

# Bears come closer than expected, but...



Bears' defence stacks it up against the Huskies on Alberta's 4 yard-line.

by Cam Cole  
Kindly don't ask Jim Donlevy to smile when his team drops a close one.

"Losing's never fun" quoth the Alberta coach, even though a surprisingly tough Bears squad nearly upset the heavily favored Saskatchewan Huskies, who squeezed out a 23-19 win at Varsity Stadium Saturday.

The Golden Bears, who lost the lead with 20 minutes to play, could have won the ball game in the final minute after Huskies' Dave Osiowy kicked his third field goal, giving Saskatchewan the 23-19 lead. Osiowy attempted a short kickoff with 59 seconds showing on the clock, trying to keep the ball away from Brian Fryer, who had earlier run one back 72 yards. Fryer, however, got his hands on the bouncing ball at his own 25 and snaked his way to the Saskatchewan 21 before he ran out of room at the sidelines.

A second-down pass from Bears' QB Ron Bryant was intercepted in the endzone with only seconds left, ending all hope of an Alberta comeback.

Bears' young defence appeared bewildered as Saskatchewan pivot Barrie Fraser directed a brilliant 8-play march downfield, finishing with a touchdown pass to Tim

Molnar on the very first offensive sequence of the game.

Costly Saskatchewan penalties repeatedly gave Bears good field position and Bryant was finally able to hit Fryer with a perfect 44-yard pass for six points. Pay Barry's line drive convert attempt was blocked at the line, and Bears trailed 7-6.

Barry was good on a field goal try from 22 yards out early in the second quarter, but Osiowy hit from 27 and 20 yards to put Huskies in front 13-9. Bears voted to receive a kickoff, rather than take the ball on their 35, and Fryer's 72-yard return put Alberta on the Saskatchewan 27 yard-line, with over 5 minutes to play in the half. Two five-yard bursts by Dalton Smarsh gave them a first down on the 16, then Bryant again found Fryer in the open, this time on a quick-out pattern, for his second touchdown.

Five plays later, the Huskies were 1st and goal on the Alberta nine yard-line, but a penalty and an incomplete pass created a third down situation. Saskatchewan gambled and lost when Bears' Peter Jennings' pass rush made Fraser release the ball early, and Bears took possession.

Bryant led them quickly downfield with help from Husky

Tom Archibald, who was called for interfering with receiver Rick Grove at the Saskatchewan 23, but the drive fizzled when a fumbled snap forced a field goal attempt which failed to net even a single. The half ended with Alberta ahead 16-13.

Saskatchewan Fullback Tom Chad plunged over from the Alberta 3 in the third quarter, and the Golden Bears were never ahead again. They had the ball on the Huskies' 3 yard-line as the third quarter ended but couldn't find the endzone in three plays, and had to give it up.

Barry closed the gap to one point with his second field goal, but Bears blew their next two good opportunities to put points on the board, and Osiowy put the score out of field goal range with three points from the 24.

A relieved Saskatchewan coach Val Schneider gave full marks to the Bears. "Whoever said Alberta was going to be easy this year is crazy," he hooted. "I don't care how many players are missing from last year - if you play Alberta, you can expect a tough game."

Schneider also had praise for his quarterback. "Fraser was right on the money all day - he's throwing the ball really well, but the guys were just dropping them."

The statistics bear him out. Fraser completed 16 of 29 passes, and 5 were dropped.

Schneider was not, however, impressed by one member of his troupe, Carl Thorna, who was guilty of rou-

ghing on three Alberta punts. Those penalties (and others) nearly cost Huskies the game.

Saskatchewan took 9 penalties in all, for a total of 137 yards, compared to Alberta's 5 for 60 yards.

The Huskies racked up 377 yards in total offence to Bears' 272, with Tom Chad running the ball 22 times for 132 yards. Bears leading rusher was Dalton Smarsh, who seemed to be good for five yards virtually every time he carried the football. Smarsh carried 18 times for 100 yards.

Leading Bear receiver was Fryer, who caught 3 passes for 68 yards. Larry Giles of Saskatchewan hauled in 6 for 59.

Alberta gave up 2 interceptions and a fumble, while Huskies did not turn the ball over.

Donlevy had kind words for his rookie-studded defence

who, after their shaky first series of plays, tightened up impressively against the powerful Saskatchewan attack.

"They hung in there together, and played really well. They didn't lose their poise when Saskatchewan marched down there at the beginning... (Garry) Smith and (Bob) Bennett have done a hell of a job patching up the defence."

Though all statistics indicate that Saskatchewan was full value for the victory, Donlevy maintains the Bears should have won it.

"We're a little disappointed. We certainly had it down close enough times - we just couldn't punch it over."

Bears have five days to prepare for their first game away - next Saturday against the Manitoba Bisons. Bisons lost their season opener 38-7 to the UBC Thunderbirds in Vancouver on Saturday.

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