

The hockey Bears knocked out the Dinos but couldn't handle the UQTR Patriotes at the nationals. file photo



Alan Small
Getting controversial about controversy

There is not any sport, or any league specially made for controversy, especially media controversy like American football.

The game is certainly not made for the ordinary human being to play. When you have to be 210 pounds to be a quarterback, the only position that you don't hit anyone, anyone can see that the game was made for betting fans, and the hordes of media who write about all of the controversy surrounding it.

Take the playoff formats for instance. Although, 10 of 28 teams make the playoffs, at least 20 of them are still in the hunt for wild cards and divisional championships with one week to go in the season. Both the NHL and the NBA have playoff systems that allow everyone and his dog to play post-season games.

College ball is solely made for media and fans. Heck, they don't even have a national championship game, they leave sundry chores like picking the best team in the land to United Press International or Associated Press. The media picks all of the trophies and awards, and the television stations pay most of the front money to the universities to play in the games. The Rose Bowl for example, gives \$6 million to each team for playing in the fun and the sun in Pasadena, California.

And the people that play the game are controversial themselves. Brian Bosworth's hair, Jim McMahon's headbands, or nicknames like Jack (I'm a Paid Assassin) Tatum. There's no disputing their ability to play the game, but there is when it concerns their attitude. Why do McMahon and Bosworth act like idiots?

The NFL strike was another controversial event. People ask, "Why do they go on strike, they make enough money anyways." Everyone watches the scabs goof around on the field for three weeks and ask, "Why do the owners put these ninemirros out there?" Because it is controversial.

But that isn't the only rule in American football to create controversy. The instant replay rule, love it or hate it, is a sportswriter's dream of an invention. Take Sunday's game between Seattle and Houston for example. Fred Young makes an apparent interception in OT but the instant replay officials overturn the call.

What if the NFL didn't have the what if.

Houston's drive keeps going and Tony Zendas manages to put one through the uprights to win the game. Writer then goes to Young after game, who says that he caught the ball and the officials went to the Braille school of refereeing. Voila! Instant story of 10 column inches in length. No wonder the media loves the instant replay.

Sure all sports are based on the "what if" principle. What if Young's supposed catch was allowed to stand, Seahawk fans would say: "Krieg passes to Largent then Johnson kicks a field goal!" What if there was no such thing as instant replay cameras? There wouldn't be as many "what if" situations. Less would be written about the game, and fans wouldn't talk about it as much. This does nothing but hurt the leagues and the networks that display their product.

The NFL lives off the "what if" principle. That is why the game is flourishing around the world. But the question is: What if the NFL didn't have the what if?

This was the year that was

by Alan Small

- The top five events of 1987:
1. The Oilers take the Stanley Cup.
 2. The Peistany brawl between the Canadian and Soviet junior hockey clubs.
 3. Todd Brooker's scary crash at Kitzbuehel, Austria.
 4. The Minnesota Twins winning the World Series.
 5. Canada defeats the Soviets in the Canada Cup.
- The top five non-events of 1987:
1. The NFL strike.
 2. Mike Tyson unifying the heavyweight boxing crown.
 3. The courts finding collusion in Major League Baseball.
 4. The Super Bowl.
 5. Rendez-vous.



Explanation: Whenever the Oilers can beat the Flyers, it is a big event, especially when the Cup is on the line. The brawl is important because it had some of the best fights in years, and the Canadians were winning most of them. Todd Brooker's crash shows skiers with no skill, like myself, that everyone can crash once in a while. When the Twins won the World Series, it ran my World Series losing streak to nine years. And when the Canadians won the Canada Cup, it was a great moment for our country.

Predictions:
The Oilers will beat the Habs in six games to reclaim the Stanley Cup. The Leafs, Kings, Rangers, Penguins, and Whalers will miss the playoffs.

Canada will win six gold medals in the Winter Olympics, in 30 below weather. They asked for winter didn't they?

Billy Martin leads the Yankees to AL East pennant and then they defeat the Mets in what the media calls, surprisingly, The Subway Series. He'll be so popular he'll be elected mayor of New York City, until Steinbrenner fires him one year later.

Golden Bear & Panda year in review

by Alan Small

The year 1987 was a year of good and bad tidings for sports at the University of Alberta.

Shining through the dark shadow of cutbacks was the meteoric rise of the Bear basketball team and the bronze medal performances of the hockey Bears at the University Games in Czechoslovakia.

The Golden Bear basketball club, for the first time ever, were ranked number one in the country to start out the year. Then they hopped in and out of the number one spot, until losing the Canada West semifinal to the Victoria Vikings. The loss ended a great year for a program that challenged for the top and jam-packed Varsity Gym at every home game in the new year.

The Bear hockey team scored a bronze medal at the University Games in Czechoslovakia. But that feat is just half the story as the hockey club was packing, unpacking, and repacking their bags before hand due to funding problems. Those problems were solved by a generous \$20,000 Student's Council grant.

"It seemed a waste that a team of world class calibre would miss such an opportunity because of a lack of funding," said then SU VP Finance Tim Boston.

They came back home just in time to unsuccessfully defend their CIAU hockey crown, which was eventually won by the Trois-Rivieres Patriotes, in a 6-3 victory over the Saskatchewan Huskies. The Bears came in third in the tournament.

It wasn't all bad for the Bears this year, as they defeated the NAIT Ooksips 7-2 in the third annual Face-Off.

In other sports, the Panda Basketball club was bounced out by Victoria in the Canada West semis, both volleyball clubs missed the playoffs, while the Panda gymnasts took a silver in the CIAU while the men finished an impressive fifth in the country.

The Panda swimmers finished fourth in Canada, while their Bear brothers were fifth, and the Panda track team grabbed third place in Canada while the men were seventh best. The wrestlers, under rookie coach Mike Payette, finished second in the west and tenth in Canada.

The summer was dominated by news of cutbacks. The Faculty of Physical Education chopped the track and cross country programs from intercollegiate competition. They also cut diving, and curtailed the wrestling and gymnastics programs.

In the new school year came the football and soccer seasons. The football team, led by All-Canadian Mark Brus, ended up with a 5-3 record, four wins better than the year before's sad sack troop. They lost the WJFL final to perennial winners UBC. Head coach Jim Donlevy answered his critics by making his team competitive, and a winner. He won the west's coach of the year honors as well.

The soccer team, after a disaster of a home stand against UBC and Victoria, went on a rampage afterwards and finished just two points out of top spot. It was a successful year for Len Vickery's crew, which were just a .500 club last season.



Quote of the year in university sports: "You know the French Canadian, they have a high temper. I don't know why; I tell the guys 'Keep your cool. Shut your (bleeping) mouths.' I think I'm going to buy some tapes and put them on their mouths."

—Trois-Rivieres coach Clement Jodoin.

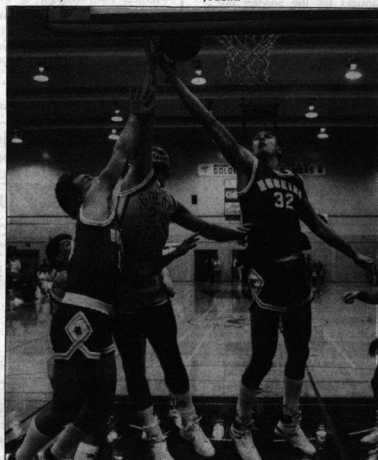


Photo Rob Galbraith

Hoop Bears struggle

The Golden Bears made it to the consolation final of the Dinosaur Invitational Monday with a victory over Regina. It ended a six game losing streak including a pair of losses at a tournament at the U of Winnipeg. They head off to Victoria for two conference games next weekend.