

Speaking on Sports

By STEVE RYBAK

Inconsistent refereeing mars Golden Bear basketball action

It would be nice to see if the Golden Bears could play basketball and win with only five men on the court.

The basketball refereeing in Edmonton is the worst in Western Canada, make that the worst in Canada. The biggest problem the referees have is consistency, all they see are the opponents' jerseys.

One of their worst displays was presented to 2,000 people in the gym Friday night when the Bears hosted the U of S Huskies.

Huskie coach, Bob Mirwald said after the game, "This is the worst refereeing we've ever received on the road."

"Don Newton, Dinosaur coach, warned me that it would be bad," he said. "It may sound like sour grapes, but that's the way it is."

It does sound like sour grapes from a coach whose team just lost 71-64, but if you remember the game and some of the choicer calls, you'll realize that Mirwald is right. There was a five minute stretch late in the last quarter when the Huskies managed only three shots but managed to pick up five offensive fouls. The dubious refereeing enable the Bears to come back from a 13 point deficit to take the game.

The Huskies picked up fouls right and left, just looking at the Bears. To try to even off things a bit the referees managed to squeeze in a few stupid calls against the Bears. One particular call that comes to mind came when the Huskies' Brent Batting had his foot out of bounds on the Bears' baseline. The referees promptly called an offensive foul.

Refs clamped down in second half

But the biggest thing the 'referees' have is inconsistency. "The first half of the game they let the teams play basketball," said Mirwald. "In the second half they really clamped down and called every petty thing in the book. It's unfair to the boys."

"They come out and work hard all through the year and expect to play basketball. Then in one of our last games they come up against something like this."

"The referees just wouldn't let them play basketball, they effectively killed the game. It wouldn't be so bad if they clamped down right at the beginning of the game and kept tight control all through the game. But this is ridiculous," he said.

The moment that the referees seem to pick to start their barrage of foul calls for the opponents comes when the Bears got hot and start to cut down their opponent's lead. They get a lot of help on defence and offence from the men in striped jerseys, you know those guys who are supposed to be neutral. Score—the Bears 13 fouls, Huskies 25, 15 in the second half.

Some may still say this is a sour grapes attitude that any losing coach will use to make excuses. Or that this is just a good excuse for me to sound-off. Talk to Darwin Semotiuk sometime. Semotiuk is the coach of the Manitoba Bisons and he played basketball for the Bears for five years. He'll be the first to agree and state that the officiating in Edmonton is the worst he has ever seen.

But no one ever complains about it

You occasionally hear some people in the athletics department start to cry and make mutterings about the wretched hockey refereeing the Bears get from one Babe McAvoy. They have even asked the Alberta Amateur Hockey Association not to send him to referee their games. But have you ever heard of them complaining about the worst basketball refereeing in Western Canada. No. This time the Bears get all the breaks.

Bear coach Barry Mitchelson had this candid comment following the victory Friday night—"There were more fouls in the second half, but I think the refereeing was adequate."

When will someone wake up and realize that the miserable effort called basketball refereeing will have to be improved more than a thousand-fold before good basketball will ever be played consistently on the Alberta campus. It does just as much to drive away the fans as poor publicity, a losing team and questionable scheduling.

How about letting the basketball players play basketball. They might enjoy it.

Bears still holding share of third after weekend split in basketball

By JIM MULLER

Bears 71, Huskies 64
Bears 75, Huskies 91

In WCIAA basketball action, the Golden Bears remained deadlocked in third place with the University of Saskatchewan Huskies.

The Bears, although outrun, outplayed, and out-coached, split a

weekend series with the Huskies, winning 71-64 Friday, and getting drubbed 91-75 Saturday.

The Bears were supposed to have a defence designed to stop the Huskies' 6'7" centre, Jim Sekulich. They gave the Huskies the corner shot and Tom Gosse made the most of it.

Friday, in the first half, Saskatchewan grabbed an early 14-9 lead, but the Bears tied the game 14-14 with seven minutes gone. Undaunted, the Huskies continued to take advantage of Bear mistakes and led 34-31 at the half.

In the second half, the Huskies ran the Bears into the floor and held a 58-45 lead with eight minutes remaining.

Coach Barry Mitchelson of the Bears had been forced to use Ian Walker when it became apparent that Dave Swann was unable to operate on a damaged knee. In the second half, Walker, hitting with an outside jump shot, kept the Bears in the game. Some questionable refereeing allowed the Bears to make a come back and tie the game 60-60 with three minutes remaining. The Bears remained in control to win 71-64.

Warren Champion led the Bears with 23 points. Walker added 15.

Gosse led the Huskies with 19 points. Guard Doug Kester contributed another 12.

Saturday, the designed defence failed to stop either Sekulich or Gosse. In the first half, both players walked over the Bears, and the Huskies led 46-41 at the half.

COMEBACK

The Bears made a comeback in the second half; led by Champion's ten points they tied the game 55-55 with six minutes gone.

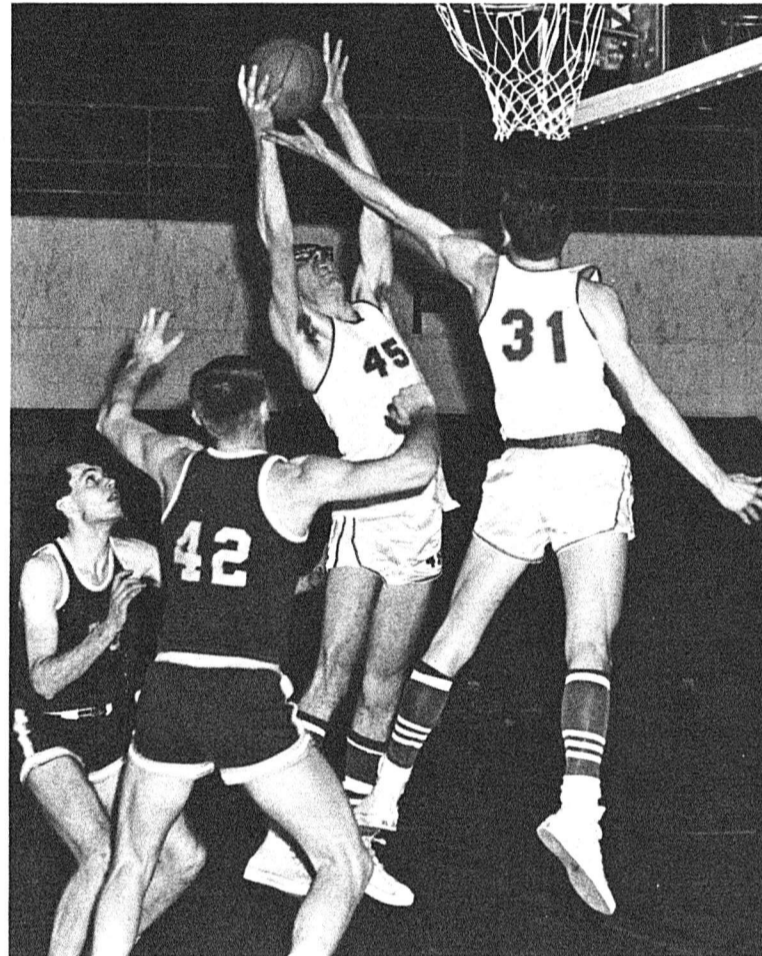
The Huskies refused to be flustered and kept working on an inept Bear defence. Five minutes later the Huskies led 66-56.

Bill Buxton and Walker attempted to inject some life into the Bears, but the cause was hopeless as Sekulich and Gosse continued to dominate the game. The Huskies won convincingly, 91-75.

Champion again led the way for the Bears, scoring 29 points. Bryan Rakoz added another 16.

Champion was philosophical about the loss. He explained that once he left the game the Bear defence simply fell apart.

Mitchelson gave the Huskies full credit for their victory. "They deserved to win. They shot 50 per cent, we shot 37."



—Ken Voutier photo

SLED-DOGGIES SEKULICH (45) AND PEPPER (31)

... showing some aggressive rebounding

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