

Field hockey Pandas move up

by Todd Saelhof

The University of Alberta field hockey Pandas managed to climb one rung in the Canada West standings this past weekend to share third place with the University of Calgary Dinosaurs. The move upwards came as a result of successful Saturday contests against the Dinos and the University of Manitoba Bisons.

Against the Bisons in game one, Alberta's Bev Wolfert and Tara Cruxford scored goals on route to a 2-1 victory. The win lifted the Pandas out of a cellar dwelling tie with Manitoba to lie one point behind U of C in the overall standings.

Cruxford, however, notched game two's only goal to move the Pandas ahead of Calgary by a single point. Alberta's 1-0 defeat of U of C wrapped up a perfect Panda Saturday giving coach Dru Marshall and her troops renewed confidence for Sunday's confrontations with the University of British Columbia Thunderbirds and the conference leading University of Victoria Vikettes.

The Panda style of play, however, switched Sunday from one of aggression to one of tight defense.

"We went with a very defensive game plan against both UVic and UBC," Marshall said realizing the two British Columbia squads possess strong offensive talent.

Game three against the Vikettes saw the Pandas proudly hold UVic off the scoreboard until the final minute of the match. Victoria finally scored on a good shot off of their fourteenth penalty corner in the 69th minute for a 1-0 win.

"The kids were disappointed. You play kitty-bar-the-door style, but come away unlucky in the end," Marshall said of the heartbreaking loss.

The ball continued bouncing the wrong way in the final match against UBC, as Alberta was shutout 3-0 by the Thunderbirds.

"The calls were against us in the last game. Anything that was fifty-fifty was called in UBC's favor," Marshall said.

All in all, however, Marshall described Panda play in Winnipeg this past weekend as "a really good team effort." It was good enough at least to pull into a third position tie with the Dinos at six points, three ahead of the last place Bisons.

Both U of C and Manitoba managed to pick up only one point in four games of competition while UBC collected three victories for six points. UVic swept all four of its games, virtually guaranteeing first place in Canada West standings with fifteen points.

The first place winner after tourney three next weekend earns a trip to the CIAU Nationals November 4th in Toronto as Canada West

representative. UBC's strong performance gives them a solid ten point second and puts them in good position to claim a wild card berth. If either Alberta or Calgary can put together dominating performances in Victoria during next weekend's final CWUAA tournament, then look for the second wild card invitation to come west.

PENALTY CORNER: No major injuries came out of weekend action in Winnipeg for the Pandas. Two U of A members, however, did suffer minor setbacks. Veteran **Melinda Smith** received a hand injury while **Patti Dumaresq** banged up her leg, but both should be ready for the final Canada West showdown four days from now in Victoria.

Football Bears one win away

Alberta 13 Manitoba 9

The Bear football squad took their 3-2 record on the road on Saturday against the University of Manitoba Bisons. With the season on the line (if the Bears lost, their playoff hopes would have diminished), the Bears came up with a 13-9 come from behind win, over the winless Bisons. "If we would have lost, that could very well have been the season," center Trevor Martin said.

The Bear comeback was completed when backup quarterback Mike Kolodnicki dove into the zone for a two yard touchdown. It was his first win as a playing quarterback since 1986. "It's hard to credit the quarterback for a sneak," Kolodnicki said. "The (offensive) line and the running backs did all the work."

Martin was one of those who Kolodnicki was talking about. "We had good field position to start the drive," Martin said. The whole offence rose to the occasion. We knew what we had to do."

Manitoba had blitzed often and that had pinned the Bear offence deep in their zone. "They weren't giving us a different picture from

what we saw in practice," Martin said. "They were just hard to predict. They blitzed a lot, probably because they had nothing to lose."

The defence, which had shutout the Bisons in the home-opener, wanted to give the offence a chance to win the game. "We always knew that if we gave the offence the ball, they'd stick it in the endzone," linebacker Mike Baker said. "The defence played good, but overall the team came out flat."

The Bears did not play last week. "It's hard coming off a bye," Baker said. "It's just a long layoff. It's hard to get yourself into the game, you're not as relaxed (as usual)," Baker said.

The Bears entered the game knowing that if they won their remaining games, they would make the playoffs. Maybe the possibility of burying the UBC T-Birds (whom the Bears play next week) and the Calgary Dinosaurs was in the back of the players' minds.

"They guys weren't looking ahead," Baker said. "But it's sort of hard not to. You see a light at the end of the tunnel. It's always in the background."



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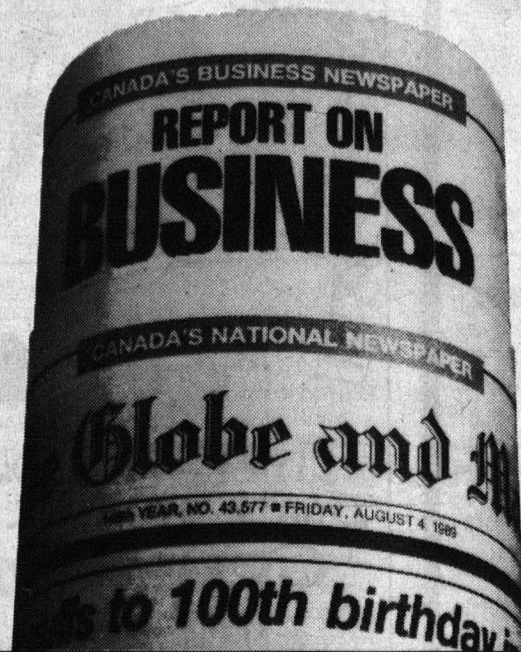
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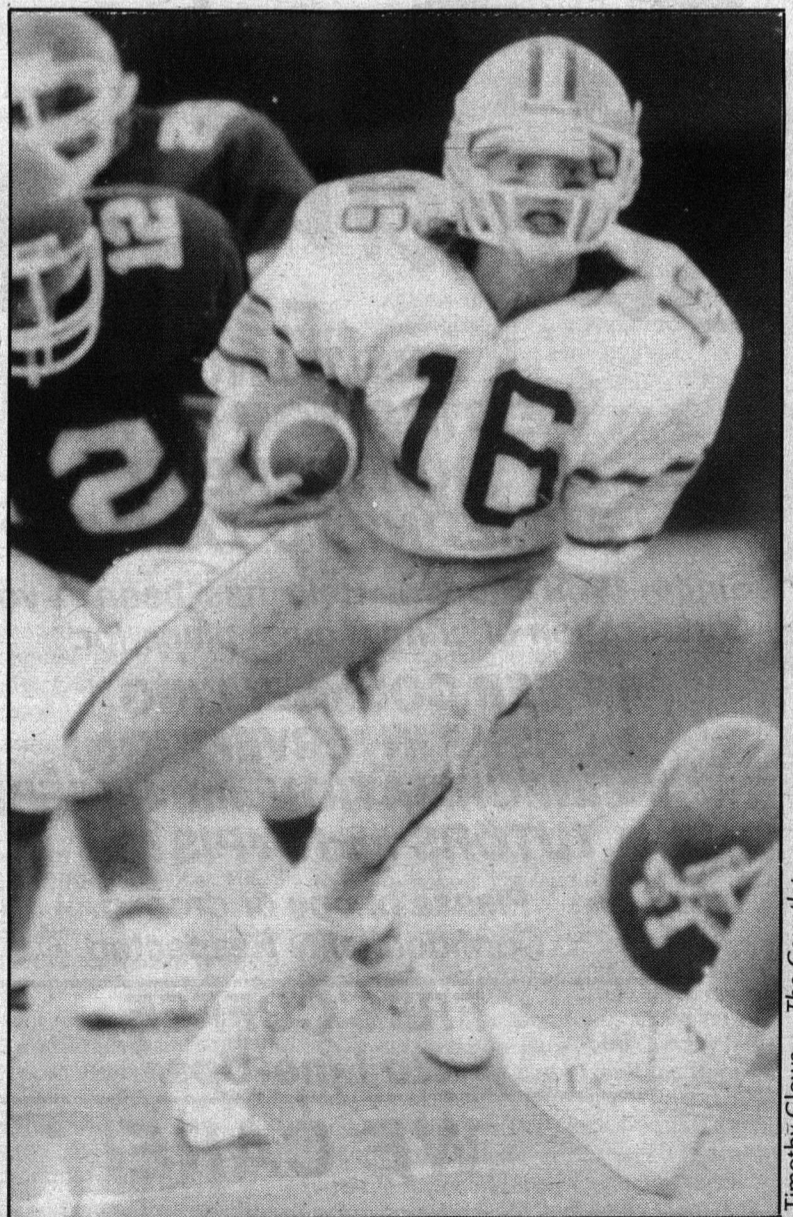
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Bear contain man Todd Matheson gets through a hole and looks for more. The Bears beat Manitoba and are one win away from the playoffs.

Timothy Glowa - The Garmiter