

Bear/Huskie and WFL stats... p. 14

# Sports

Mark Brus more than filled Funtasz' shoes... p.14

## Alberta opens at home with style

by Mark Spector

It's amazing how effective the Alberta Golden Bears can be when they're firing on all cylinders. The University of Saskatchewan Huskies found that out on Sunday, as the Bears scored early and often, en route to a 34-7 win. Alberta evened their record at 1-1 while the Huskies are still winless with two losses.

It was evident early on that it would not be the Huskies' day, as cornerback Trent Brown set the tone on Saskatchewan's opening possession. After a couple of Alberta penalties had prolonged an unorganized Huskie drive, quarterback Tony Gagnon had Tom Sargeant deep, two steps behind Brown.

But the ball was underthrown just enough to allow the second year corner to make a spectacular one-handed interception, and the Huskies had just failed on what would have turned out to be their most effective drive of the opening half.

Soon after the barrage began: Freshman halfback Mark Brus ran the ball four times, gaining 24 of the Golden Bears' 57 yards on this drive, and capping it off with a two yard plunge for the major. Then before the Huskie's backup QB had even charted the scoring play, Alberta was on Saskatchewan's doorstep once more.

On the ensuing kickoff, John Hoffman fumbled and the Bears recovered on the opposition 32 yardline. The very next play quarterback Mark Denesiuk found a wide open Brian Forrest over the middle for the touchdown.

Before the first half ended Denesiuk found a streaking Gary Kozakovich for a 27 yard TD, and Steve Kasowski kicked a 38 yard field goal to put Alberta in command at the half 24-1.

The score should have been 31-1, but Tony Peirson couldn't hold on to a sure touchdown delivery from Denesiuk, despite being open by a good ten yards. Other than that miscue, however, the Golden Bears offense was flawless.

"Last week we sort of let the defense down," said Denesiuk of the 23-5 loss in UBC. "People were saying that our offense couldn't

move the ball and stuff like that. We needed this performance to gain some credibility."

"I do wish that Tony would have caught that one though," admitted the third year pivot, "I took a pretty good hit for that play."

Alberta played a lot of their second string in the last half, (linebacker Peter White played every down replacing an injured Russell Schoeppe), but still managed to put ten more points on the board, while allowing only six.

Sheldon Weinkauf capped a stellar performance from his safety spot with a 31 yard interception return for a touchdown. He read the Huskie QB perfectly, closing on a lazy pass in the flat and taking it in unmolested. Kasowski then hit on a 40 yarder with 0:37 left on the clock to close out the scoring for Alberta. On the day, the Bear kicker was two for four, but showed much promise, especially after Alberta's weakness at that position last season.

"It is nice to have (the consistent kicking game)," said Denesiuk. "When the offense stalls on the 20, it's good to know that you're likely to get three points, not just one."

Something else that the Alberta QB could be pleased with was the protection provided by his young offensive line. "It just comes down to experience," he said. "Last week was the first time together for them and you could really see them coming together out there (today)."

"In BC we had a lot of mental breakdowns, and I think that not having any exhibition games had something to do with that," relayed the veteran on the line, center Blair Wood. "This year I think that we're a lot less predictable than in the last few seasons. In the past, people have been able to know what we were going to do."

Definitely it was the varied attack of the offense that led to Alberta's success. "Every game you play you like to go into it thinking that you can go deep," was how rookie receivers coach Brian Fryer put it, and one gets the feeling that Bear fans will be treated to a few more aerial displays this year. The receivers are just starting to get confidence in catching the ball from



Tom Houg takes the ball and runs for a few of his 40 yards, Saturday vs. Saskatchewan.

photo Bruce Gardave

Mark," said Fryer. "We need this game so that the guys could believe in themselves."

The Golden Bears looked like world beaters on Saturday. The defense was more than just outstanding, allowing only a single and a TD (which came with only 52 seconds left against a largely second string defense). The offensive line provided adequate protection for Denesiuk, but they did their best work with the inside running game. Brus and Tom Houg continually ripped off six and seven yard gains from simple off-tackles and counters up the middle. And the receivers, by and large, were extremely effective.

They must remember one thing, however — the Saskatchewan Huskies are a last place team. The Calgary Dinosaurs are the defending CIAU champions.

And unless Alberta wants to disappoint what will be their largest crowd of the season on Saturday at Commonwealth Stadium, they'd better not let this one impressive victory go to their heads.



Alberta's Paul St. Pierre puts the hit on Dave Dube of Saskatchewan.

photo Alex Miller

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