

Sports

Bears surprise all — reach final

U of A Bears 98 Windsor Lancers 77
Bears 78 York Yeomen 73 (OT)
Bears 74 Saskatchewan Huskies 79
by Pat Maguire

The thrill of victory, the agony of defeat. While it certainly was not as tragic as that poor skier who bounces down the jump, the U of A Golden Bears did lose the championship game of their own tournament Sunday. But getting to that game was half the fun.

After winning easily on the tournament's opening day, downing the Windsor Lancers 98-77, the Bears faced the sixth ranked York Yeomen.

Saturday's game was just what the Golden Bear Invitational needed. It made TSN, the fans, and head coach Don Horwood very happy.

That 78-73 victory came in overtime, after Gerry Couzens tied the game with one second remaining. The overtime period was won by the Bears on freethrows — two each by Scott McIntyre and Gerry Couzens.

So the stage was set: The host team taking on the eighth-ranked Saskatchewan Huskies, who had previously beaten Western (Ontario) and Winnipeg. A meeting earlier this year saw the Huskies beat the Bears by 16 points.

A good crowd of 1,542 saw a big, tough Saskatchewan team dominate defensively and claim the championship trophy with a 79-74 win.

"We didn't lose this one, they won it," said coach Horwood, who never saw his team in the lead all game. "When you are always behind, it is like running up hill."

The Bears showed a good effort, recovering from a 12 point deficit in the first half to pull to within six by halftime.

Both York and the Huskies are big teams, and the extra effort to compensate for the difference

drained the energy of the Bears. "Banging the boards with two big teams in two days takes a lot out of you," commented Horwood.

6'8" Scott McIntyre agreed. "It felt like I was lacking energy out there." In fairness to McIntyre, he had been a little under the weather before the weekend.

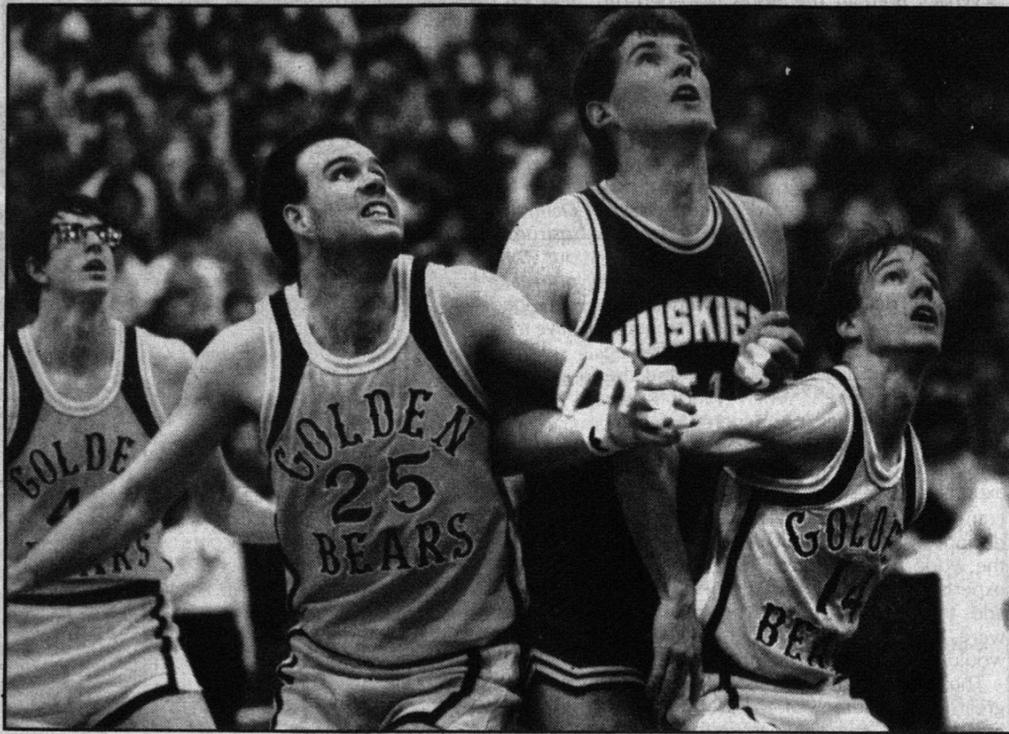
Despite Bear injuries — Mike Kornak (hand), Chris Toutant (ankle) — the Huskies deserved to win. Bears' assistant coach Steve Roth agreed, "they played extremely well. . . we had problems with their zone defense. It's tough with all that height."

Second time tournament MVP Byron Tokarchuk was happy with the Huskies' defense, "it's improved considerably, it would have been hard to play a lot better." His coach Guy Vitrie agreed, "we played some tremendous defense, it's really our bread and butter."

For Saskatchewan, Kirk Jones shot 86% in picking up 20 points and a game star. Gerry Couzens had what his coach described as "probably the best game of his life," shooting an incredible 91%. Several came from outside of 20 feet as he picked up 23 points and the Alberta game star.

Golden Bear Invitational Wrap-up

— Tournament all star jackets handed out after the game went to John Vigna of Calgary, Ron Hepburn of York, Gord Tucker from Winnipeg, Western's Greg Moore and Gerry Couzens. Byron Tokarchuk picked up his second consecutive tournament MVP trophy. . . Saturday night's banquet was highlighted by a humorous talk by national team coach Jack Donahue . . . Winnipeg snuck by York to take third place... attendance was very good averaging about 1100 for the three days. . . CIAU rankings come out today, this weekend's results should cause



From left to right, Bears' Dean Peters, Mark Baker, and all-star Gerry Couzens guard MVP Byron Tokarchuk of the Saskatchewan Huskies.

major changes, as formerly, number one ranked Victoria lost its opening game against tenth ranked Winnipeg, last year's tournament champions...the Bears are out of the public eye until after Christmas, when they will travel to Calgary and Winnipeg for tournaments. The Canada West season begins in early January.

Chairman is happy

by Mark Spector

The official chairman of the Golden Bear Invitational was more than pleased with the way that his tournament turned out.

"The crowd definitely makes the weekend," remarked Brent Foster after Sunday's championship game. He said that the attendance, which averaged about 1100 per day, "always makes or breaks a tournament."

Another key to this year being more successful than last was the fact that the Golden Bears got past their first round opponents, the University of Windsor, and into the championship side of the draw. Knowing that the tournament's attendance was directly proportionate to the success of the Bears, Foster was asked if one weak team is purposely invited to insure that the home team will win the all-important opening game. "It definitely increases the probability that you will have the good turnout. Let's face it, every town does it, you'd be crazy not to."

And as for the rumour that we will be seeing Arizona State in next

year's classic, Foster wasn't too sure that it would be to Alberta's benefit. "Is it nicer to see a top quality NCAA team come here and play their superior brand of basketball, or is it nicer to see the Bears and some other Canadian team play on an even level and see some very close games?"

Until Canadian basketball schools can compete with the top American ones, you can bet that you won't see any real name schools coming to the Golden Bear tournament. TSN was very happy with this weekend in which they televised four games across the country, so why should they show one top American club beating the pants off some poor Canadian club. If people want to see American college ball, they'll turn their channels over to the American stations where they'll at least see a close ballgame.

And for the next several years, the Golden Bear Invitational Basketball tournament needs TSN a lot more than it needs Arizona State or anyone else from that part of town, thank you.

Pandas vault over UofC

The Panda Gymnastics Team began their National Championship title defense on Sunday when they defeated the University of Calgary 123.35 to 120.85 to win their first Canada West Conference Meet.

Last year's individual overall national champion Sherry Blunden of Calgary captured the all-around title, however the depth of the Panda team was quite evident as they captured four of the top six all-around positions. Shelley Spaner led the Pandas with her second place finish (32.03). She was followed by teammates Carrie Nawata (31.86) and Donna Spaner (30.83), who finished third and fourth respectively. Lara Edmonds, a first year team member finished in the sixth position with 27.30 points.

The team showing was quite impressive considering Heidi Ross

(1985 All-Canadian) and Margie Drysdale (uneven bar silver medalist, 1985 nationals) were both scratched due to leg injuries, and promising newcomer Diane Patterson will not be eligible to compete for the Pandas until January.

In the individual events, Blunden captured three titles — vault, bars and floor. However, Shelley Spaner managed to take the beam title. Spaner also finished second on vault and floor exercise, and third on uneven bars. Other Panda medal winners were Nawata, who finished second on bars and third on beam, and Donna Spaner who captured the bronze medal in floor exercise.

The gymnasts next action will be after Christmas, when they meet the University of British Columbia team January 11 in Vancouver.

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