

CW title for Alberta

Emotions high in hockey Bears' triumph

by Cam Cole

Someone had taped a sign on the dressing room door. It said, "Believe in ourselves and each other."

For three nerve racking days last weekend, twenty Golden Bear hockey players and their coach did just that, and they came away with the Canada West Championship, winning two out of three from a fired up UBC club who refused to admit that Bears were number one.

Playing before near-capacity crowds all three games, Alberta looked as though they would wrap it up in two straight, after an impressive 5-2 win in the opener, but the victory had cost Bears the services of Kevin Primeau (knee ligaments) for at least a week, and Jim Ofrim (pulled groin) for Saturday's match.

British Columbia continued to play tough physical hockey on Saturday, and eked out a 2-1 decision, while putting Bears' Bruce Crawford out of action with a badly bruised shoulder. Ofrim and Crawford are 2/3 of Alberta's, regular centremen, and Primeau and Crawford make up 2/3 of Alberta's second line.

Bears shrugged off the injuries, however, and their spirited come-from-behind 4-3 victory in Sunday's deciding game left 2,500 ecstatic fans shouting and clapping long after the game's conclusion.

Goaltending on both sides highlighted the series, along with good forechecking and penalty-killing, but in the end it was pure hustle and heart that told the tale.

Alberta controlled the series' first game from start to finish, holding period leads of 1-0 and 3-0, keeping T-Birds in check throughout. Rick Peterson, stading all along in front of BC goalie Dave Andrews, opened scoring early, and Oliver Steward, Ross Barros, and Steve McKnight made it 4-0, before Keith Tindle finally got the Birds on the board. 24 seconds later, rookie Randy Lemy negated BC's goal with one of his own, and Thunderbirds' second marker came too late to matter.

McKnight and Barros were outstanding for Alberta, and Dale Henwood was a steading influence in the net, when a

case of the early jitters gave BC some good chances in the opening 20 minutes.

Henwood made 41 saves, while Andrews blocked an identical total in the UBC goal. T-Birds' second goal-scorer was Bob Sperling.

"Something inside me told me to go with Vic (Lemire) in goal," said UBC coach Bob Hindmarch, after his netminder had shared the spotlight with Henwood in BC's knee-knocker 2-1 victory Saturday. Thunderbirds out-muscled Alberta, while the goaltenders made save after spectacular save, as all the scoring came in the second half of the contest. BC's Brian Penrosé drew first blood at the 10:00 mark of the second period in the penalty-filled match, but John Simkin tied the score early in the third.

UBC captain Brian Debasio needed two rebounds to beat Henwood for the winner with 14 minutes remaining.

Hindmarch had been irritated by the refereeing in the initial stages of the game, but he was all smiles afterward.

"We had 18 players out there going 100%," he said, "our goaltending was great again ... these two kids (Jim) Lawrence and (Grant) Cumberbirch just did a heck of a job killing penalties for us."

Before the series final Sunday, Hindmarch was confident of a BC win. He felt that Alberta's injury situation, and the fact that they would have to use inexperienced players to replace Crawford, Primeau, and Ofrim, would hurt them.

Hindmarch also expressed the belief that goaltending would be a problem for Alberta. Coach Clare Drake, he thought, would be reluctant to switch to Craig Gunther after two strong outings by Henwood, but that Henwood would be too tired to play well three days in a row.

He was wrong on both counts, or rather, on three of them.

In the first place, Henwood was obviously stronger than his diminutive frame would indicate. He was called upon to make numerous difficult stops, including a breakaway by BC's top scorer, Sean Boyd, in the third period.

In the second place, Jim Ofrim couldn't be kept out of the lineup, despite a noticeable



Was it or wasn't it? The puck appeared to be in the net after Rick Peterson (9) drilled a shot from short range.

limp, and turned in a gutsy performance, helping winger Clark Jantzie to a big two-goal afternoon.

In the third place, Hindmarch underestimated Drake's ability to come up with winning combinations. Craig Styles centered a makeshift line with Rick Peterson and Howard Crosley, and the line accounted



Howard Crosley - 2 goals Sunday, including the winner.

for two goals, including the winner.

Bryan Sosnowski had to kill penalties, aside from his regular duties, replacing Crawford, who had been Bears' most effective penalty-killing forward all season.

Crosley started the ball

rolling at 2:25 of the first period, on a shorrange backhand that squirted past Lemire.

At 8:22, Bob Sperling knotted the score, with UA's John Simkin sitting out an interference penalty.

BC took a short-lived lead in the second period, with Bill Ennos' quick blast from the slot area, but it only lasted 15 seconds before Jantzie, with a tremendous show of strength, shook off two checkers and swept a backhand shot behind Lemire.

BC surged ahead again at 7:27, when Penrose drilled a 25-footer by Henwood, but Steve Davis was penalized for charging, and Alberta's "previously powerless power play" finally came through, with Jantzie's second goal - a high hard wrist shot that beat Lemire cleanly at 9:20.

Play was conided to fierce checking in the third period, with both clubs afraid of a mistake that would cost them the series.

Both UA and UBC managed 9 shots in the period, but only three of the eighteen really mattered.

Two were game-saving saves by Henwood - Boyd's breakaway, and a pointblank stop on Keith Tindle, who was parked all by himself in front of the Alberta net.

The 'Big One' was the goal that won the West for the Bears - Howard Crosley threaded the needle from 20 feet out, high to Lemire's stick side at 12:42, and Varsity Arena went crazy. Teammates came off the bench to mob Crosley, and BC couldn't get a solid attack going or the Alberta goal for the balance of the game, as the Bears prevailed 4-3.

Nearly all the fans remained in their seats, while Phys. Ed. Dean Dr. Maury Van Vliet presented Captain Steve McKnight with the trophy, and gave each member of the Golden Bears organization his individual medal, signifying Canada West supremacy.

There were tears in the UBC dressing room, but not for Hindmarch, who was as proud of his team's effort as if they had won the emotionally-charged series.

On the other side of the rink, Bears savored the sweet taste of victory, before settling

down to prepare for their upcoming playoffs against the Great Plains Conference champs, the U. of Brandon Bobcats.

That series begins here on Friday.

Bears hurting for Brandon series

The University of Alberta Golden Bear hockey team, now the Canada West champions, face the University of Brandon Bobcats in the best-of-three playoff series this weekend with the winner moving one more step down the path to the national championships.

Game times in Varsity Arena are 8:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday nights with the third game scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Sunday if necessary.

Tickets are available at Students Union Information Desk, Mackenzie Desk, Mikes, Room 116, Physical Education Building, and The Box Office at McCauley Plaza.

The Great Plains Athletic Conference champion, Bobcats, are something of an unknown quantity to Coach Clare Drake and his Golden Bears as the team hasn't faced them on the ice, nor have they had they had the opportunity to see them play.

But Coach Drake does know that the Bobcats were virtually unchallenged for the GPAC championship and that in exhibition play early this season the Bobcats defeated the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds twice. He also had three Bobcats at his Student National Team camp in Edmonton - including GPAC all-star goaltender, Larry Budzinski. "All excellent players," says Drake, which would seem to indicate that the University of Brandon has a very competent hockey club. Golden Bears fans can look forward to some excellent hockey action again this weekend.

Jim Ofrim and Kevin Primeau, injured in the hard-hitting UBC series last weekend will likely be able to play this weekend. The situation with Bruce Crawford, also injured in the series is a bit more doubtful but Bruce may recover enough to see some action in the series, says Coach Drake.

...and pick up individual awards



photo by Ray Popikaitis

Clark Jantzie (20) accepts medal from Dr. Maury Van Vliet. Dale Henwood (30) and Coach Drake (right) are close behind.