

Hail! Champions will now defend

by Blaine Ostapovich and Mark Spector

It will be a difficult task for the 1986-87 edition of the Golden Bear hockey team to match the success that they enjoyed last season. Alberta went 40-16-0 on the year, the second highest number of wins ever by a Golden Bear team. The team placed first in the Canada West University Athletic Association over the regular season, and after suffering an upset at the hands of the Saskatchewan Huskies, went on to win their seventh CIAU championship.

Team honors were many on this year, as the Golden Bears set a new CWUAA record scoring 173 goals, eclipsing the old mark of 166 which was also held by an Alberta squad. They won their own Golden Bear Invitational tournament, as well as being victorious at the University of Saskatchewan Classic.

Alberta opens their 74th season at home this weekend against the UBC Thunderbirds with games on Friday and Saturday at 7:30 p.m. With a few new players, a new score clock, and new uniforms, here are your 1986-87 Alberta Golden Bears hockey team.

Forwards

The forward ranks of the Golden Bears' hockey squad may have been the most difficult to crack this season. Following a CIAU championship year and no players leaving because of graduation, it created a situation where only four newcomers made the team.

In coach Drake's scheme of things, look for the rookies to be paired alongside a pair of veterans.

Dennis Cranston will be the first line center. A rugged and versatile player, Cranston led the team in scoring and was a first team Canada West All-Star. The CIAU tournament MVP will suit up alongside sniper Stacey Wakabayashi who scored 16 goals in 18 Canada West contests a year ago. Todd Stokowski is the other winger on this line. He is a first year player who played last season in Red Deer.

Line two sees Sid Cranston centering Curtis Brandolini and rookie Rob Glasgow. The elder Cranston is a playmaker who is also returning from knee surgery. Brandolini is a tough hard-working third year player, while Glasgow is a 17-year old rookie that Drake says has some "potential offensively."

Next is three veterans: the unit of Dave Otto, Craig Dill, and Jack Patrick. They can do it all, with Otto

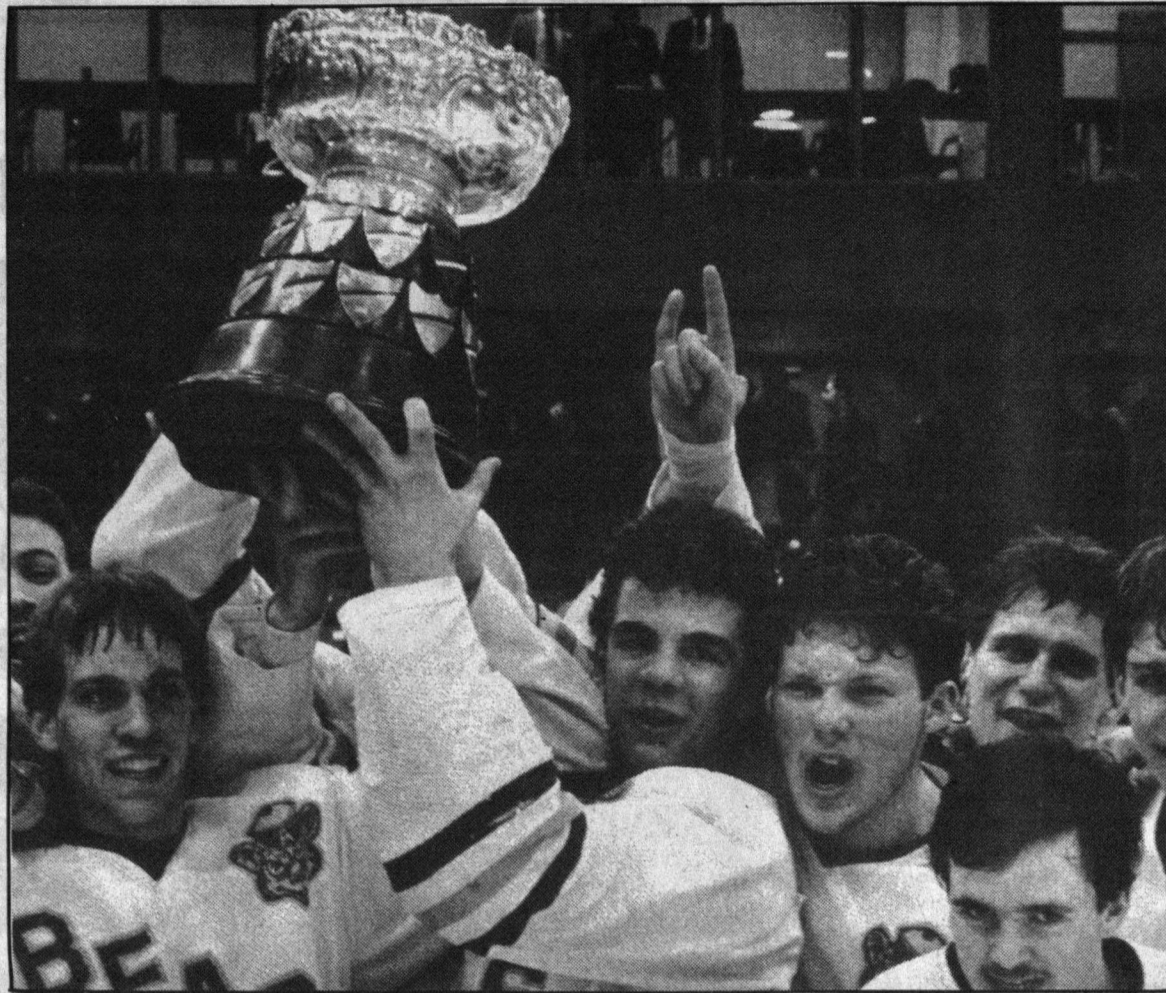


photo Leif Stout

and Patrick also killing penalties. Dill led the team in goal scoring with 20 tallies, while Otto averaged an assist per game. Dill led the team in power play goals last year and Patrick is an A1 pot-stirrer.

The remaining forwards vary in the roles they will play, however. Drake says that he prefers that roles develop rather than assign players to them.

Wes Craig is a first year player that Drake says, of all the new players, has the best touch around the net. Bret Walter returns for his second season after stints with the New York Rangers and the Canadian Olympic Team. He can be dominant at times, and is just 18-years old.

Veteran Jeff Helland is a strong skater who had an outstanding championship series, while Denis LeClair is another veteran who was bothered by injuries a year ago. He has good size and will work penalty killing duty. Fifth-year senior Bill Ansell currently has a shoulder injury should be out for three weeks. Ansell is an offensive threat with a good shot. Todd Gordon is the last of the rookies hurt early in camp; he remains a question mark.

All in all, the forwards look like a

solid lot. Last year they averaged over six goals a game and 40 shots a contest. Losing Al Tarasuk (Springfield), Shaun Clouston (Portland), Gerald Koebel (Cdn Olympic Program), and John Lamb (Bears football), it may be a tall order to fill on offense, but coach Drake seems to have done just that.

Defense

The Golden Bears' defensive corps was devastated over the summer with the loss of five starters: team captain, Ron Vertz (retired), sturdy Colin Chisholm (Springfield of the AHL), Eric Thurston (Germany), D.J. Havrelock (Seattle, WHL), and Gerald Koebel (Olympics).

With the only two returnees being sophomores, Howie Draper and Steve Cousins, the blueline looks, at first glance, to be weak. Well, although it is not weak, Clare Drake's defensive corps is somewhat of a question mark.

Steve Cousins came to the Bears from the Red Deer College Kings last season and despite a slow start which was partly due to a wrist injury, blossomed into Alberta's most improved player on defense. The 22-year old Kamloops native weighed in at 6'3", 200 lbs. last year, but has done extensive weight train-

ing over the summer and bulked up considerably. His progress will be closely marked by the Washington Capitals, who selected him in the supplementary college draft of this fall. He began to move the puck well in 85-86 and should develop into a solid force on defense.

Howie Draper tailed off somewhat last season, but should bounce back this year. At 5'10", 160 lbs., the ex-Sherwood Park Crusader must use his good skating ability to his own advantage this year, carrying the puck more in order to gain some much needed confidence.

In losing Eric Thurston, Alberta lost that much needed skating defenseman. In getting Parie Proft back from the Olympic program they solved that problem. Proft played for the Bears two years ago before going to the Vancouver Canucks and then to the Oly's. He is an excellent skater who will move the puck out of the zone single-handedly, while committing precious few giveaways in the defensive zone. He will be a leader.

The strongest real newcomer to the Golden Bear fold is ex-NAIT blueliner Dean Clark. The extra large stay-at-home defenseman will add much needed steadiness to the Bears' defense, and should see action alongside Proft, making Proft's offensive excursions all the

more possible.

Darwin Bozek, Brent Severyn, and Jeff Lawson (all rookies) round out the blueline corps. Bozek, yet another Red Deer College product, is a sure-handed 20-year old who is, at worst, a steady defenseman. With some maturity he will see plenty of ice time as the year progresses. Severyn is a big, tough guy out of Seattle of the WHL. He racked up his share of penalties there and, if he can learn the ways of the Canadian university game, will be a valuable asset. Especially when the going gets tough. Lawson is the youngest Golden Bear at 17, but has some tier II Junior experience in Ontario. Drake will keep him around to try to tap some of his abundant potential.

Goalies

At this point last season, goal-tending was a serious concern for the Bears' coaching staff. Now, a year later, it still is.

The Bears' number one man, Darren Turner, will pass up at least the first half of this year to concentrate on his studies, leaving behind little experience between the Alberta pipes.

Second year man John Krill came on strong in '86, after being allowed to break in slowly behind the solid work of Turner. This year, the load falls on his shoulders to do the work while backup Brian Harley sheds a little green.

Krill fills the net at 6'1/2", but like the rest of the goalies didn't enjoy a good early part of training camp. He came on strong, though, posting a shutout against the Huskies in the Golden Bear tourney and playing well at the U of S Classic. There's no doubt that he's capable of doing the job, but the question is whether or not he will.

And if he can't, the Bears may be in trouble. Pre-Med student Brian Harley enjoyed a couple of stellar performances in the pre-season, but then came down to earth with a shaky start in Saskatoon. Like all young goalies, he can be great one minute and very average looking the next. It is a fair bet, however, that should Alberta be forced to lay their hopes at his feet, they won't be favorites for another national crown.

Drake is keeping Nadr Jomha around, as he suffered a pulled groin in the pre-season and hasn't seen any action. He will have to stand on his head to unseat Harley, especially with the possibility of Turner's return.

☐ Theories of Relativity: II

But I think that it can be said with certainty that the form which does emerge cannot be greater than the content which went into it. For form is only the manifestation, the shape of content.

Ben Shahn

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