

Speaking on Sports

By LAWRIE HIGNELL

Why? Why? Why?

Why do we always lose Saturday night?

Why can't we win two games in a row?

Why do we leave it up to other teams to decide whether we will finish in first or second (or third?) place?

When you look at the facts you realize that we haven't lost all our Saturday night basketball games. (We beat the Bisons on December third—a Saturday night.)

We've actually won two games in a row. (We beat the Bisons on December 2 and 3.)

But who are these Bisons who claim to be from the University of Manitoba?

The WCIAA rates them in our league but their 0-7 won-loss record claims that this rating is just a vicious rumor.

I was hoping that we were out to establish two new records this season, as we mounted the back stairs leading to the gym on Saturday night. (We might even set a third record and push ourselves into a first place tie—but that was a faint hope that I tried to forget—two records is enough for one night.)

First Saturday loss excused

Everything was in our favor.

Our first Saturday loss was against Calgary, but then it was early in the season and so could be excused.

Our second Saturday loss was in Vancouver, so that was an excuse in itself.

After all, we had won the first game and a split series away from home is the most any team can hope for.

Now we were at home in front of our loyal fans.

We won the first game Friday night (naturally—we can't lose that night) and the 63-49 score even pointed to a possible Saturday victory.

We had beaten the famous UBC press that gave us so much trouble in Vancouver.

We had stopped UBC's big gun, Neil Murray (only four points).

We had controlled the back boards, an essential factor in winning basketball games and we had averaged a respectable 34 per cent from the floor.

The first half was over—I wasn't too worried—things looked good.

We were behind, but only 36-33.

T'birds were within reach

Our shooting average was a decent 42 per cent and our rebounding was just behind the Thunderbirds.

Neil Murray had hooped eight points but then we couldn't expect him to stop scoring two games in a row.

Fifteen minutes to play in the game and we finally tied the score 40-40.

Our big chance had finally arrived.

Game over. Final score 81-52.

As I trudged down the back stairs to the dressing room, I still couldn't believe it.

Our shooting average in the second half was 10 per cent.

Neil Murray had hooped 12 more points.

Our rebounding was non-existent.

The press had squashed us.

Now we had to hope that we could beat Calgary, UBC could beat Calgary, we could beat Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan could beat Calgary. . . .

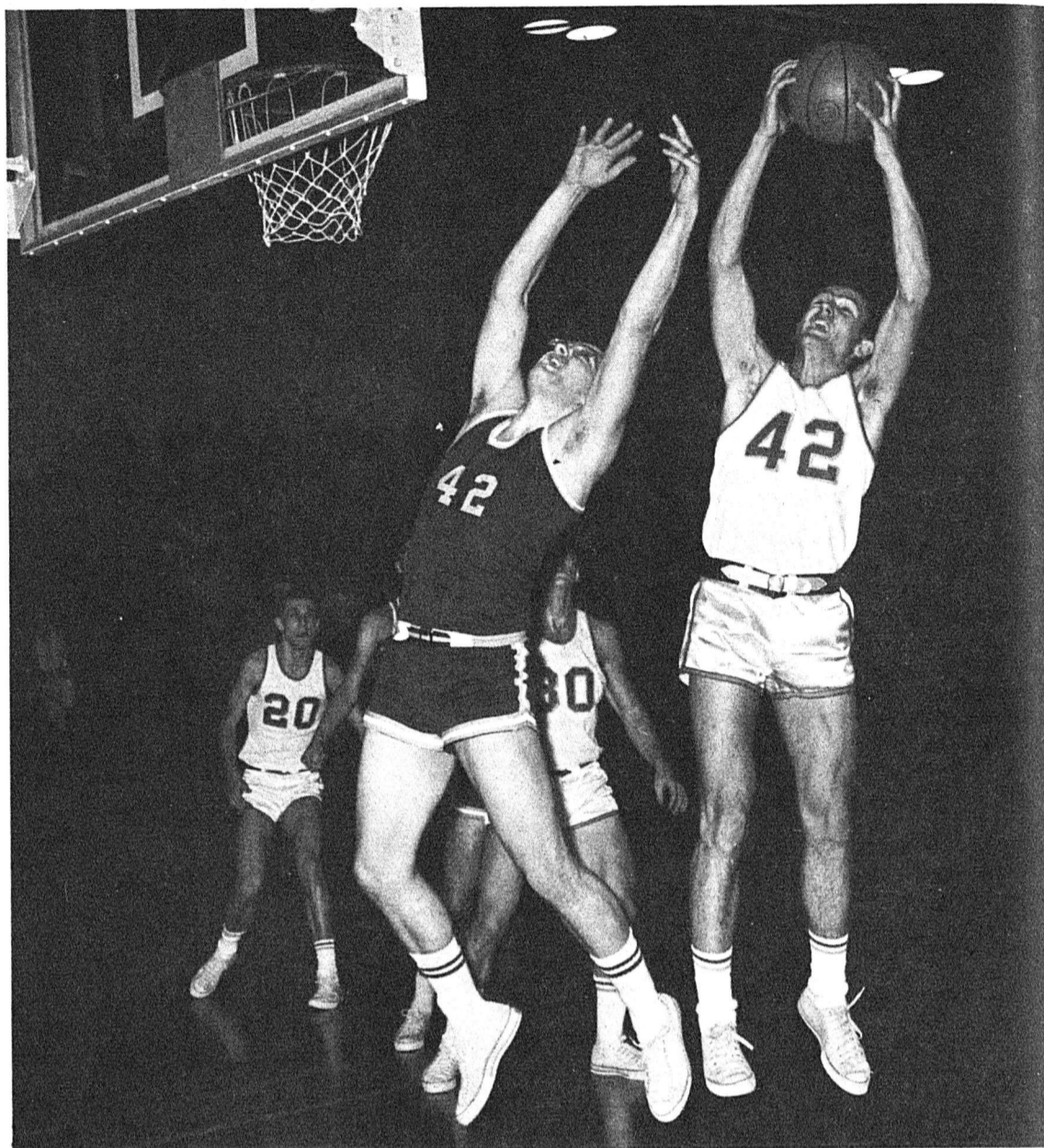
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BEARS' SHAPIRO DOES NEAT PIROUTTE, BUT T'BIRD COME UP WITH BALL
... weekend split with UBC leaves Alberta squad in second place

Bears hit by Saturday jinx for third time this season

By LAWRIE HIGNELL

The Saturday night jinx hit the Golden Bears for the third time this season as they bowed to the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds Saturday night 81-52 after a convincing 63-49 victory Friday.

Previous to this meeting, the Bears had split a series with the University of Calgary Dinosaurs as they lost the Saturday game and then repeated the feat in Vancouver two weeks ago.

When Coach Glassford was asked about the three Saturday losses, he commented, "I don't know what it is—if I did, I would correct it."

The Bears now hold down second spot in the WCIAA with five wins and three losses, two points behind the Dinosaurs who hold a 6-2 won-loss record.

The Thunderbirds, who have won all three of their games on Saturdays, are presently in third spot with three wins and three losses.

SLOW START

Friday night, the Bears started slowly as they fell behind 12-5 after seven minutes.

The 'Birds used an effective zone press to stifle the Bears' attempts to advance the ball into the forecourt.

A time-out righted the situation and the Bears pulled ahead of the Thunderbirds and led at half time 24-17.

Good defensive play and strong rebounding on both offensive and defensive boards enabled the Bears to control the game.

Guard Don Melnychuk looked very sharp on defense for the Bears and picked off many rebounds that eluded the taller forwards.

On offense, Melnychuk threw a couple of bad passes but effectively moved the ball into the forwards against the close checking Thunderbirds.

In the second half, the Thunderbirds pulled within four points of the Bears after five minutes of play but the Bears left them behind as they scored well on rebounds and fast breaks.

STRONG REBOUNDING

Forward Ed Blott and captain Nestor Korchinsky rebounded strongly for the Bears as they picked up 12 and 17 rebounds respectively.

Rebounds proved the difference in the game as the Thunderbird defense left little openings for easy baskets.

Korchinsky summed up the game when he said, "we won that game through sheer hustle."

Rookie forward Warren Champion hooped 20 points and effectively held the Thunderbird's leading scorer, Neil Murray, to only four points.

Guard Darwin Semotiuk hooped 13 points while Korchinsky added twelve.

Saturday night's humiliation was unbelievable to most of the U of A fans and Bear players.

Coach Dr. Mullins of the UBC team summed up the victory with his understatement, "I think the press really hurt them."

In the first half the score changed hands several times as Bear guard Bruce Blummell scored half of the Bear's first 14 points.

Halfway through the period, the score was tied 18-18 but the UBC

team pulled ahead by seven points at one time on good rebounding and quick breaks to lead 36-33 at the half.

In the second half the Bears literally fell apart as they failed to advance the ball against the 'Birds' tight zone press.

The press worked so effectively that the Bears only scored three baskets in the last half and two of these were on lay-ups.

As the margin grew wider, the Bears threw up desperation shots but failed to come close to the high flying Thunderbirds, who used the quick break along with the press and a tight defense to build up a final 29-point margin.

Coach Glassford was obviously disturbed after the game as he commented, "Terrible! UBC deserved to win."

When asked to explain the breaking point, Glassford pointed to the Bears attempt at beating the press in the second half and said, "All of a sudden they started throwing the ball away."

MURRAY BIG GUN

Several other factors proved to guide the UBC team to the lopsided victory—they rebounded well and Neil Murray, their top scorer this season, hooped 20 points.

Murray also held Bears' Warren Champion to five points as he stopped one of the team's top scorers.

Guard Darwin Semotiuk led the Bears with 16 points followed by Bruce Blummell with an even dozen.

Bill Langley hooped 14 for UBC while Ian Dixon and Maurice Douglas each scored twelve points.

—Neil Driscoll photo