



## Crusader crucifies Clare

Welcome to the New Year, or as it is known at the city's other newspaper, Phase II of the "Let's Run Clare Out of Town" Crusade.

You have no doubt noticed, if you have picked up a recent copy of the city scandal sheet, that there is an insidious (and not at all subtle) plot afoot, set in motion by a prominent sports columnist, to rid the city of its most perilous pestilence since whooping cough - that miserable incompetent, Clare Drake.

This man (I can scarcely bring myself to call him that) has had the unmitigated gall to coach a losing hockey team - in EDMONTON!!

In the midst of all the recriminations and mud-slinging resulting from a nine-game losing streak, only the prominent columnist-cum-Crusader (not Cleveland, either, by God!) has maintained the proper perspective on the situation.

Coolly and efficiently, with unflinching judgement, our Crusader has weighed all the factors:

a) Drake admitted he was happy with the talent, when he really should have told the press, in his first day on the job, that management wasn't doing its job. (Left himself wide open there, notes Crusader.)

b) Told everyone his goal was to improve individual performance 20% but it hasn't happened. (Might be something involved there about having no power to threaten anyone with demotion, notes Crusader, but just the same...)

c) Players aren't putting out 100% maybe, but some are putting out 50% or even 60% and after all, it is a long season. (Players have to pace themselves, notes Crusader.)

d) Drake's system may be all right for smart-ass college kids, but you can't expect to get anywhere trying to move the puck out along the boards in pro hockey (Forget what you saw Buffalo doing to the Russians, notes Crusader. Pro players are too smart for that stuff.)

e) To get performance out of pro players, you have to have a proven pro coach (like Winnipeg's Bobby Kromm, notes Crusader) - Bobby who?

f) There may be some truth to the allegation that Bill Hunter's only talent lies in promoting junior hockey, but he owns stock, and is difficult to get fired (Might as well bite where there's a chance to draw blood, notes Crusader, and coaches are vulnerable.)

In short, our prominent columnist has rounded up all the facts that fit, put them all together, and come up with the conclusion that they spell D-R-A-K-E.

So, by the power vested in him by the Almighty, our Crusader has ordered the death sentence. One assumes that Oilers management will dutifully carry out the execution, as it has in the past - Ray McKay, Jack Norris, etc.

Consider please:

If all five teams in the Canadian Division were well-coached, would they all make the playoffs? Could Fred Shero coach the Oilers to a playoff berth in the city's industrial league? Couldn't even the worm Billy Harris (whom you may remember as the guy who was doing a terrific job until Team Canada '74 started losing, whereupon he became a silent scapegoat) coach the Winnipeg Jets to a playoff spot?

And what on earth has coaching got to do with the demise of an organization that reeks of mismanagement at the top, and of indifference at the bottom?

And finally, how can you take seriously anything written by the prominent columnist, when a recent column started out with a statement to the effect that Frank Mahovlich is playing his best hockey in years?

Greg Neiman

## Bears suffer bad draw

Surprising many by finishing second in the Klondike Classic held in Edmonton Dec. 27-30, Barry Mitchelson's basketball Bears surprised a few more, finishing third in the first annual Calgary Classic over the weekend.

After the Golden Bears dropped Winnipeg Wesmen 77-59, some of Mitchelson's crew may have had the feeling that the cards had been stacked against them from the outset.

The Bears found themselves sharing the same division with No. 1-ranked Manitoba Bisons, No. 4-ranked Acadia Axemen and No. 6-ranked Windsor Lancers.

Calgary, the host team, had to deal with only one top ranked team, that being No. 9-rated Laurentian Voyageurs. Winnipeg and the Marauders from McMaster were the other teams in Dinosaurs' division.

The U of C had good cause to "arrange" the divisions in that particular manner. They dished out about \$12,000 to help pay expenses for the visiting teams, and for that kind of money the host team should get some kind of break.

The Bears opened play Friday afternoon against the heavily favoured Acadia Axemen and upset the American-dominated team 82-81, after nearly blowing a 23 point lead in the second half.

Bears led 46-32 at the half thanks to Doud Baker's 20 points and the team's 57.5% field goal average.

Axemen were able to gain ground in the second half because of the growing weariness of the Bears, who went with only 7 players, plus Alberta's inability to put the

game out of reach by converting on the foul line. Bears hit on only 8 of 19 while the Axemen had 17 points on 27 attempts.

Baker finished with 31 points, hitting 14/23 for 61% while Mike Abercrombie helped out with 17 points. Alvin Jessamy, one of six Americans on the team, paced the Acadia attack with 16 points.

Saturday night, Bears played Manitoba with the winner advancing to the final. Manitoba, the top ranked team in the country had previously beaten Bears by margins of 14 and 32 points.

Bears' hands were full in the first half but they kept pace with their taller opponents and turned in a sterling defensive performance, trailing only 36-30 at halftime.

The second half opened with the Bisons striking for 6 points within the first 2 minutes, and that, coupled with Bears getting in early foul trouble, prevented the U of A squad from playing their aggressive style and they never got close losing, 77-65.

Doug Baker again shot an excellent 55% from the field but only managed 11 attempts and 12 points. Brent Patterson had 13 points, 9 of them coming from his perfect night on the free throw line. The entire team

converted all 17 of their attempts on the foul line. For Manitoba Rick Watts had 22 points and Martin Riley 20, hitting on 64% of his shots.

Bears gained third place by virtue of the easy 77-59 victory over Winnipeg, who they had previously beaten in exhibition matches by scores of 78-68 and 67-62.

Alberta led 43-24 at the half again due to Doug Baker's proficiency in the offensive end. Baker had 14 points in the first 20 minutes, and finished with 24. Len Davidiuk cam off the bench to add 13 points.

The ease of Bears' victory shows up in the two most vital statistics - field goal average and rebounds. The Bears out shot the Bisons 44% to 30% and out re-bounded them 45-32. One statistic that doesn't show up is hustle, and the Bears certainly had a big edge in that department.

In the consolation game the Acadia Axemen chopped the McMaster crew down to size, trouncing them 104-76. In the final the Manitoba Bisons were upset by the No. 5-ranked Calgary Dinosaurs 72-71.

After all the upsets in the past two weeks the order of the top ten ranked teams will be anybody's guess.

by Darrell Semenuk

## Pandas first thrashing

by Darrell Semenuk

Coach Debbie Shogan's Pandas basketball squad had their undefeated streak snapped over the weekend in a tournament in Saskatchewan.

Pandas opened the tournament with a 72-44 thrashing of

Brandon, but lost their next two games, 51-49 to Regina and 53-47 to Manitoba.

Coach Shogan decided that the team either could have prepared over the holidays for the tournament, or used the tournament to prepare for their next league games January 9, 10 against the Victoria Vikes.

"If we played all during the Christmas holidays we would have a stale ball club by February," said Shogan.

Pandas started to look more like their old selves with a 66-62 overtime win over Regina to capture third place in the tournament. They had to do it without three of their starters in the second half - Amanda Holloway and Deena Mitchell fouled out, while Karen Johnson suffered a knee injury.

Pandas record now stands at 18-2 including a 6-0 record in league play.

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