. "I know that. But I have my job to do. It's important that rookies notice that and take on that kind of attitude."

No doubt, Draper isn't the biggest scoring threat on the Bears. In fact, he has only five regular season goals in his four years on the point for the Bears. That worries him very little.



Dave Hingley and the hockey Bears travel down to Lethbridge this weekend to harass the Horns.

"I've never really considered myself much of a goal scorer or point getter," Draper said with a laugh.

But, in his younger years, things were a lot different.

"Back in minor hockey I was what you'd call an offensive defenseman and I'd move the puck a lot more," he recalled. "But once I started playing with the more proficient hockey players, I kind of realized that my hands weren't as soft as I thought they were.

"Cement hands is what they call it."

The transition from head manning the puck out of his end to staying back while his defensive partner was up ice wasn't an overnight transition for Draper. "It was a gradual change, I suppose," he said.

The fourth year Physical Education student doesn't play on

the powerplay much, but often is called on to kill penalties. "From that, I can gauge what my role is on the team. It's something you have to work out for yourself as the years go on," he noted.

Before coming to the Bears in 1985-86, Draper played junior for the Sherwood Park Crusaders of the AJHL. In his rookie year with the Bears, the team went on to take the CIAU championship. It is a time that Draper treasures.

"It was a really great experience. Everyone strives for championships in their own sport; it was just the thrill of my life — to this point anyway."

On that team there were leaders. If the Bears are fortunate enough to make it that far again, the team can count on Draper for his leadership skills.

I think my role is that person everyone can look up to as a hard worker. And this year I think I'm

starting to take on more of a leadership role, and hopefully I'm passing on what I've learned — as far as the Golden Bear work ethic — on to the new players coming in," he explained.

This is Draper's first year wearing the 'A' on his jersey — something he tries to play down.

"You look at a lot of the other guys around the room, like Grant Couture and Gord Thibodeau... there's a lot of leaders on this team and just because I have a letter doesn't necessarily mean that's my role alone to take," he pointed out.

While playing on the Bears is serious business to Draper, he maintains that things shouldn't be too serious all the time.

"In my position (as assistant captain) this year it's important that I relate well to the other players, and hopefully if they have a problem then they can look up to me as someone they can approach.

"In order to develop that kind of rapport it's important to look at everyone on a one-to-one basis; that everyone is on the same level, and just have a good time."

Draper is expecting better things from the team in the second half of the season. "I think we're really starting to jell as a team," he said. "In the last couple of practices we've really started to come together. And the work ethic is there, too, which is something we were missing in the first half of the season. Now everyone is going 100 percent every practice, which is good."

But he emphasizes that better defense is a must if the Bears are to make a run at another national championship.

If the Bears win it all, "that'll be the icing on the cake," Draper said. Especially if he manages to stay conscious for it. In 1985-86, Draper was knocked out before the Bears claimed the title.

That will be nice. IF the Bears can do it again.

"No, we like to say when," he smiled. "We like to be a little more positive."

Smith banged up but still playing

by Alan Small

Mark Smith is a basketball survivor.

The 6'6" Bear forward sat on the sidelines for two years with the Golden Bears during the Bear glory years, and after a stint with Mount Royal College, plays the role that Mark Baker did last season for the Bears: play between five and fifteen minutes per game and play great defence. Smith has filled that role well during the first half of the 88-89 campaign.

"I learned a lot from guys like Mike Suderman and Dean Peters when I was here the first time," Smith, an arts student said. "I have to do a lot of rebounding. I'm a big guy, and that's what we're supposed to do."

"He's a role player for us,"

Bear head coach Don Horwood said. "He has an outstanding attitude. He wasn't sure if he could keep up the commitment to the program because of his knees, but he's played through it."

Smith left the U of A hoop program when he was felled by chronic pain in both knees. After redshirting a year, he went down to Mount Royal to test his knees out in the less demanding ACAC hoop game.

"We had a pretty talented team. We had a couple of players that could play university calibre basketball," Smith said.

After helping the Cougars to the ACAC regular season championship, Smith came back to Alberta, but he hasn't left his injury problems behind.

"He runs kind of funny," Horwood said. "You don't know if he runs that way because of his knees, or that his knees hurt because he runs that way. What came first, the running style or the knees? He plays in pain all the time."

When he came to the U of A for the second time, both he and Horwood weren't sure of how valuable he could be for the Bears. While he hasn't shot the lights out, he has done the important things that often go unnoticed under the U of A basket.

"He's given us a lot of valuable time so far," Horwood said. "More than I thought he'd get, and more than I think he thought he'd get. If you do a good job on this team, you keep doing a job."

Smith notices a change in the atmosphere on the Bear club of today as compared to two or three years ago.

"We seem to be having a lot more fun that we did back then," Smith stated. "We had to play through a lot of adversity at the beginning, because we only have ten men playing."

To compound his injury problems, Smith also sprained his left wrist in a game against the Lethbridge Pronghorns. He still wears tape on his hand to keep it from getting any worse. However, it isn't getting any better.

"It's not my shooting hand, so it doesn't really bother me much," said Smith about the tape job. "Every time I play it I hurt it again, but there's only a couple months left in the season, so I'm not going to take much time off for it."

Rob Galbraith