

Bears showed good potential

Inconsistency ruined title chances

By LAWRIE HIGNELL

Many people feel that the 1966-67 version of the Golden Bears basketball team had the potential to win the WCIAA championship this year and even go as far as the national finals.

They certainly had a combination of players that were the best in the West when they played together.

Friday nights this season, the Bears had the best record in the conference with only one loss, in overtime, and seven wins to their record.

Saturday night was a different matter as they won only three, two of these in the last three games of the season.

Inconsistency was the main problem throughout the season, as the Bears lost miserably Saturday night after staging an impressive win in the first game of the series.

The team started the season off on the right foot as they defeated their arch rival, the University of Calgary Dinosaurs, in Edmonton.

JINX STARTS

The next night the Bears showed signs of the jinx that was to haunt them for the rest of the season. After an impressive and exciting 72-70 win Friday, they fell to pieces Saturday to the score of 76-43.

The next weekend, they scored two wins over the hapless Manitoba Bisons, 85-80 Friday and 69-55 Saturday. The Saturday win was to be their last for almost three months in the league.

Starting the new year right, the Bears travelled to British Columbia to beat the UBC Thunderbirds 85-77 in a double overtime win. It was the first time in the last ten years that a Golden Bear team had beaten the Thunderbirds in Vancouver.

The sweet smell of success didn't last too long however, as the

Thunderbirds rebounded back 72-59 the next night.

BIG CHANCE

The Bears took a two week rest, and watched as the Thunderbirds took on the Calgary Dinosaurs in the Cowtown. The 'Birds lost a close game Friday, 73-72 as they missed a last minute shot, but won the next night 62-59, to give the Bears a chance to take over first place the next weekend.

When the UBC team visited Edmonton, the Bears were up for the game, and looked like league champions as they trounced them 63-49. The tension was too much for them the next night, however, as they fought vainly for an undisputed possession of first place. Their third Saturday loss, and second one to the 'Birds, ended 81-52.

The next real test was to come the following weekend, as the Bears travelled to Calgary for the most important two-game series of the season.

DISAPPOINTMENT

The Bears didn't live up to the challenge however, as they lost in overtime 81-77 on Friday, and then were badly manhandled by the referees and the Dinosaurs Saturday to the tune of 94-71.

A three week rest still didn't seem to help the Bears when they travelled to Manitoba. They edged out a win in the first game 87-80 but gave the Bisons their only win of the season Saturday afternoon, as they lost 82-73.

In their last home games of the season, the Bears finally broke the Saturday jinx as they won 74-70 after a 78-70 win the previous night.

The same weekend, the Calgary

Dinosaurs were defeated by the UBC Thunderbirds to lose the WCIAA championship.

The Bears went to Saskatoon for their final two games of the season, and a chance to finish tied with the Dinosaurs in the WCIAA.

NO MISTAKE

This time they made no mistake as they proved they were as good as the Dinosaurs.

They won 64-57 and 93-70, finally looking like the first place team they should have been.

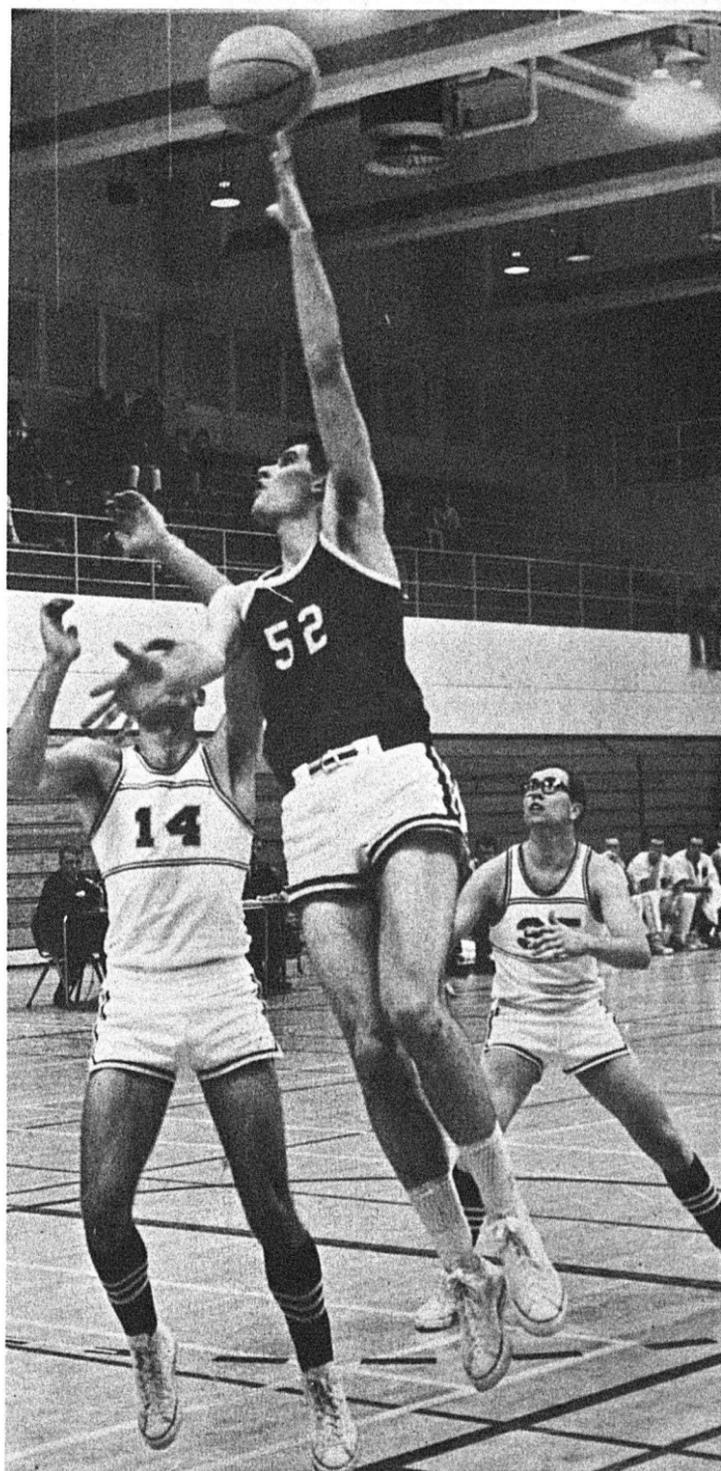
With Nestor Korchinsky leading the pack, the Bears should have been able to control the boards throughout the season, but despite added efforts by Ed Blott and Warren Champion the team was often outthrustled for the ball by their smaller opponents.

Shooting was another problem for the Bears, as a general poor shooting average hampered their drive for the title. Darwin Semotiuk, a guard, finished off strong in the points column as he hit well late in the season, against Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

The Bears will definitely be weaker next year with the loss of five veterans. The outstanding improvement of rookie Warren Champion and guard Don Melnychuk, this year however, could offset this loss next year, but the team to beat is the UBC Thunderbirds.

The 'Birds had a young team this year and won the WCIAA as well as finishing a strong second in the finals.

With all of their players returning next year, they are a strong bet to repeat as title holders in the WCIAA.



—Perry Afaganis photo
BEARS' ED BLOTT NETS TWO
... but probably not on a Saturday

Sports review

A look at the past year's successes and failures in basketball, hockey, and football



—Perry Afaganis photo
SOME DAYS NOTHING GOES RIGHT
... caught sitting down on the job

Long, tough season finally over

By DON MOREN

Bear supporters suffered through a frustrating sports year and it was no different for hockey.

Clare Drake's squad had a few established players such as Ralph Jorstad, Darrell LeBlanc, Brian Harper and Gerry Braunberger left, but this was one season when the rookies would have a good crack at the team.

Del Billings, Terry Cutler and Meros Stelmaschuk made the team in their first year on campus. Jim Seutter, Ron Cebryk and Dale Halterman moved up from the now defunct junior hockey team.

The club looked promising in its exhibition schedule against senior clubs. They managed to win almost as many games as they lost against Drumheller Miners, Red Deer Rustlers, and the Edmonton Nuggets.

Alberta lost out to the Blues 8-5 in the prestigious Centennial Tournament at Montreal in January. They went on to take three from UBC. Two more from

Calgary. In February they split with Saskatchewan again.

The high point of the season came when the Bears won the hockey gold medal at the First Canadian Winter Games at Quebec.

It was downhill from then on. A loss to Manitoba cost the Bears an automatic berth in Olympiad. Two losses to Denver. A fateful 4-3 loss to Saskatchewan in the sudden-death playoff and the Bears watched from the stands as the Blues won the Canadian college hockey crown.

Coach Clare Drake is expecting to lose nine or ten players. All the defencemen will be gone. Ralph Jorstad, the last remaining member of the Canadian champions of '64-65, is entertaining a dozen job offers right now and expects to be somewhere in industry.

George Kingston is going on staff at the University of Calgary to teach in the phys ed department. It is rumored he will be teaching hockey.

Gary Link will be doing physiotherapy work in either Swift Current or Regina and would like

to be associated with some sports team.

Hugh Twa will be teaching high school in Edmonton.

Jack Nicholl will be studying law here but no more hockey.

On the forward lines Gord Jones will be going to Europe and hopes to play hockey over there. He says he may eventually come back for a Master's degree.

Darrell LeBlanc is either going to try pro hockey or stay on staff here in the Department of Industrial Arts.

Brian Harper is heading to Winnipeg to give the National team a try.

Dale Rippel will be teaching in Edmonton next year and may give the Nuggets a whirl.

Bob Wolfe says his future as far as hockey is concerned is a question mark.

Returning are Gerry Braunberger, Dave Zarowny, Ron Cebryk, Meros Stelmaschuk, Jim Seuter, Del Billings, Terry Cutler and Dale Halterman.

It is rumored that Coach Drake will be back to weather the trauma and perils of another college hockey season.