SPORTS

Two wins end deadlock

Hockey Bears show Saskatchewan who is best in the west

by Bernard Poitras

Were it not for Super Bowl XVIII (that's 18 for all you non-Romans) being played this weekend, the most important sporting event would have probably been the Bears-Huskies hockey series. The two teams came into the weekend deadlocked in first place in the C.W.U.A.A. with 9-3 records. Their rankings were also very close, with the Bears ranked No. 2 and the Huskies No. 3.

As it turned out the Bears came out on top with 7-1 and 5-2 victories on Friday and Saturday night respectively. Had the teams split their games, the standings and their over-all ranking would not have changed all that much. If one team, however, took both games - as it did happen - it would alter and affect that team's standing for the rest of the year.

With the two wins the Bears moved four points ahead of the Huskies and coupled with No. 1 ranked U of Toronto Blues tie with unranked Wilfred Laurier University, the Bears should find themselves again ranked No. 1 by week's end.

Friday's action turned out to be lopsided as the Bears walked all over the Huskies 7-1. Tied at 1-1 after the first frame, the Bears regrouped in the dressing room and came out to score six unanswered goals and coasted to their tenth win of the regular season. Senior winger Dave Souch started the Bears off on the right foot as he scored 6 seconds into the game. Breen Neeser continued the massacre netting two of his own while Jack Patrick, Gerald Koebel, Perry Zapernick and John Reid chipped in with singles.

Saskatchewan's usually potent offence (56 goals in 12 games) was in absenteeism most of the night as they could only muster a deflection shot goal by winger Dennis Fenske in the first period. Bears' goalie Ken Hodge played his usual brilliant self as he allowed only the one goal in 20 shots. Whether the score was tied or the Bears were ahead Hodge continually came out to challenge his shooters and consequently was able to make the save. The Bears took eight out of thirteen minor penalties while outshooting the Huskies 32-20.

It looked like a rerun of Friday's game on Saturday night as the Bears used basically the same script in disposing the Huskies and left them on the cutting room floor by beating them 5-2. The goals came a little harder, the Huskies put up a better fight and the hitting was a little more fiercer, but the same result prevailed.

Lady Luck came Saskatchewan's way as Ward Thiessen alley-ooped a shot into the Bears zone that took a funny hop and bounced past an embarrassed Bears' goalie Ken Hodge. Thiessen's shot came just outside the Bears blueline and fooled Hodge at 16:46 of the first period. That left the score 1-0 after a period that saw the Bears miss some good opportunities, particularly a Tim Krug shot that rattled off of the goalpost.

The second period saw the Bears score twice, off the sticks of freshman Dave Otto and sophomore defenceman Colin Chisholm, while the Huskies countered with a Curtis Stuart marker. The Huskies needed more than goalposts to stop the Bears attack in the third session as the Bears pumped in three more goals to make the final 5-2. John Reid, Joey Engert and Dennis Cranston completed the scoring, running up the Bears total to 67 goals in 14 contests.

Not even a small cheering section of about 40 Huskie fans could help Saskatchewan as they dropped to 9-5. With the loss of their top scorer Bruce Keller, who as of Monday will be with the Olympic team, they may even drop further down. Added Bears' coach Bill Moores about the loss of Keller, "Well he's top in their scoring, and that's not going to help them at all, It's a tough loss for anybody. I empathize with with them." When asked whether the Bears needed to be tested to get them going after mediocre first periods, Moores replied, "I think it's been a while since we've had that kind of sustained pressure and intensity. Saskatchewan's got a very good hockey team, I'll tell ya, you look at their forward lines and they've got 7 or 8 guys that have played on regular or national championship teams. For our guys to come out and play as well as they did and go against a team with that much experience, I think it's a real tremendous accomplishment."

As agreed by most people who saw the series, it turned out to be a great pair of hockey games. Added Moores, "They were two of the finest games we've had in this building."

Indeed it was, Coach Moores.

FROM THE DEN:

Goalie Ken Hodge was named third and first star in Friday's and Saturday's games respectively. Bears leading scorers are: John Reid, 9 goals, 18 pts.; Breen Neeser, 8 goals and 15 pts.; Rick Swan 4 goals, 14 pts.; Dennis Cranston 8 goals, 13 pts.; Perry Zapernick 4 goals, 13 pts.; and Tim Krug 5 goals, 12 pts. Hodge's GAA stands at 1.73 GAA. Sunday the Bears came from behind to beat non-conference Lethbridge Pronghorns 8-4.

Perry Zapernick (16) scores the Bears 6th goal of Friday's 7-1 mauling.

photo Bill Inglee

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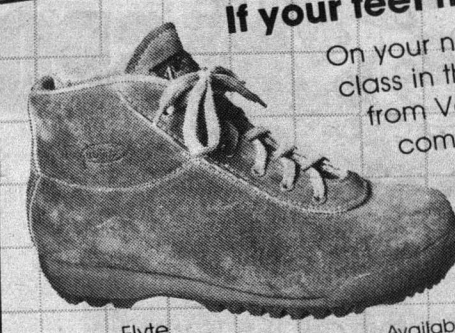

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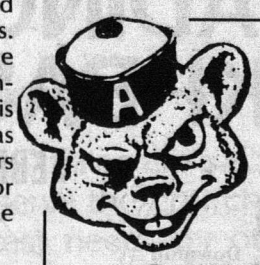

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