

Speaking on Sports

By LAWRIE HIGNELL

Christmas came late to the University of Alberta Golden Bear basketball squad but not to the dismay of the team.

Someone has finally beaten the University of Calgary Dinosaurs on their home court, a feat which has been extremely rare in the last two seasons in the WCIAA.

Not only had they beaten the Dinos once, but they had come within seconds of making a clean sweep of the weekend in Calgary.

The Bears weren't shedding any tears last Saturday when the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds squashed Calgary's pride and beat them 62-59 at their own game.

Even the Friday night game proved that Calgary was not invincible, but then UBC didn't want to humiliate the Dinosaurs on their first night in Calgary.

Instead they quietly missed a lay-up in the last two seconds and bowed out gracefully to their hosts 73-72.

Everything was coming up roses again for the Bears and they were once again in contention for the basketball crown of the West and a free pass to Second Century Week in March.

The Bears had split their doubleheader with Calgary here last November and were dreading the return engagement in Calgary late in January.

And why shouldn't they doubt their ability in front of the raving-mad fans in the Cowtown?

Victories scarce in Calgary

No other Golden Bear team has won a single game on the Calgary court in the last three years.

But just a minute, fellows. All those old wives' tales about Calgary could be wrong.

Perhaps there aren't really any lids on those baskets—maybe the southern referees can see with both eyes—and perhaps the Dinosaurs wouldn't eat us alive if we beat them on their home court.

After all, UBC played them last weekend, beat them and are scheduled to play us here tonight and Saturday.

Say, that's something to think about.

Suppose the Thunderbirds did escape alive from the Dinosaur's grasp.

That means they'll be flying around our baskets tonight, trying to shoot us down and steal that crown.

Perhaps we had just better show up tonight with our teeth bared, ready to rip those 'Birds to shreds.

Remember what happened two weeks ago when we travelled to their nest to try to steal their eggs.

Sure, we split the doubleheader, but not in a very convincing fashion.

A win in double overtime and a loss by 13 points can hardly be claimed a victory by superiority.

And remember that UBC beat Calgary on their home court, something we have failed to do this year or last.

They may be a small team compared to us but height isn't everything. And home town fans aren't everything, especially if we play poor basketball.

University fans fickle

That's another point that you should be warned about. University fans are known to be extremely fickle in regards to basketball on campus.

Loyal fans turn up for every game, but 300 people certainly doesn't do much for the morale.

The other 11,000 are much too busy studying for those final exams in April to waste time on a team that is only tied for first place.

Now is the time to show those mangy crows that there is no roost in Edmonton for their flock.

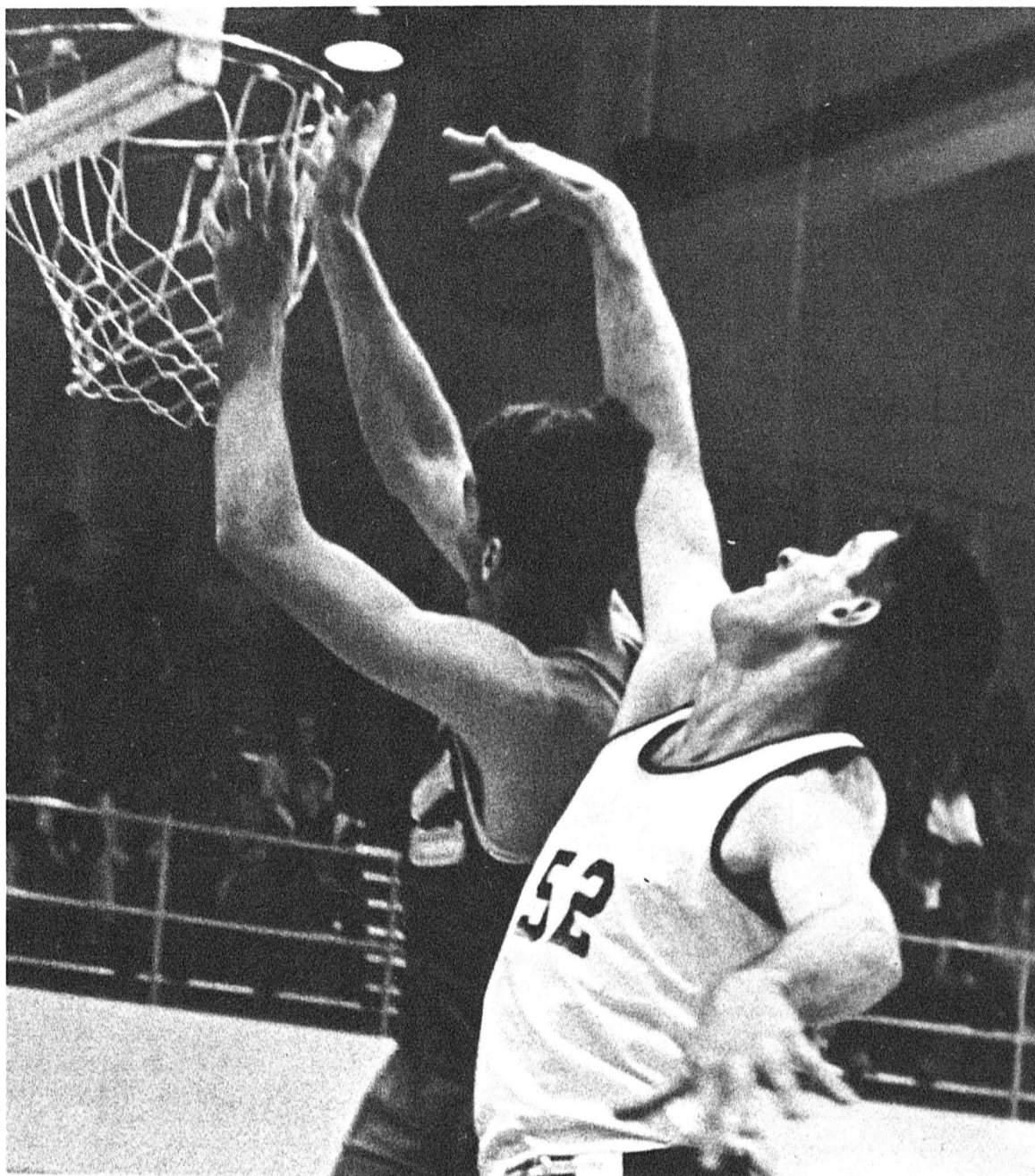
Besides, we can use the practice for our big games next weekend in Calgary when we aim to stifle the Dinosaurs in two straight games.

Go out there and show the 'Birds that we intend to play host to the finals in Edmonton next March—not just fans.

One compensating factor that is sure to be in our favor this weekend is the refereeing.

Edmonton referees have to be about the most biased bunch in the WCIAA as they hate to see the home team continually ending up in the loser's column.

But at least they cheat in a legal way—that's a great improvement on the way the referees treat us in the other WCIAA cities.



BEAR ED BLOTT (52) GIVES HIS ALL UNDER BASKET
... whole team must do same to down high-flying T'Birds this weekend

—Frank Johnstone photo

Bears host UBC Thunderbirds in battle for championship

By LAWRIE HIGNELL

The Bears play host to the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds this weekend in what could prove the decisive factor in the final WCIAA standings.

The Bears, the Thunderbirds and the University of Calgary Dinosaurs have each split a doubleheader on the foreign court this season and caused an upset in the pre-season predictions.

Coach Gerry Glassford commented, "This weekend's activity could give us a chance to finish first in the league. If we can win these two and split in Calgary next weekend, we will be pretty well assured of first place."

When asked about Calgary's chances of retaining the crown, Glassford added, "Calgary will have to win two games in Vancouver and both games next weekend to finish first."

The Bears will have to be up for these games as the Thunderbirds are riding a hot streak of one win and a one-point loss, both to the Dinosaurs in Calgary.

The Bears had trouble in Vancouver two weeks ago against UBC but managed to split the weekend with a double-overtime win.

UBC has re-entered the WCIAA after two years absence and they have taken this time to play top ranked U.S.A. college teams.

University of Hawaii, Gonzaga

University, Portland State and Eastern Oregon College include some of the western teams that the Thunderbirds have met during the two seasons of international play.

When asked about the 13 point loss in UBC, Coach Glassford was quick to reply that forward Ed Blott was sidelined for over half the game.

Blott got four quick fouls in the first eight minutes of play and I had to pull him for fear of losing him," added Glassford.

"I didn't put him back in until the last seven minutes of play so he played only fifteen minutes of the game."

Statistics up to January 16, released by the Bear coaches, prove that Ed Blott is indeed the most valuable point getter on the Bear squad.

Blott has totalled 334 points this season for an average of 15 points per game.

Captain Nestor Korchinsky is second in points total with 223 and a ten point per game average.

Korchinsky, however, has made up in rebounds what he lacks in scoring as he leads the team with 267 followed closely by Blott with 243 in 22 games.

Rookie forward Warren Champion has averaged nine points per game and 168 rebounds but leads the team in fumbled balls.

Forwards in general, hold the

majority of fumbles, while guards are costly in bad passes.

Don Melnychuk has thrown away 35 passes this year but is closely followed by Darwin Semotiuk with 33 and Bruce Blummell with 23.

In the last week, the Bears have been stressing the full court press. During their loss to UBC two weeks ago, the Bears were completely bewildered by a good press and the smaller Thunderbird players soared ahead of the Bears on costly errors and bad passes.

Despite all the practice this week, the Bears may still find trouble with UBC team who are determined to insure themselves a first place finish in the western conference.

Fans are to be treated to some live entertainment during the half-time break in Friday's game, including a preliminary game with the University of Alberta Cubs and the University of Saskatchewan from Regina.

Saturday night will see two preliminary games with the Cubs playing the Regina team and the U of A Bearcats hosting the senior men's team from the Edmonton YMCA.

Friday and Saturday night's main games begin at 8:30 in the main gymnasium with the preliminary games both nights commencing at 6:00 p.m.