

Bear goalie John Krill keeps an eye on the puck. photo Rob Galbraith

Cranston going back to roots

by Alan Small

The Bears Sid Cranston will be going back to his hockey roots this weekend when the Bears hockey team plays the University of Brandon Bobcats in Brandon.

Cranston, 24, played three years with the Brandon Wheat Kings of the Western Hockey League earlier in his career.

"We had a pretty lousy team," Cranston reminisced, "we were always struggling for the last spot in the playoffs."

Last year, the Bears lost a pair of games to the Bobcats in Brandon. Sid had to miss the games due to an ankle injury, which plagued him throughout the season.

"I had to listen to the game on

the radio," Cranston said, "Brandon plays well at home."

Brandon lost a pair of close shoot-outs earlier in the season by scores of 8-5 and 6-5. The series was the beginning of a tailspin for the Bears, who struggled during the series, and went on to lose a pair to the Calgary Dinosaurs.

"They don't have much offensive punch," Cranston said, "but they have enough of one to respect."

Cranston, in his third year of Golden Bear hockey, is having a career year so far, having scored 17 goals and 35 assists for 52 points. He's in first place in scoring, four points up on Calgary's Terry Houder. If Cranston stayed away from the injury bug that's plagued him the last two years, he would

have a shot at the Dave "Sweeney" Schrier Trophy for Canada West scoring leader. The last Golden Bear to achieve the feat was Rick Swan, in the 83-84 season.

"I made a goal this year to make every game this year," Cranston said, "I don't expect to miss a shift."

Last year, Sid had problems with both ankles and freshman year, played in only nine Canada West games due to a knee injury. He doesn't know why this year he hasn't been on the trainer's table as often as he was.

"Just luck, I guess," Cranston said, "I just can't explain why I got them before and I don't get them now."

Cranston is also fresh off a hot week against the Lethbridge Pronghorns, in which he scored nine points in the two blowouts and was named Canada West player of the week.

SLAP SHOTS: The Bears are 32-10-1 lifetime against the Bobcats... Brandon captain **Bruce Thompson** leads the Bobcats in scoring with 26 points while **Bernie Martine** is right behind with 25... Brandon is fresh off a pair of wins over the hapless **Regina Cougars** last weekend and are fifth in Canada West standings...

Brent Severyn will miss the trip to Brandon because of his fight with Pronghorn **Dave Craibley** Saturday night. There has been no notice of how long his suspension will be. The Bear defence may be quite depleted as **Gord Thibodeau** might miss the series as he twisted his knee during practice Tuesday.

Pandas moving up?

by Alan Small

The Pandas volleyball club is gearing up for the big Canada West tournament at Lethbridge this weekend.

The Pandas, who are 2-4 this season, play four matches over the space of two days, in the tournament that usually decides the two playoff clubs in Canada West. The four games in two days make team preparation more difficult, but for the Pandas the difficulty of adapting to totally different systems have been lessened.

"The game plans of both teams aren't that much different," Panda head coach Suzi Smith said of Calgary, Lethbridge, Victoria, and UBC.

The big change for the Pandas though is that they are going to a new offence for the first time.

"We'll be using a fairly advanced offence," Smith said, "it should really keep the opposing defences

on their toes. We couldn't use it before because the girls basic skills weren't good enough."

Victoria looks to be the toughest team in the Panda's path, as they are the third ranked team in the nation.

"We'll have a better shot against UBC," Smith said, "although we were very competitive against Victoria when we last played them."



BC and Calgary will not be easy either as they are the seventh and eighth ranked teams in the CIAU respectively. Lethbridge will be easier for the Pandas, as they have already beat them once this year, and are one of the poorer teams in the conference.

The Pandas next home action is against Victoria a week from Friday.

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Bears in tough against big three

by Alan Small

The Bears volleyball club face probably their toughest test of the year this weekend. They travel to Lethbridge for the Canada West tournament, where they will face the Calgary Dinosaurs, Lethbridge Pronghorns, Victoria Vikings, and the UBC T-Birds. Of the four teams, all but Lethbridge are ranked in CIAU's top ten volleyball clubs.

Calgary is ranked number three, UBC is eighth and Uvic is tenth. Lethbridge is the gift match. The Bears and Bear coach Pierre Baudin know the task ahead of the.

"If we beat any one of those three teams, we'll be ranked in the

top ten," Baudin said, "they'll be three tough matches."

Baudin hopes that the three teams will be trying to knock each other off, and spend less time preparing for the Bears.

"The other teams will be gunning for each other," Baudin said, "they may not be prepared for us. Hopefully, they will take us lightly."

"We are the dark horse of the tournament."

Then again, the Bears will be playing three teams in the top ten. They didn't get there by taking tests lightly. If the Bears have any chance of knocking off one of them and moving up in the Canada West standings and the CIAU rank-

ings, massive preparations will be needed and the players will have to play at the top of their game.

"All three teams are quite different," Baudin said.

Baudin is also changing the defence slightly going into the all-important tournament.

"I used to have a big guy in the deep middle," Baudin said, "they just can't recover balls unless they are hit right at them. I'm putting quicker guys in that spot now."

Again, the Golden Bears will rely on the skills of hitters Steve Kentel and Dean Kakoschke. "For us to do really well, Steve will have to be on the floor all the time," Baudin said.

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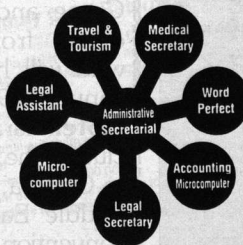
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