

Gateway

Sports



Bob Anderson ... one man's opinion

The long road back for the hockey Golden Bears appears at last to be showing signs of growing shorter.

Perhaps it is unfair to call it a long road back, but the Bears did indeed find themselves wondering what it was all about as they managed to garner only two ties in five pre-season contests.

The brunt of the criticism resulting from the losses and the general poor play was laid on rookie coach Brian McDonald. And here again we have one of the many anomalies of sport. Whenever a club, be it football, baseball or what have you, is not winning, the fans, writers and anybody else who happens to be around, automatically blame the coach.

But little do they realize that it isn't the coach who gets thrown for the 15 yard loss, nor is it the coach who strikes out with the bases loaded in a 3-2 game or who misses an open net on a breakaway.

The critics may accept this, but then they point out that it is the coach's job to get his players "up" for the game and if he doesn't then he's completely to blame for the ensuing consequences.

That is so much balderdash.

Sure a coach has to make sure that his players are thinking about the upcoming game. Sure he has to make sure that they are well prepared and know what to expect from opposing clubs.

But some onus has to fall on the athletes themselves to do their preparation, too.

At any rate, it appears that better things are in store for Alberta fans if the past weekend's action is any indication.

The Bruins swept a pair of non-conference encounters from the Lakehead University Norwesters (7-2 and 9-5) in Port Arthur and Fort William and in doing so looked more like the powerhouse they are reputed to be.

Looked better

"We looked a lot better than we did against Calgary a week ago," was how McDonald summed up the two games. "Some of the guys are finally starting to show some good hockey."

Granted, the Norwesters are not anywhere near the calibre of the Bears but they probably could play with moderate success in the Western Canada Intercollegiate Hockey League.

"It's hard to tell, of course, just how good they actually are," McDonald continued. "They're certainly about the biggest club that I've ever seen. They average about 5'11" and 180 pounds and don't mind the rough stuff."

The Lakehead situation is rather unique as far as the rest of Canadian college hockey is concerned. The school, which has a total enrolment of 2,500, has a liberal bursary system for athletics. One hockey player is reported to be getting in the area of \$3,000. Not too bad for a season's work.

Like Simon Fraser University on the west coast, the Norwesters have turned to American colleges for their opposition. They play in a league which includes three American clubs, and allows ex-pros to participate.

What was even more pleasant for McDonald was the fact that the wins came with the Bears at far from full strength.

Winger Bob Devaney and centre Gerry Hornby, both of whom figure prominently in the Green Machine this season, were left at home because of injuries while Mel Baird and captain Gerry Braunberger were injured in Saturday's first game against the Lakehead outfit.

Braunberger was forced to miss Sunday's contest as a bruised wrist forced him to the sidelines while Baird saw limited action in the second game.

Notwithstanding the success on the ice, the Golden Ones had a rough weekend as far as transportation was concerned.

They were scheduled to play the University of Winnipeg Wesmen Monday in the Manitoba capital. However, fog prevented their plane from taking off from Port Arthur and the club was forced to lease cars for the seven hour trip to Winnipeg in order to catch a midnight train for home.

Norwesters succumb to Bruins

Puck squad posts first wins

BEARS 7, LAKEHEAD 2
BEARS 9, LAKEHEAD 5

PORT ARTHUR—The jokesters back in Alberta can now go back into hiding.

There will be no more cause for wisecracks like the one that said the Golden Bears weren't going to win a hockey game all season long.

Brian McDonald's Bruins, with only two ties to show in five previous exhibition starts, came on strong here at the weekend to down the Lakehead University Norwesters 7-2 and 9-5 in a pair of non-conference contests.

In earlier games, the Golden Ones had tied once and lost three times to the University of Calgary Dinosaurs and had fought to a 2-2 draw with the Edmonton Monarchs.

AMERICAN OPPOSITION

The Norwesters, who play in a league which includes three American college teams, were making their first starts of the season.

In Saturday evening's contest played in Fort William before 950 onlookers, the Albertans led 2-0 after 20 minutes and were up 4-2 after two periods of action.

Milt Hohol showed the way for the victors with a pair of goals,

while Gerry Braunberger, Jack Gibson, Sam Belcourt, Dave Couves and Oliver Morris added the others.

Vern Campigotto and Greg Smith replied for the losers.

The Bears were assessed 11 of 22 penalties, including a major to Couves and a game misconduct to Gibson.

GRAB 2-1 LEAD

On Sunday, about 1,200 fans at Port Arthur saw the Bears grab a 2-1 opening period margin on goals by Couves and Tom Devaney. Cliff Stewart supplied the Lakehead marker.

The Bears then went to work and were ahead 5-3 after 40 minutes.

Rounding out the scoring for McDonald's outfit were Devaney and Couves, each with their second of the afternoon, Hohol, Maris, Belcourt, Al Cameron and Mike Lemieux.

Dwight Stirret with two, Murray Smith and Bill McEwan were the other Norwester marksmen who contributed in outshooting the Bears 39-27.

HAPPY COACH

McDonald was a little happier with his club's performance here than at any other time this season.



TOM DEVANEY

"It was nice to see Cameron, Belcourt, Morris and Lemieux break out of their scoring slump," he stated. "For a while I was wondering if and when that first goal was ever going to come for each of them."

A scheduled Monday game with the University of Winnipeg Wesmen in Winnipeg was cancelled as the Bruins couldn't get off the ground at the fog-bound Port Arthur airport.

Hoop Bears drop final to Chinooks in second Tri-University Classic

By RON TERNOWAY

BEARS 79, CALGARY 70
BEARS 68, LETHBRIDGE 69

LETHBRIDGE—The basketball Bruins had their first test this season.

They must not have studied enough because they muffed it.

Barry Mitchelson's crew edged the University of Calgary Dino-

sauers 79-70 Friday night in the second annual Tri-University Classic, but were just not quite in top form the next morning and dropped a cliffhanger to the University of Lethbridge Chinooks 69-68.

The games, played in the dimly-lit Lethbridge Civic Centre marked the initial encounters for the Bears against other Western Conference

Intercollegiate Basketball League teams. Regina was the other team in the tourney.

The Bears utilized the same outside offence that took them to the Western title and Canadian Championships last year. It was enough to get them by Calgary. The cage Bruins held a slim 37-36 margin at the half and opened up in the second half to coast to the victory.

Dick DeKlerk had a phenomenal evening, hitting the hoop for 31 points. He had a great second half, netting 22 of his points in that stanza. Bobby Morris dropped 16 points from his guard spot. Wayne Thomas led the losers with 14 points.

Saturday's game was much the same as the one the night before. Lethbridge had advanced to the finals by defeating Regina and were playing before a home crowd.

The game was close throughout with the teams deadlocked at 34 points apiece at the half.

Big gun for the Chinooks was D. McClain, with 28 points. D. McKay collected another 15 for Lethbridge.

Larry Nowak sank 19 points in a losing cause. Bob Bain and Al Melnychuk were also in double figures for the Bears.

DeKlerk, who was super hot against Calgary, had foul problems against Lethbridge and played little of the second half.

The Bears seemed to suffer from shooter's cramp in both games, hitting only 33 per cent from the floor. Foul shot averages were atrocious as the team was good on only 45 per cent of attempts.

Mitchelson, while naturally disappointed about not winning the competition, was not disappointed with the performance of his team.

"Once again, they did everything I told them to. I can't complain."

Mitchelson's gang will be out for revenge this weekend as the same two teams travel to Edmonton for games with the Bears. The Bruins take on Calgary Friday night and will attempt to cool off the Chinooks Saturday. Games are in the Main Gym.

Court Bruins to open Friday

Tomorrow night the University of Calgary Dinosaurs will lumber into Varsity Gym and Saturday the Lethbridge Chinooks will blow into town.

That's the weather report for the weekend.

The big question, though, is whether or not Golden Bear basketball coach Barry Mitchelson and his bouncing Bruins will be able to send the teams lumbering and blowing, respectively, back to their lairs with 0-1 records.

This weekend marks the initial league encounters for all three teams in the newly-expanded Western Canada Intercollegiate Basketball League.

The Bears meet the Dinos Friday night at 8 p.m., and Lethbridge will be potential victims Saturday at 7 p.m.

Barry's brigade will be out to demolish the Dinosaurs and avenge their loss to Lethbridge. Their aim will be to show for once and for all that the Chinooks are just hot air.

It won't be that easy, though, and Coach Mitchelson is the first to admit it.

"Calgary has improved about 150 per cent over last year, and in order to win, we'll have to play well. If we have a bad game things could be extremely close," he said.

Dinosaurs were edged 79-70 by the Bears in Lethbridge last weekend. In the same tournament, Lethbridge squeaked by the Bruins in a cliffhanger, 69-68.

Mitchelson has built his team around a hard core of veterans and a sprinkling of rookies. Veterans

to watch up front are Dick DeKlerk, who scored a respectable 31 points against Calgary, and Larry Nowak, who should be in for a great season.

Back also is high scoring guard Bobby Morris and Al Melnychuk, a defensive star.

Dave Turner, who joined the club midway through last season, rounds out the returning members of the 1969-70 version of the Golden Bears.

Mitchelson has also found some experienced newcomers for his team. Joining the Bears this season after playing with the Junior Bearcats is Paul Pomietlarz.

Also, watch for Bob Bain. Bain, who played three years with Waterloo Lutheran and was instrumental in leading Waterloo to the Canadian Championships two years ago, will add definite scoring punch.

Two former Edmonton High School All-Stars, Jack Schwartzberg and Brian Johnson, are also on the Green and Gold squad.

Rounding out the crew is Bain McMillan, who starred with U of C Dinosaurs last year.

The contest on Friday will be preceded by a Junior Bearcat-LDS encounter at 5:30 p.m. Saturday night the Bearcats will meet the Mo'stads at 9 p.m. Both are Edmonton Senior League encounters.

So let's be there to cheer on the Bears. Who knows, this could be the start of the long journey to the Canadian Championships in March.

All games are slated for Varsity Gym.