

SPORTS

cole's notes

Drake's troops may have hands full

Is the Golden Bear hockey team jumpy this week? Can Clare Drake be found pacing the halls of the Phys. Ed. building late at nights? Will the tension, hanging thick like diesel fumes (or maybe those ARE diesel fumes) in the ice arena, cause the organist to make even more mistakes during 'O Canada' on Friday? Will there even BE an organist there? Does anyone really care about the answers to these and other questions?

At any rate, the Bears do play the UBC Thunderbirds in a best of three series at Varsity Arena, starting this Friday, and if the players are jumpy and Drake is nervous - you can't blame them. Bears found out just how tough UBC is 10 days ago, when the Birds nearly swept a pair of games from them, right here in Bear country.

The T-Birds have to be the most improved team in the CWUAA (if not in Canada) since recovering from a crippling series of injuries in the early part of the schedule.

Someone else must think so, too - UBC, despite a mediocre 12-11-1 record, has suddenly made its appearance in the top ten-rated clubs in the nation, replacing the Calgary Dinosaurs, who were eliminated by the Birds in Calgary last Friday.

The last time BC was in town, they eked out a 6-5 victory in the second period of overtime in the Friday game. UBC mentor Dr. Bob Hindmarch, in an interview after that match, told reporters, "I think we played fairly well, although not as well as we can play - but I believe Alberta played as well as they can tonight,if we play good hockey, we can beat them regularly and consistently."

Nobody has been able to beat Bears "regularly and consistently" so far this year, as Bears made a joke of the pennant race, finishing with a 20-4 record, but Thunderbirds don't actually need to defeat Alberta very consistently two out of three will do.

In a three game series, regular-season records don't mean an awful lot. Bears have won six of their eight encounters with UBC, but four of those wins came before the break, during the peak of T-Birds' injury binge, and another was against a BC club suffering from a severe attack of flu which had more of less immobilized the ranks, leaving several top players out of the lineup.

Now that you have been informed as to why Bears could lose their series with UBC this weekend, here's why they shouldn't:

1. Bears have superior depth at all positions except goaltending, in which the two clubs are fairly evenly matched.
2. Any regular on the Golden Bear roster is capable of a big scoring performance. Eight of their ten regular forwards have 20 or more points (the scoring championship was won with 28), and so do three of five defencemen on the squad.
3. Home ice advantage (and home fans). After the two cliff-hangers these teams staged here last time, chances for a sellout or three seem pretty good.
4. Coaching. Pro scouts at the Saskatchewan games last weekend raved about Alberta's forechecking, and rotation on the powerplay, but mostly about how well-drilled the players were in various aspects of their play.
5. Desire. There may be as many as eight first-year Bears on the ice Friday. The team that lost in the playoffs last year had more experienced and, possibly, talented players, but they lacked the spirit and desire that marks this year's edition of the Golden Bears - nor are the veterans on the team letting the rest of the players down, as they did last year.
6. Bears are healthy. They have suffered very few injuries all season, and go into the playoffs with only minor hurts.
7. Finally, Alberta is ranked the Number One team in Canadian Intercollegiate Hockey. If they can't advance beyond the first round of playoffs, they are not worthy of the position.

Cam Cole



Pronghorns' Laurne Edlund (22 - dark jersey) has a shot blocked by Bears' Wallace Tollestrup as Alberta toppled Lethbridge 115-76 at Varsity Main Gym last Friday. Bears also won Saturday, by a 90-63 margin. Details of the contests appear below.

Hoopsters enter stretch

by Cliff Lacey

Bears 115 - Pronghorns 76
Bears 90 - Pronghorns 63

It is hard to criticize a team that scored 205 points in two wins over the weekend. The Bears did just that, in games against the lowly U of Lethbridge Pronghorns. It's hard, but not impossible.

Alberta really did not look like contenders for the CWUAA basketball title. They had trouble keeping pace with the cellar-dwelling Pronghorns in the first ten minutes of Friday's game. It almost looked as though a repeat of last week's loss to Saskatchewan was about to befall the Bears when things turned rosey. The ball started to drop through the hoop in an incredible scoring spree. The Bears retired at the half leading 54-34.

They hit quicker in the second half to sting the beleaguered Pronghorns, who by then, were drawing fouls on every move they made. The visitor's play was bad enough without the refs delivering a "home job"

Doug Baker and Bill Hamilton led the team scoring with 22 and 20 points respectively. The team outrebounded the Lethbridge squad 59 to 27 while making marginally fewer turnovers than their opposition.

Laurne Edlund had 21 for the Pronghorns while Phil Letham added 18 in what ended up as a fast moving offensive game from a sloppy, slow, defensive start.

Saturday's game was a pleasant surprise. The Bears were considerably sharper, but the unbelievable part was the early play of the Lethbridge team. In their last game of the season the southerners kept pace with Alberta and had the lead a couple of times deep in the first half. Bears turned it on though, and had a comfortable 36-27 split score.

The rest, as they say, is history. Bears did not slow down as they poured in 54 points to win all the marbles. The play was free wheeling and sometimes careless. That style of play won't go over well against the big Calgary squad the Bears must face next week.

It was a team effort in scoring that gave Alberta the win. Baker had a repeat performance as Bears number one shooter with 18. Wallace Tollestrup got hot in the second half with 17 points. Colin Fennell slipped in 16 while Dave Holland came off his recent injury for 14 points and 15 rebounds.

Pronghorn scorers were the reliable Phil Letham with 20, Laurne Edlund with 17 and Richard Foggo with 16.

Bears beat the Pronghorns both on the boards and in turnovers, once again.

Alberta coach Barry Mitchelson was asked why the Bears' play was not as sharp as

we have seen in other games? He suggested that "the players only psych themselves up for the opposition they are going to face." In the case of this weekend's series, the Bears could not have expected much opposition or the home town fans would have seen better play.

The Green and Gold have to take at least one game in Calgary next weekend to stay in the running. If they win both games (a real psych job) they are assured of either first or second spot. Only hard play will bail them out now.

For the first time this side of Christmas, Alberta was a fit team. This allowed them to press more effectively. Since the press gives the center extra floor length to run, the Bears have been reluctant to use it. Either Dave Holland or Len Davidiuk, both centers, have been out with injuries, all season long.

Pandas respectable at Winter Games

The Pandas basketball team turned a horrendous start into a respectable showing at the Canada Winter Games, over the past 7 days.

Representing Alberta at the Games, the Pandas finished fifth overall in the Women's section, (third in their own division). Pandas were somewhat of a novelty in the competition, as all the other provinces' representatives were all-star squads, with the exception of the Manitoba entry. British Columbia's reps for example, boasted 4 players on the current national team, plus 3 former members.

Pandas started poorly, losing to both Manitoba and New Brunswick (who finished 3rd and 4th overall), but turned

their play around and won three straight in their own division, defeating Newfoundland, Ontario, and North West Territories.

Alberta then met the 3rd-place team in the other division, Nova Scotia, and pulled off a thrilling 64-61 victory. That win, which netted them 5th place in the overall standings, was particularly sweet because Nova Scotia had previously beaten Saskatchewan, whom Pandas haven't been able to cope with all season in league play.

The British Columbia team picked up the gold medal, defeating the unpopular Quebec team in the final, by an 11-point margin.