



Even Guba couldn't lead Bears to a 2nd consecutive national title. Photo Brian Gavriloff.

# Bears undergo rookie experience, fail repeat as champs

by Keith Steinbach

"It goes without saying that it was a disappointing way to end the season," Coach Abbott said as the runner-up plaque of the CIAU western final rested against the wall. "It was discouraging for the seniors especially whom I have a great deal of compassion for."

Disappointment was the general feeling echoed by almost all the people whom I talked to on the Bears team, but only about the way the season ended, not the season itself. Bruce Crawford said, "I thought we did quite well for all of the inexperienced players we had. I was disappointed though with my own personal season and the playoffs."

Rick Peterson shared the same feelings: "I was disappointed we didn't win but I think our team showed lots of character especially the rookies." Craig Gunther went so far as to say, "our kids did a good job."

Certainly it was a year for rookies. Of the 23 players on the

Bears roster at the end of the season 12 were completing their first full year with the Bears. With the vast inexperience a 16-8 finish in a division with 2 other nationally ranked teams is pretty fair. The all-rookie defensive core held their own but did not really become our "strong point" as the Coach predicted at the outset of the season. "I think certain individuals showed a lot of intestinal fortitude," said Abbott.

For the rookies though, there is always next year but for four, possibly five Bears this was their final fling at college hockey. Rick Peterson and Bruce Crawford are leaving the team to play in Europe for a year. They will be paid 1000 marks (\$400) a month, plus an apartment and a plane ticket for playing Division I hockey in Bodenheim, Germany.

Dale Henwood is going to teach, "somewhere but not in Edmonton." Oliver Steward's future is still up in the air. Craig Gunther still has one year of

eligibility left. He is hoping to be admitted to the school of medicine next year and is undecided as to whether he will play hockey or not.

Injuries played a large part in the Bear's season this year. Jack Cummings, Abbey Hebert, Bruce Crawford, Clark Jantzie, Oliver Steward, and the list goes on and on of all the players who were injured at one time or the other. It was a rare occasion when the Bears were at full strength. The injuries that hurt the most were the late season blows to Clarke Jantzie and Oliver Steward. They were sorely missed at playoff time. "There's no question injuries influenced our season," said Abbott.

As for next year, Abbott was cautious as he stated, "We'll be right in there but I'm not predicting anything." He did indicate a few voids that he would like to have filled. "I believe you have to play a physical game," Abbott emphasized. This means that he will be looking for a few more big people next year. "I'd like to have 2 more defensemen and 3 or 4 more big, strong forwards."

When asked about his own situation next year, as far as coaching goes, Abbott said, "I don't know. Clare Drake has not said whether he is coming back or not." One factor that could play a part in this situation is the formation of a year-round Student National Team needing a full-time coach. Drake would certainly be the No. 1 candidate for that or he could desire another shot at pro coaching.

Abbott of course should not be overlooked. He did a fine job with what could be classified as a rebuilding team. His work with the all-rookie defense resulted in a solid unit by the end of the season. "I was impressed by some of the things he did," praised Craig Gunther. "I was a bit frustrated by the playoffs but I can't criticize him for it because he did what he thought was best."

Although many people are disappointed, there's nothing wrong with a 16-8 win-loss record. Maybe it seems ordinary because of the winning tradition built up over the years by U of A hockey teams.

As Leon Abbott leaned back in his chair he reflected the general consensus of feelings about the season. "It was a funny season, filled with lots of pleasure and disappointment."

## Hockey finals

### Hockey Finals

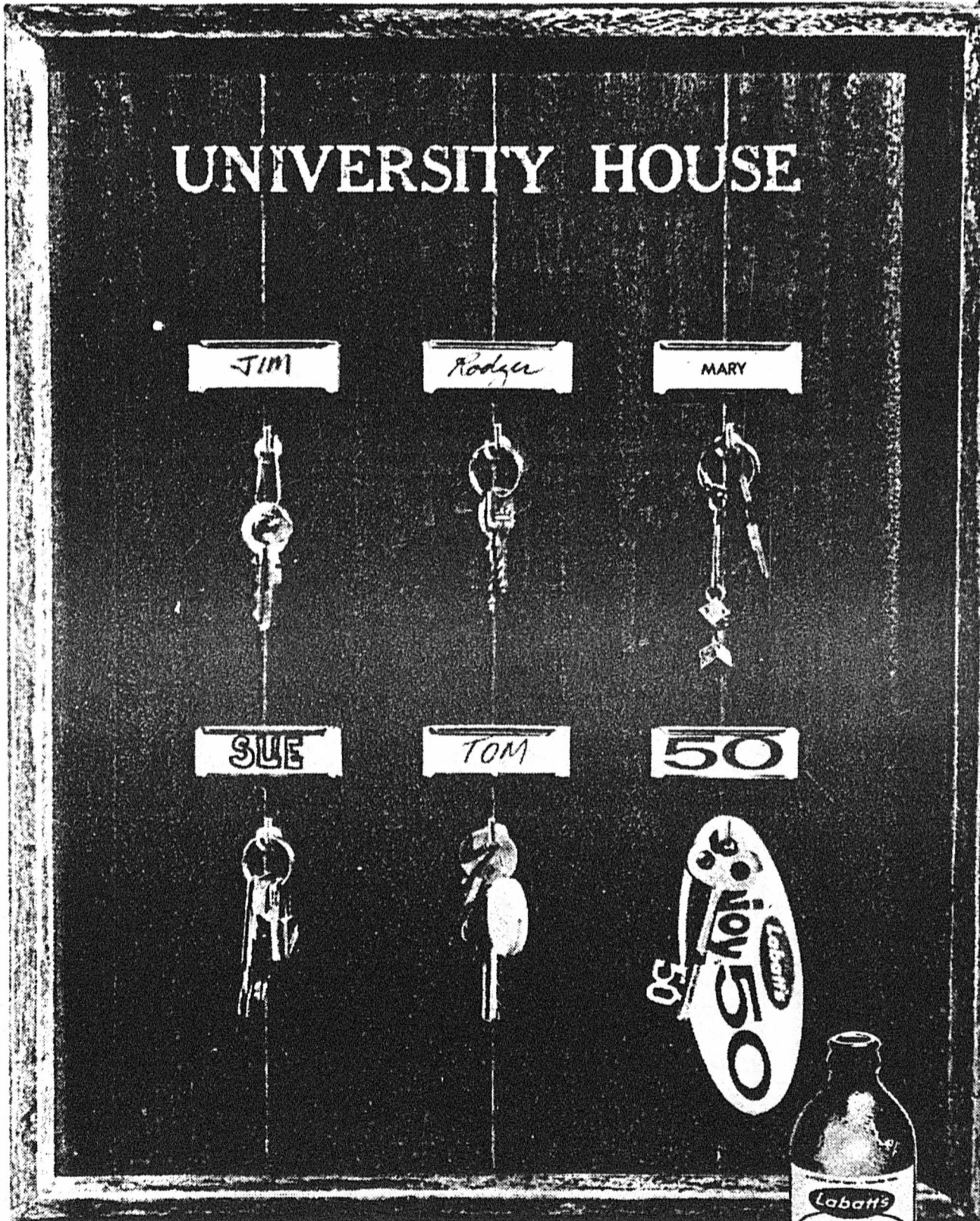
The playoff game for the Division III title was played Saturday afternoon at Varsity Arena before a sparse crowd. The teams, Recreation and Physical Education Grads overcame a weary week of hockey, playing three games each to achieve an playoff berth. The game an interfaculty rivalry, featured some excellent hockey from the likes of Cal Botterill of Phys. Ed. a former national team member, and Ray Poulin, scoring three goals for Recreation. The final outcome of the game, featuring 17 penalties, saw Recreation winning the title by a 5-3 score. The victory, indeed a deserving one, was the first championship ever recorded by a Recreation team. Congratulations to all the team members of both teams.

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