



# Poitras's peerless predictions

by **Bernie Poitras**

Well, it's that time again. You know, the annual rite performed on the sports page where the writer is supposed to tell you exactly where each team will finish in the conference. The proverbial going-out-on-a-limb and risking-public embarrassment column, a.k.a. — The Predictions Column.

Some writers expect you to take their word as if it were in stone — a sort of "ten commandments guide" to picking a winner. Some use formulas so complex that only a math major could comprehend them.

Some claim clairvoyance as their second hobby, and then try to prove that they could never be wrong. Others, however, are less prophetic; they just outright guess.

But, at the Gateway, we do things a bit differently than those other scribes; we simply collect the facts and make the best predictions we can, letting you decide whether or not the choices are valid ones.

So, without further prolonging the inevitable, here are the 1984-85 CIAU hockey picks for the Canada West Conference:

If history repeats itself, the **U of Alberta Golden Bears** will finish third as they did in the 1980-81 season after winning the Canada West title. But, chances are history will not repeat itself; 24 returning players and one of the winningest coaches in college hockey will make sure of that.

On paper, the Bears look to have their strongest team in years. Head coach Clare Drake has a wealth of experienced players to work with, and has lost only one player from last year's western regional championship squad — captain and defenseman Dan Peacocke.

In goal, Ken Hodge, named to the all-Canadian and Canada West first

all-star teams last year, and backup Kelly Brooks are back to defend their goals against title of 59 goals in 24 games. No one alive can doubt the Bears have the best one-two combination in the conference.

The word on defence this year for the Bears is big — big and mobile, as five of the seven returning defencemen are over six feet tall. stalwarts Tim Krug, Ron Vertz and Colin Chisholm are back, as is Parie Proft, who just may be the best transition defenceman in the conference. Sophomore John Winter is also expected to fit in this year; he maintained spot duty last season.

Leading the forwards back for another season are: conference scoring champion Rick Swan; linemates Bill Ansell and Dave Souch; hard workers Perry Zapernick and Joey Engert; smooth skating Breen Neeser, who was seventh in conference scoring last year; and John Reid, who had an impressive first half a year ago.

The only weak spot facing the Bears this year might be over-confidence, but considering the Clare Drake is at the helm, that's unlikely. Look for the Bears to lead wire-to-wire, and that's why I pick them to finish in first place with a 21-3 record.

If it was another year or another universe, the **U of Saskatchewan Huskies** might be looking towards finishing first, but because of the strength of the Bears, the Huskies will just have to settle for playing in their shadow. Head coach Brent McEwen will have, at most, 13 returnees from last year's 14-10 club, which will provide him with enough of a nucleus to build around.

Key returnees are goalies Terry Moroz and Owen Felske; defencemen Reid Williams, Gord Tait, Brent Hamilton and Tim Leier; and for-

wards Denis Fenske, Arden Knoll, Bruce Keller and Marc Chartier.

Reports from Saskatoon indicate that Owen Felske will probably end up as backup to newcomer Ross McKay, who seems to have impressed the Huskies' coach staff enough to land him the starting job.

On defence the Huskies will sorely miss conference first all-star team blueliner Peter Anholt, but rookie Wally Niewchach, a junior last year with Prince Alberta, is expected to eventually fill his shoes. Williams and Hamilton lead a stable defence corps that still has some experience and won't give up many good scoring chances.

The forward lines boast one of the most exciting players to watch in left winger Denis Fenske. This 5'8" dynamo finished second in conference scoring last year, and along with former Olympian Bruce Keller, who had 30 points last year, will provide the Huskies with enough offence to finish ahead of the rest of the division.

The word from Saskatoon is that they expect to fight it out with UBC and U of Calgary for a playoff spot, but that isn't likely, being they're heads above those two clubs. They will, however, have to be content with playing second fiddle to the Bears, and so I predict them to finish in second place at 16-8.

As you glance at this year's **UBC Thunderbird** roster of players when they visit Varsity Arena in two weeks, you'll notice a familiar name — Bobby Hull. No, your eyes won't be

deceiving you and no, it's not the same Bobby Hull of WHA and NHL fame; it's his son, Bobby Hull Jr.

But even bloodlines like those won't help the T-Birds capture a Canada West title this season; the T-Birds capture a Canada West title this season; they will have to play more inspiring hockey than the 11-13 record of a year ago indicates.

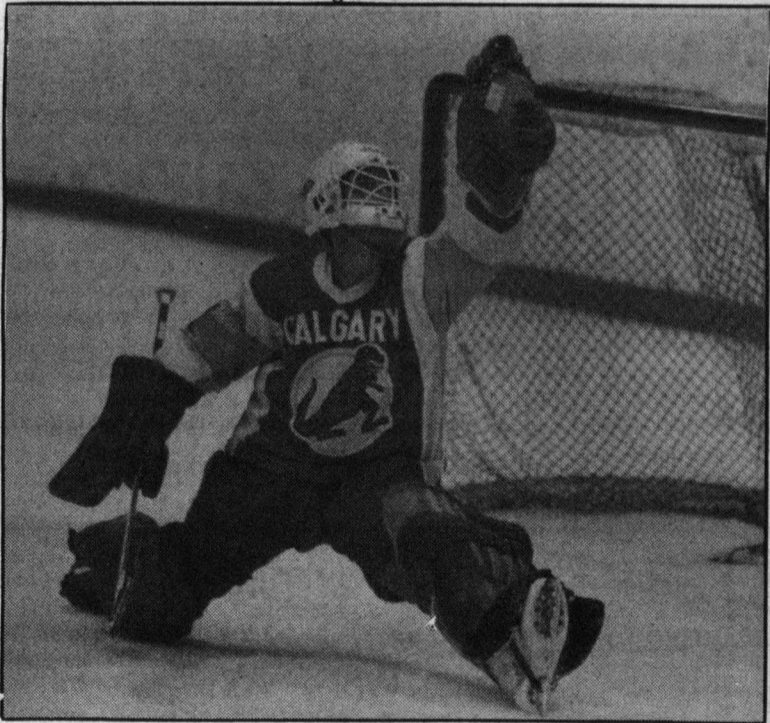
New head coach Fred Masuch has 12 returning players, and most of them are at the forward position. Up front will be last year's leading goal scorer in the Canada West, Daryl Coldwell; centers Kevin Argue

and Dave Brownlie; and wingers Mike Coflin, Renzo Berra, Graham Kerr and Anthony Thomas. Also returning, after missing last year, will be Bill Holowaty, who is the T-Birds all-time leading scorer.

Unfortunately, the return of several forwards will be offset by a depletion in the defence as the lone returning blueliner will be all-star Rick Amann, the top scoring defenceman in the conference last year.

So, expect the T-Birds to score a lot of goals with their much vaunted

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Goaltender Mike Craig couldn't save the Dinosaurs from extinction

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