

Soccer Bears "out of business"

by Harald Kuckertz

Within 120 seconds the Soccer Bears' dream of winning the Canada West Soccer Championship vanished during Friday's game against the Victoria Vikings.

The Vikings quickly scored two consecutive goals in the 72nd and the 74th minute, putting on for a 2-1 win over the Bears, and subsequently captured the Western crown by defeating the University of Saskatchewan Huskies 4-0 Saturday.

The Bears wrapped up second place Saturday with a 2-0 win over the U.B.C. Thunderbirds, a small consolation for the home team.

Unfortunately the Bears picked their most important game of the season to play what must be considered one of their weakest games of the year. While full credit must be given to Victoria, who are worthy champions and certainly the most cohesive team in the tournament, it should be pointed out that the Bears might have won if they had played as well as in an exhibition game in Victoria two weeks earlier.

Victoria had an edge throughout the game, but after the Bears had survived the initial Viking thrust and after Terry Kindrat had scored for the Bears, late in the first half, it looked as if the Bears might sneak away with a win thanks to their solid defence. On several occasions early in the second half the Bears' forwards had good opportunities to extend the lead and possibly put the game out of reach, but they failed to score.

And then came the 72nd minute when Danny Lomas finished a nice Viking combination off with the tying goal. Hardly a minute later Vic Escude scored the winner, surprising a momentarily shaken defence.

In the remaining 15 minutes the Bears tried but failed to mount an dangerous attacks. Too few ideas originated in the Bears' midfield, and it did not help that the team's leading goalgetters Doug Potiuk and Terry Kindrat had to be taken out of the game due to injury and health problems.

Saturday's game was a different story. Led by the strong play of Matteo Piscopo and Bob McCauley (who played his best game as a Bear so far), the Alberta team had a slight edge throughout the game.

After a scoreless first half, Doug Potiuk scored the first goal in the 65th minute after a nice run by Piscopo on the right

side who passed to McCauley who, in turn, gave the ball to Potiuk.

The Thunderbirds subsequently brought considerably pressure to bear on the Bears' defence but Piscopo put the

win should be given to Geoff Bird who played very constructively in the second half after a rather lacklustre performance in the first 45 minutes. Moreover, Doug Potiuk, rookie full-back Bill McConkey, goalie

would have been "in business" if they had performed as well in Friday's game as in Saturday's contest.

"We should have been able to maintain our one goal lead. We can match Victoria in skill, fitness and desire but one advantage they have is that their university team plays together during the summer in a west coast league. Therefore their players have more understanding and the team has more cohesion than we are able to reach."

"I'm very proud of the guys that played with the Bears all season to the bitter end and

gave their valuable time to practice for the soccer team. It was a privilege to be associated with this group of athletes. I only wish the ending could be more successful."

Game Results

- Victoria 4-UBC 0
- Bears 4-Saskatchewan 0
- UBC 6-Saskatchewan 2
- Victoria 2-Bears 1
- Victoria 4-Saskatchewan 0
- Bears 2-UBC 0



Photo by Andrew Yeung

Bears' Doug Potiuk (white) was a key figure in Alberta's improved performance this season.

game out of reach when he scored on a beautiful shot from 25 yards out into the upper right corner - a beauty of a goal and the culmination of a great season for Piscopo. Doug Potiuk almost made it 3-0 but his excellent header after a cornerkick by Piscopo only hit the cross-bar with two minutes left in the game.

Special credit for the Bears'

Peter Dickie and Frank Tassone in his last game for the Bears, contributed significantly to the victory.

After the tournament Bears' coach Gerry Redmond was naturally disappointed that the Bears did not win the championship. While he was pleased with second place, an improvement over last year's third place finish, he felt that the Bears

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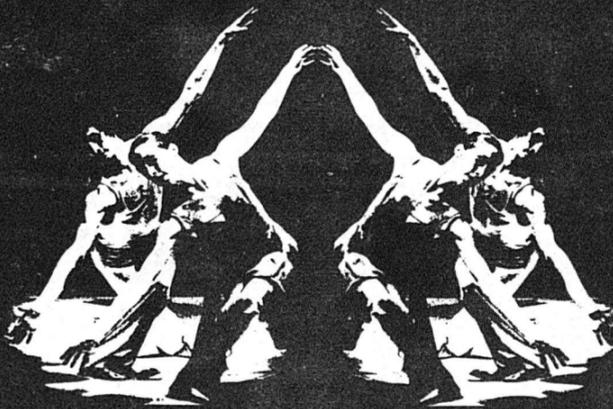
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