

Philip Preville

U of A selling runs into wall

There wasn't a bad seat in the house at Commonwealth Stadium Saturday for the annual Shrine Bowl. A paltry 2,712 fans were on hand to witness a crucial football game for the Alberta Golden Bears.

All in all, they got what they came for — a couple of blocked kicks, four Bears interceptions, a solid running game and a 34-17 playoff berth clincher for the home team. A trip for two to the Caribbean was also given away to one lucky fan (with odds of one in 2,712, it's a better deal than any lottery).

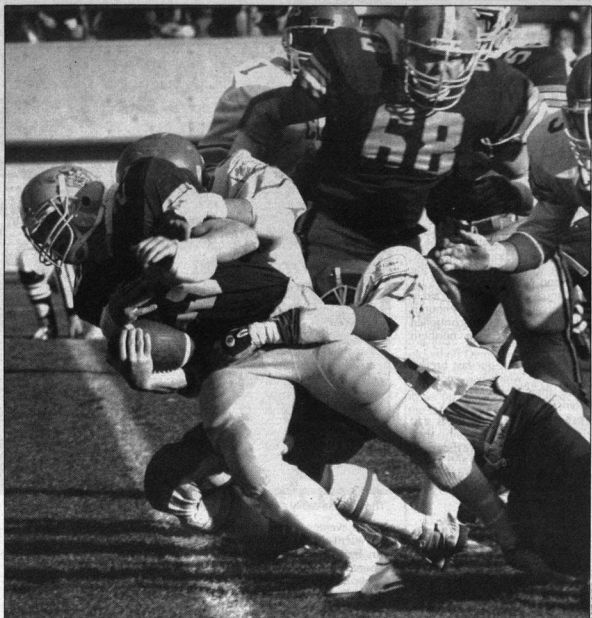
Over 20,000 students and alumni filled into Lansdowne Park to witness the annual Ottawa Gee-Gees — Carleton Ravens grudge match this past weekend. Annual rivalries also meet every year when York plays Toronto and when McGill faces Concordia in Montreal. Shrine Bowl organizers are obviously trying to capitalize on the Edmonton-Calgary thing, and they do, but only to the minimum.

The Shrine Bowl turnout was disappointing. This year, athletics tried to step up their marketing with a huge give-away package with Husky Oil. There is no indication that it was a success. Results of an informal poll of about 50 people on hand would indicate that most of the fans were either U of A students or alumni, and that almost all of them paid for their tickets. When reminded that they could have received free tickets for filling up at Husky, one paying student/fan remarked, "It would be nice if I had a car to fill up."

This statement, believe it or not, reveals an important truth: selling the college game begins on the college campus. Just who are they reaching through Husky anyway? All those local football enthusiasts who just can't get their fill from the CFL?

The student body is more likely to be cured of apathy than anyone else, at least as far as varsity sports is concerned. A giveaway would be much more effective if, for the sake of argument, two free tickets were awarded for buying \$10 worth of chow at Food Services, or for running a \$25 plus tab at Dewey's. All the people living at Lister Hall couldn't avoid getting tickets, and they'd only have to walk across the street on a sunny afternoon to catch the action.

Athletics marketing are addressing their message to the wrong people. If the students don't know about the games, if they can't get their hands on the freebies, if they don't know there's a free trip for two to the Caribbean to be won, they won't go to the games. If this trend keeps up, athletics will ride off into the sunset, unnoticed, on Husky gas, with a pair of tickets in hand.



Golden Bears Mark Brus gets tackled by a couple of Dino defenders.

Bears win Shrine Bowl, playoff spot

by Randal Smathers

It was the battle of the backs. The top two rushers in Western Canada led their teams into the second half of the Shrine Bowl Saturday, with the winner earning a playoff spot.

In the end, it wasn't close, as the Golden Bears, led by Mark Brus, beat Elio Geremia and the Calgary Dinosaur 34-17 at Commonwealth Stadium. The win put a lock on second place in the conference and a visit to Vancouver for the WIFL final. Combined with the 32-20 score in Calgary, the U of A won the two-game Shrine Bowl 66-37.

The playoff berth is especially sweet, after last year's 1-7 record, and the win is especially sweet, coming as revenge for last year's 46-7 drubbing by the Dinos in Edmonton. "That's the kind of thing that sends you down into the weight room in the summer, when you'd rather be doing something else," said Brus.

by Alan Small

Last year's Edmonton leg of the North/South Shrine Bowl was a disaster for the Golden Bears. A 46-7 loss to the Calgary Dinosaur in last year's gridiron tilt was a quick beginning of the end for Head Coach Jim Donlevy's charges.

There were wounds as deep as the San Andreas Fault. However, the Bears healed them last weekend at the scene of the crime.

"We owe these guys that's for sure," Bear linebacker Andy Schinke said.

"It (last year's game) was in the back of our minds, I got us pumped up."

Not only did the win allow the Bears to avenge old losses, it also cemented a playoff spot and a trip to Vancouver to take on the UBC Thunderbirds in the WIFL final.

Geremia outrushed Brus slightly — 146 yards on 23 carries for Geremia, to 133 yards for Brus on 26 packs by the Bear back — but Brus got two TDs to Geremia's none, and it's the score that counts.

It was the supporting cast that made all the difference in this one. The Calgary defense shut down the Bear running game in the first half, and so Brus got sat down for the end of the second quarter and the start of the third. In his absence, Tom Houg almost broke one at the end of the first half, going 58 yards but coming short of scoring on the last play of the half.

The halftime score stayed 3-1 for the Bears, with the difference being Steve Kasowski's extra range on field goals. Kasowski hit from 41 yards into a 40-45 kph wind, while Calgary kicker Brent Korte missed wide for a single from similar range with the breeze at his back.

In the first half, the defensive

lines were dominant, with neither offense able to establish a good drive. Donlevy felt his entire offensive unit was hesitating.

Donlevy also said that the line-men were confused by some of the things Calgary was doing on defense, and were looking for players to block instead of firing off the line of scrimmage with the ball. Brus agreed with his coach in that he was also hesitant.

Donlevy sat Brus down in order to give him a look at the game from the sidelines, to spot some of the things Calgary was doing to stop the run. Apparently the strategy worked, because Brus and the entire offense looked like a different unit in the second half.

The defense, led by game star Brent Korte, held Calgary without a first down in their first four possessions of the second half — including stopping Geremia for minus one yard on three carries, and

brutal near-sack by Korte.

For Korte, it was overdue recognition. "He plays great games every game," said Donlevy. "He toils in the pits religiously." While the whole defensive front has been strong, it is Korte who seems to make the big plays for this team.

The big Bear front line were starting to get some holes for the backs, and when Brus came back in, the tempo visibly lifted. After a short drive, Kasowski narrowly missed a field goal from 39 yards into the wind, hitting the upright.

The next possession, the Bears stayed on the ground, with the entire backfield of Brus, Houg, Allan Bleiken and backup QB Brant Villettard all getting carries. Bleiken got the game's first major score from the nine-yard line at the 11:19 mark.



All season the Bears had a problem with giving up points right after a score of their own. Saturday they held for the first series, but blew the second one. In the only major blunder by the defense all game, they were caught by a play-action pass. Dave Brown was ten yards behind Bear corner Todd Matheson when Dino quarterback Bob Torrance hit him for a 70-yard TD bomb.

When the Bear offense failed to move the ball, the pressure was squarely on the defense yet again. On the first play by Calgary's offense after the touchdown, linebacker Mark Singer picked off a throw by Torrance.

Given the ball on the Calgary 41, the offense came through. Brus and Houg carried the load, with Brus getting his first TD on the day and fifth on the season.

The next series, the defence stuffed Geremia, and after Torrance threw incomplete, backup linebacker Bryan Lang was the first Bear in on Dino punter Brent Matich, blocking his kick and then recovering the ball on the Dino three-yard line.

Darren Brezden hit Dave Bolstad in the end zone to give the Bears a 15-point lead with less than ten minutes left.

The Dinosaur did manage another touchdown after a long drive, with Rob Zimmerman scoring on the sixth try from inside the Golden Bear ten, but Kasowski hit another field goal and Brus broke a 36-yard TD run with eight seconds left, to make the final 34-17. Kasowski hit two of three field

FOOTBALL — p.13

Golden Bears pay back a year long debt

"We wanted to play UBC again," running back Mark Brus said. "It's what it's all about."

Many observers did not expect that the Golden Bears would rebound from a 1-7 year so well and so fast. The players, though, were confident of their chances.

"We have the talent to do it," Bear MVP Brent Korte said. "We have a great team atmosphere and a close knit bunch of guys."

"We knew we were going (to the playoffs)," Bear offensive tackle Russ Brown said. "We had no doubts."

SMALL NOTES: The Bears finish their season off in Saskatoon as they will face the Huskies, who lost 27-26 to the Manitoba Bisons last weekend. Then they will have two weeks to heal and prepare for the T-Birds, whom they face on November 7.



Tom Houg (22) runs through a gaping hole created by the offensive line.