

# Golden Bears draft picks stay in Alberta



**Tim Enger**

Last Saturday the CFL held its annual draft. In the past, the event has been less than momentous, because the territorial protection picks usually took care of the better players, leaving the actual draft for the rest. But now with the open draft it has become an interesting annual event and a true indicator of who the best Canadian talent is each year.

This means that for the best Golden Bear draft prospects they will be on the open market as opposed to instant Eskimos as they have become in the past.

This year's draft saw two Golden Bears selected. Runningback Jeff Funtasz went to the Eskimos in the fourth round and wide receiver Tony Pierson was taken by the Calgary Stampeders in the sixth round.

For Funtasz, being drafted wasn't much of a surprise. "I'd been in contact with (Eskimo Head Scout) Frank Morris earlier," said the Bears single season rushing record holder. "He said that they were going to go after a couple of guys with their first couple of picks but they were definitely going to take me."

Funtasz came into the league in 1984 and blew the W.I.F.L. apart, leading the country in rushing and his team to a regular season championship. That year he won Rookie-of-the-Year honors in the nation and most assuredly would have been a first round pick if he could have kept up that pace for the rest of his collegiate career. But a couple of star-crossed years filled with injuries dropped his stock.

Now he faces a huge challenge in trying to crack the Eskimo line-up which not only features three solid running backs in Chris Skinner, Milson Jones, and Chris Johnstone, but also a number one

draft pick in Blake Marshall from Western Ontario. The fact that all these guys are Canadian doesn't help much either.

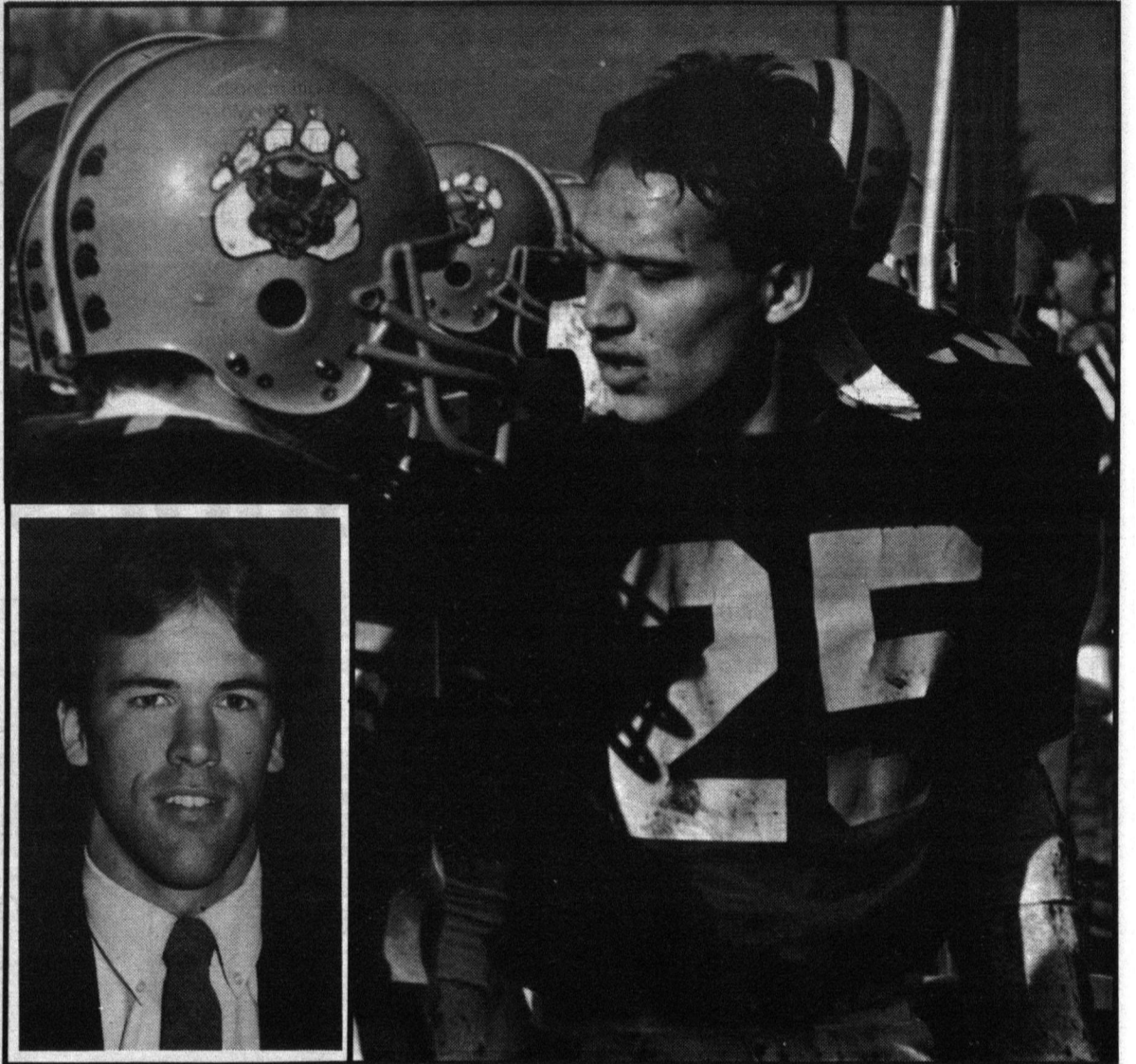
Pierson's selection can be considered a bit of a surprise because prior to the 1985 season he was trying to crack the Bears line-up as a defensive back.

"I had a pretty good CFL evaluation camp," said Pierson, "but it was still a bit of a shock when I saw on TV that I had been taken by the Stampeders."



Unfortunately for him, he will be competing for a job in a position that has traditionally been reserved for Americans, but his speed may help him in that area.

**BEAR TRACKS** — The open draft is the big league move by the CFL, but the fact that the draftees get informed by newspaper reporters and TV newscasts instead of the drafting teams themselves leaves a lot to be desired . . . Both Pierson and Funtasz are eligible to return to the Bears next season.



Jeff Funtasz in his CIAU Rookie of the Year season. The 20-year old junior was drafted in the fourth round while wide out Tony Pierson (inset) was taken in the sixth round by the Calgary Stampeders. photo Bruce Gardave

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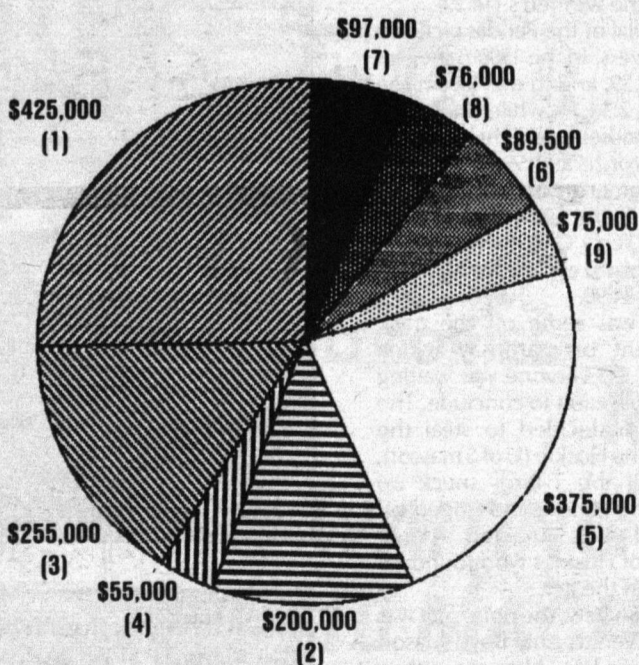
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