

Reflections on 'Big T'

Hard work is the key to Tom Solyom's success in basketball.

The highest scorer in Edmonton high school basketball history, Tom is a starting guard on the Alberta Golden Bears.

But sometimes his desire to succeed on the court has caused some headaches.

Like in the first game he ever played in the seventh grade at St. Catherine's school in junior high school.

"I was anxious because they didn't let me play too much," recalls Solyom. Somebody passed the ball and it hit me in the head. Then I turned around and put it in my own basket."

Even now, when he misses a basket, he tries to rectify the situation by shooting more. Occasionally he overlooks a teammate with a better chance to score.

"Tom doesn't get mad at anyone but himself," says coach Bob Bain. You have to keep his poise. We had a deal that anytime he got mad, he'd owe me a milkshake. We had to stop it because he was going broke."

Tom's style of play is spectacular. He scores mostly on high leaps into the air. Snapping his wrists, he sends the ball floating on a high arc towards the basket. The crowd roars when the net dances and waves as the spinning orb passes through it.

His shooting prowess once earned him the nickname "T for two". Now, his comrades call him "Big T."

"One on one, Tommy's probably the best man we've got," says Bain. "You can't stop the jump shot unless you get lucky." The ease with which he takes the shot and his tendency to control the ball gives some fans the notion Tom is a show-off.

"Maybe I am," answers Tom. "I just want to be somebody. People know me. I like that feeling. Fans really make the game. They make you play a lot harder."

Last year, his first as a Bear, Tom averaged 9.2 points a game under coach Barry Mitchelson. This season, Tom is scoring 12 points a game and is improving steadily on defence.

"He's probably the hardest worker out there," says Bain.

One drill Bears use in practice involves jumping benches.

"Most guys straddle just one bench. Tommy's out there straddling two benches after a full two hours of practice."

He began his illustrious high school hoop career in Grade 11 at O'Leary. He averaged 10 points a game and during the following summer he spent countless hours at the U of A dribbling and shooting baskets. He came under the critical eye of Bear centre Warren Champion.

"He told me I'd never be a good player, says Solyom. "He helped me, though, because he pointed out my mistakes."

Solyom practised at home during the day then, for two or three hours a night he worked out with some of the Golden Bears.

"I improved my left hand and jump shots. It was a cakewalk when I went back to high school."

In his final year he set his scoring record of 431 points in a season 30.8 average and made the first all-star team. He also set a single-game record with 48 points against Harry Ainley.

"It was the greatest event of my life. I was fouled and sank

two free throws. Then with 30 seconds left, something told me I was going to steal the ball. Sure enough I got the ball and broke the record with a lay-up."

Later in the season, Mike Frisby, then with Jasper Place High, scored 52 points.

Tom sacrificed a year of eligibility at Alberta to accept an athletic scholarship at University of Puget Sound in Tacoma. It is a private school with a student enrollment of 2200.

He played only four exhibition games there and came back to Edmonton at Christmas.

"I became super-depressed. I didn't know anyone. I didn't have a car. I would have been a better player if I had stayed, but I'm playing a lot more here."

Solyom would seem to agree with the late Vince Lombardi's notion that "winning isn't everything, it's the only thing."

"I am really happy to win. That's why I get frustrated on the court."

And it's also why he's the Bears' holler guy both on and off the court. Even when he is disappointed with his own play, Tom is the loudest cheerleader on the bench.

"He's turned into quite a team leader," comments Bain. Especially at practices, he's always talking and yelling."

There is still one exultation basketball hasn't provided him.

"I've never been on a championship team. It may take some breaks but I think we can do it."

Tom's other personal goals are also related to basketball.

One is to play on Canada's national team in the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal. Tom would like to play professionally in Europe before the Games.

"Mike Frisby is going to do that too. He'll make it unless he has a serious injury. It'll be tough for me. They can get guys like myself for a dime a dozen."

Tom also hopes to make an all-star team in his last year of college ball.

Looking to the more immediate future, Tom seems content to have his basketball skills.

"I have been disappointed in my play. I know I can't walk through people, but I can score more. I can play a lot better."

Women's intramurals

A lighter side of University studies got under way last Monday night as the second term of the Women's Intramural Program opened with volleyball.

It goes at 7 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays until Jan. 30 when the finals take place.

Saturday, bowling will take to the lanes at S.U.B. from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Due to the lack of competitors, the originally scheduled time was dropped. Sign-ups are being accepted at the Women's Intramural Office, Physical Education Building, and will also be accepted at the bowling lanes on Saturday.

Also, the squash and racketball ladders are in effect at present.

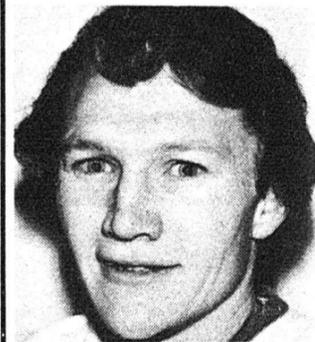
In the race to the Rosebowl Trophy, Apathy is maintaining the lead with 208 points but is closely pursued by Lower Kelsey with 199 points. Agriculture has dropped from second to third spot, 17 points behind Lower Kelsey and 40 points in front of Kappa Alpha Theta. bb



"Big T" demonstrates his patented jump shot.

Photo by Peter Johnston

Bears' player of the week



Dave Couves

"Dave told me the other night he's never scored more than two goals in one game," revealed hockey coach Clare Drake. Saturday against U of Victoria Vikings, Couves scored four goals and picked up four assists besides which enabled him to polevault into first place in league scoring.

Couves is an exceptionally good checker. In a one on one situation, he's almost impossible to get past. Especially talented at forcing the other team to make mistakes in their own end, he's also quick to capitalize on the resulting scoring opportunities.

"What can I say about Dave?" ponders linemate Gerry LeGrandeur. "He's just a really hard worker, an excellent skater. He's always got his head up. He's good to play with—it you're in the open, he'll get the puck to you. He hardly ever loses a face-off. He won that one for us in Vancouver when we needed it."

The 24-year old centre, a fourth-year physical education student, was named to the WCIAA second all-star team in 1971-72 as well as the Canada Student Games team. Drake considered him one of the best defensive forwards in the games game.

Pandas typify trend in gymnastics

Those women striving to achieve equality with men can forget about gymnastics.

Judging from the record, females of the species are superior in the sport that requires strength but also grace and poise.

"There are many other sports much easier to compete in for men," says Sandra Hartley, the former Olympic performer who coaches the Pandas. Last year, her first at U of A, she guided them to the national championships.

Hockey could be the biggest villain in their takeover of gymnastics.

"Women don't have other sports, such as hockey and football. They are more related to gymnastics."

This trend, according to Miss Hartley, is apparent across Canada.

Francis Tally, coach of the U of A men's team, wasn't about to argue. "The girls are doing much better than the guys, which is a turnabout from three years ago," the men won the national title in 1969.

Both women's and men's teams competed in trials last weekend in the gymnastics room of the Physical Education Building.

The trials provided the gymnasts with competition in preparation for the next six weekends of dual-meets. Positions on the two teams were mostly decided prior to the trials.

It appears Pandas will have to function without Lerika Svatek, who was sidelined last summer from Munich Games with a

broken elbow. Though Miss Svatek is still unable to straighten her arm, Miss Hartley claims she would be Pandas' top scorer.

A most pleasant surprise has been Joan Richardson, the

junior gymnastic champion of Alberta in 1971.

"Joan is very young so it isn't too late for international competition."

Other newcomers to the women's squad are Barbara Rutherford, Irene Werner and Dagny Hill. Miss Rutherford was a member on the Manitoba provincial team while Miss Hill, a former British Columbia junior champion, didn't compete in 1972 due to an injury.

Beth Fane returns from last year's group.

The men's team is led by the twin-brother act of Dale and Darryl O'Brien. Both plan to compete for positions on the Canadian team in the world university games this summer in Moscow.

Other members of the team are Gordon Osborne and Colin Lorbach, and two juniors, Ian Kirkpatrick and Dave Woo.

Alberta hosts University of Calgary in a dual meet this weekend.

Phi Deltas take hockey crown

On Thursday night, Dec. 7, 1972, Phi Delta Theta 'A' captured the Division I Hockey title, with a 4-1 victory over Geology. Greg Hawkins of Geology and Norm Robblee of the Phi Deltas traded first period goals and then Keith Fraser and Doug McLeod knocked in second period goals. John Cuthbertson rounded out the scoring for Phi Deltas with a goal in the 3rd period. Goal tenders Brian Rimmer of the Phi Deltas and Gary Dupoy of Geology both came up with big saves but Dupoy just had too many shots to handle. Geology reached the final with a 2-1 win over Medicine while the Phi Deltas beat Upper Res. 2-0. Phi Deltas went through their league and playoffs undefeated. And for all but two of their games they had the maximum fifteen players dressed.

Now Division II and III Hockey is in full swing and it is time to make a few predictions. The Non-Skating Leagues have really increased in popularity and credibility and the Intramural Department is considering charging admission for these games. The defending champion, Lambda Chi Alpha, is

back but Recreation 'D' and St. Joe's 'F' have great promise. In Division III, the early nod would have to go to either Medicine 'F' or Education 'E'. Last years Division II Hockey Champion was Phys. Ed 'B'. This year they will be carrying the A.A.A. 'B' banner and should meet Law 'B' in the final.

Deadlines:
Tues, Jan. 16, 1:00 p.m. — men's racquetball, and three on three basketball.

Wed, Jan 17, 1:00 p.m. — Co-rec badminton.

Co-rec Inertube Waterpolo starts Wednesday evening (7:00 p.m.), Jan. 17, in the West Pool. Entries closed yesterday and the powers appear to be "The New Beavers", "The Seven Virgins", and "The Hairy Hobnobs". This years action is guaranteed to be fierce.

This weeks "Participant of the Week" is Ed Ezergailes of Delta Upsilon. Ed played for his D.U. 'B' hockey team last Sunday when they lost a 5-4 squeaker to St. Joe's 'C'. Monday evening Ed scored 16 points to lead his D.U. Basketball team to a 29-14 victory over Varsity Christian Fellowship.