

# Sports

## NAIT anxious for Bear revenge

by Alan Small

At a Tuesday press conference, Bear head coach Clare Drake was doing his best Sparky Anderson imitation.

Drake, with tongue planted firmly in his cheek, said that the Alberta Golden Bears should be underdogs at Face Off '89 because NAIT has much more experience in the annual cross-town hockey game.

"NAIT is always the underdog in this game," said NAIT head coach Perry Pearn.

Maybe Drake was exaggerating

**"That game was the least competitive of the four." — Pearn**

a bit — two Bears have played in all four previous Face Offs — but one cannot deny the fact that the team the hockey Bears will face on January 31 will be the most experienced NAIT hockey club that the north-siders have come up with for the annual classic.

"Our experience level is up some," Pearn said, whose team has only one win in the previous four Face Offs. "This team could rival some of the championship

teams we've had in the past."

The Oaks are coming off two consecutive stinging losses to the U of A. NAIT is looking to erase memories of last year's debacle, which had the U of A swamp the Oaks 8-2. Pearn will try a new strategy going into the hockey game this year.

"We're going to play it down this year," Pearn said. "Last year we got so hyper it affected our play early. It took us the whole first period to settle down and play hockey."

"That game particularly was the least competitive of the four games," Pearn added.

Part of last year's hype was NAIT's video, which showed highlights of the Oaks' triumphs over the U of A and told of how the Golden Bears were in trouble when tangling with NAIT on the ice.

"The video was a great idea," Pearn said, "whether or not it was good for us on the ice is another question."

That first period was disastrous for the Oaks, as the Bears took a 5-1 lead and never looked back. The same thing happened the year before, when the Golden Bears hammered NAIT 7-2.

Another event that may help the Oaks in this year's conflict was their trip to Czechoslovakia during the Christmas holidays.

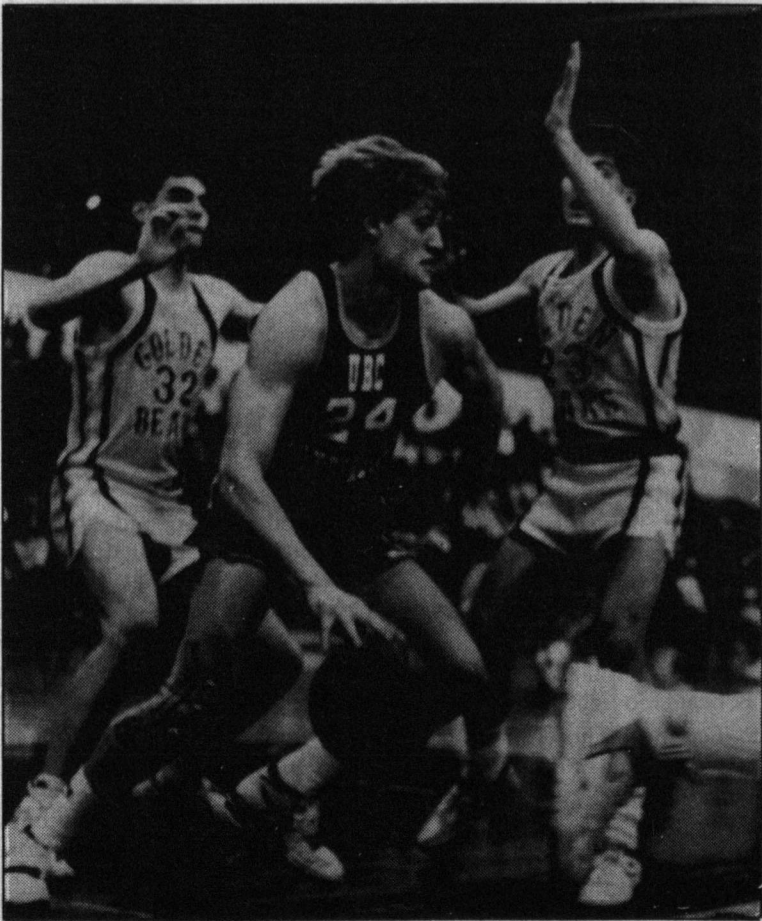
## Bears in the middle of playoff crapshoot

by Alan Small

When the basketball Bears were 1-5, their playoff hopes weren't the best. How things change so

quickly.

Four games and three wins later, they're in the thick of a crowded hunt for post-season



The Bear defence must stop Calgary's three point shooting.



The Bears face NAIT in Face Off '89 on January 31st at Northlands Coliseum.

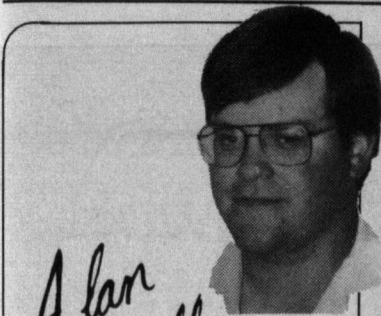
NAIT went 7-0-1 in the tour, and swept the Czech junior national B team in the process.

"It made me proud to be a Canadian," said Marty Volcan, who has 11 points in 26 games playing defence for the Oaks this season. "They gave us a standing ovation after our last game and we saluted the crowd."

Pearn believes that the team's experiences in Europe this winter will have a positive effect on their club going into the clash with the Golden Bears.

"Not only were we representing NAIT, but the guys were playing for Canada too," Pearn said. "We played in front of some big crowds there too, so the Coliseum probably won't be as awe-striking."

Everyone is hoping for that awe-striking crowd on the 31st, for 50 cents from every ticket sold goes to Ronald McDonald House, a home where parents from out of town can live if their sick child has to stay for an extended period in the hospital in Edmonton.



Alan Small

The Oilers return from their road trip on Friday, with a few more losses, a lot worse for wear, and with Dave Hunter.

The addition of Craig Redmond looks to be a fine one. Not only has Glen Sather picked up a young defenceman that can play the point on the power play, but Redmond has matured enough in the last couple of years to the point that he can play NHL calibre defence. The Oilers hope that young Chris Joseph picks up on some of the problems that Redmond had in LA.

Like Joseph this year, Redmond was supposed to be a playmaking defenceman with good skating skill when he was drafted by Kings (he didn't show them all that often when he was 18), and also like Joseph, has had trouble adjusting to the NHL. Redmond worked hard the last couple of years to get back into the NHL, and maybe that will show Joseph that a player can't be a star in the big leagues with just talent alone.

The Oilers have been saying for the last year that Joseph has great skills. For Oiler fans sake, may Joseph pick up something from the lessons that Redmond had to endure.

The Oilers right now are feeling one thing they haven't had to deal with since they came into the NHL in 1979: injuries.

Sure, in the past, Gretzky or Coffey would be out of the lineup for five or ten games. There haven't been so many players hurt at the same time however. The Oilers are finding out in a hurry what it's like to have an aging team.

Kevin Lowe has been injured twice this season. Jeff Beukeboom is now out for the second time, however, the first time was due to a questionable suspension during the pre-season. Randy Gregg has been plagued with injuries all year long and Steve Smith is out for the second time with a shoulder problem. Tack on Esa Tikkanen's broken wrist and Craig Simpson's broken foot, and you have a major problem.

Now that Lowe's back, he is joining veterans Charlie Huddy and Craig Muni by playing 25-30 minutes per game. They probably can do this over a ten game period, but the Oilers may be in trouble if this keeps up until the playoffs. Lowe and Muni have absorbed a lot of punishing checks this season, and add to that the fact that all three are on that fine line — the line between the peak and the decline of the career for and NHL hockey player — and one must be concerned whether the three can handle the rough going all season and still be on top of their game in May.

play. Three teams (UBC, Lethbridge, and Alberta) sport 4-6 records and are tied for third place in the Canada West conference. Victoria leads the pack with a spotless 10-0 record. Those ten games weren't the easiest wins in the world, however. They don't blow teams out like in the past. That doesn't mean that they are a poor basketball club though.

"I'd rather have a tough 10-0 record than an easy 4-6," deadpanned Bear head coach Don Horwood, "you have a lot more room to play with that way."

The team in second place, the 6-4 Calgary Dinosaurs, host the Golden Bears for a pair of pivotal conference games this weekend. In the opening week of the season, the Dinosaurs stole a pair from the Bears in Varsity Gym. They've never looked back until the new year, when they lost a pair to the Vikings and they gave up a split to the lowly Saskatchewan Huskies in their own gym.

"There ain't any more easy weekends," said Horwood. The Dinosaurs found out a week late.

Both teams will be concerned about scores from out-of-town. This weekend's results could drastically change team's position in the Canada West standings.

"If we lose to Calgary, Lethbridge loses to Saskatchewan, and

Victoria beats UBC," Horwood said, "four teams could be tied for third place with four wins. It's possible." Conversely, if UBC, Alberta, and Lethbridge all win, there will be a four way tie for second place. This Calgary team is not one to take lightly while watching the out-of-town scoreboard, however. They are not ninth ranked in the country for nothing.

The Bears will be looking to defence the three-point shot better than they did against the Dinosaurs before. In the second game of that series, the Dinosaurs were 10-for-13 from three point land as they cruised to a ten point victory. They were also a not too shabby four-for-eight in the first game of the series.

"I don't know if you can't stop (the three point shot) completely," Horwood said. "Usually, people can't shoot well if the defence is playing well. That's what we have to do."

John Vigna, one of those hot three point shooters, leads Calgary in the scoring parade, averaging 17.1 per game. Sean Chursinoff who has a 16.2 point-per-game average, is Alberta's top shooter.

Friday's game will be broadcast on CJSR-FM, starting at 8 pm.

The Pandas will have their

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Randal Smatiers