

# Bears have grown new paws

By Karl Wilberg

Fortunately, appearances are deceiving. Ravaged by old age and the lures of professional ball, the Bears could appear to be an easy target for their rivals. After losing 14 starting line up players, the Bears and coach Donlevy may seem far from success.

In fact, the rebuilding of an effective offensive game, under coach Lazaruk, may prove to be the Bears' strength. Even if the 25

new players and remaining veterans fail to win a conference title, a strong base for future success exists.

The largest gaps in the lineup appeared on the defensive, and to a lesser extent, on the offensive line. For example 1978 starters Coffin, Zaharko, and star lineman Leo Blanchard are now involved in the C.F.L. Also, Marco Cyncar, receiver and punt-kicker, was lost to professional ball.

To compensate for these losses, the Bears' coaching staff has recruited several promising athletes. For example, offensive line rookies R. Bouy, from Vegreville, and Ben Der from Vic Comp are thought highly of by Donlevy. In time, they should be able to support veterans Hole, Henschel, and Moore on the line. The Bears' offensive line is outsized by other teams. However, they are determined and, as Lazaruk says, they are gritty.

Still, against teams with strong defensive lines, like Manitoba, the offensive line could have difficulty allowing running backs Martin Pardell and Sean Kehoe to display their skill. Both sophomore Pardell and veteran Kehoe were able to gain critical yards in tight situations last season. In fact, their efforts provided excitement in an otherwise disappointing year. For example Kehoe, against U.B.C., became the first Bear since 1976 to rush more than 100 yards. Last season, the running game often became the basis for remaining competitive. This year, under coach Smith, the running backs will again attempt to elude the powerful defensive lines in the collegiate league.

In contrast with the known capabilities of the ground attack, the Bears' quarterback situation is less certain. 1978 starting quarterback Dan McDermid retired after the third pre-season practice. Forrest Kennerd, Randy Stollery, and Jamie Crawford are the remaining candidates. Last year the Bears suffered from an inconsistent offense, caused in part by a poor passing game.

Ex-Huskie Forrest Kennerd, after a year away from football, is likely to be the starting quarterback. Kennerd typifies many of the rookies in not being a rookie at all, but really an established athlete. Kennerd, in training camp and in the season opener, proved to be an exciting performer.

According to defensive coach Syrotiuk, the Bears will be using a new offensive strategy. He states that a new "half pass, half run" policy will make it difficult for other teams to predict the Bears' offensive strategy. Also, for the first few games it is likely that offensive coach Jim Lazaruk will call the plays. This is intended to take pressure off the new quarterbacks. Consequently, the quarterbacks will have more time to concentrate on executing the play. So far, this idea has been successful.

In general, Donlevy believes the Bears are "in tough for the defensive line." Donlevy probably has justified confidence in his defense because he has veterans DeGroot, Miles, and Shaver. Also notable on the line is rookie Blake Dermott from Bonnie Doon.

Dermott, in training camp, seemed to typify the new players' attentiveness and determination. One hopes that this attitude prevails with the new men. Also, contact between player and

coach as well as team unity will benefit from this attitude. Previously, disunity has been a problem with the Bears and has hindered performance. Similarly, Syrotiuk mentions that this year the veterans are pleased with the rookies, and have said the team is "closer together than last year."

With the immeasurable effect of good relations between players and coaches, the Bears may be able to elude previous late season slumps. In addition, the new players may soon become the nucleus of a new wave Bears team. A tired offensive strategy may become revitalized, and the rookies will allow coaches greater flexibility in training.

In total, the addition of new players is not, as many believe, a disadvantage. Given the large effort put into the team, and good coaching, the Bears should be successful in the future. The team's character is different from last year and, as yet, relatively unproven. However, it would be foolish to overemphasize their youth and underemphasize having time as an ally.



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