

as there ever any doubt?

Hockey Bears clinch playoff spot in CWUAA

Shaune Impey

Christmas in February? The Golden Bear hockey team was playing Santa Claus more than one occasion Sunday as they gave Saskatchewan Huskies

easy (and strange) goals by rallying to nip the Huskies by a 7-5 margin.

After whitewashing the Huskies 8-1 on Saturday afternoon, it appeared that some of the Bears thought they only had to lace up their skates to collect points.

Or could it be that the Bears are some of Saskatchewan's best? Dave Smith's comments at the Saturday contest?

Smith said the trouble with the Canada West league this year is the lack of competitiveness.

Nobody can argue this year. Almost all the games the Bears have been involved in end in one sided victories (a la the Montreal Canadiens). So far so good for Mr. Smith. The incredible thing is that Smith doesn't blame the blame on Calgary, UBC, or Saskatchewan for having the best teams and being in a rebuilding year with young players etc. etc. ad nauseum.

The Huskies' coach (that's Dave Smith in the program) says the Bears are ruining the league because they're too powerful for the rest of the teams.

Perhaps, Dave, Clare Drake would tell Randy Gregg, Don Broadfoot, Ted Poplawski, Dave Lomas, John Devaney (and whoever of your choice) "sorry you guys can't dress today because the Saskatchewan coach says we're too good and don't want to lose."

Better yet why not just pick the best out of a hat from all the teams who show up at training camp and call that the team. Then Saskatchewan can win more than three games a year.

Get serious, Mr. Smith. What would the NHL be without the Montreal Canadiens, the New York Islanders and other top teams. Nobody cries because the Washington Capitals haven't won the Stanley Cup.

Winning teams are built by winning coaches with winning attitudes. Everybody plays by the same rules and has the same chance to ice a winning team. Winning teams help to build a league, not destroy it.

If I were you, Dave Smith, I would be keeping an eye behind me for the giant green hand of the U of S Athletic Department giving a pink slip. Without a change in attitude and conduct on the part of the man in charge, the Bears will continue to be the underdog of the league.

Getting back to the facts of the game.

In Saturday's game the big Bears got two goals from Darrell Zaparniuk, Rolin, Jim Lomas, Mike Broadfoot, Chris Helland, and John Devaney. Broadfoot also had three assists for a four point game. Lomas and Dave Maxwell (the game's first star) had three points.

Dave Broshko spoiled Poplawski's shutout with just over 10 minutes remaining in the game.

Saskatchewan had 51 minutes in penalties to the Bears in the roughly played (and consistently refereed) contest.

On Sunday the score was 7-5 on five separate occasions as the Bears had to continually come back after giving the

Huskies the lead several times.

The teams traded goals in the first period as Zaparniuk scored his second goal in two games for the Bears while Del Chapman notched the Saskatchewan marker.

The pace was fast and furious early in the second period as the two squads combined for six goals in just over nine minutes. The Huskies took a 2-1 lead at the thirty one second

mark on Chapman's second goal of the game. He intercepted a Stan Swales pass in front of the net and beat Sanza with a low shot between the legs.

Greg Skoreyko evened the score with a good rush down the right side and a high shot from close in over Hepp's shoulder.

The strangest goal of the game (perhaps of the season) was scored by

Murray Benson. Sanza was

trying to clear a loose puck in the corner and got caught up in a tangle of players. While Sanza was scurrying back to the net Benson shot the puck towards the front of the goal from the corner. One bounce off Sanza's stick and the puck was in the net.

Jim Causgrove brought the Bears even again when he batted a rebound past Hepp. Chapman completed his hat trick to give the Huskies a short lived lead at the 8:25 mark. At 9:05 Devaney notched his first of two to deadlock the score one more time.

Devaney and Greg Wiebe traded powerplay markers early in the third to set the stage for the winning goal by Jim Lomas. Causgrove did the work as he checked the puck off a Huskies stick to Lomas alone in front of the net. Hepp had no chance on the quick shot.

Dave Smith's favorite Bear (Ted Olson) scored into the empty net to clinch the victory.

The Bears outshot Saskatchewan 47-34 and had 27 minutes in penalties to the Huskies' eight. Most of the Bears' minutes came near the end of the third period when Larry Riggins picked up a misconduct and a pair of minors.

The mild mannered Riggins told referee Ron Panchyshyn a few truths about the poor quality of his officiating after receiving a somewhat suspect crosschecking penalty.

The overall caliber of refereeing in most of the Bears home games has been less than adequate, as many officials are lax in calling the clutch and grab type of penalties. This can lead to frustration for the players and is one of the reasons why several games have got out of hand this year. Let's hope for an improvement in the future.

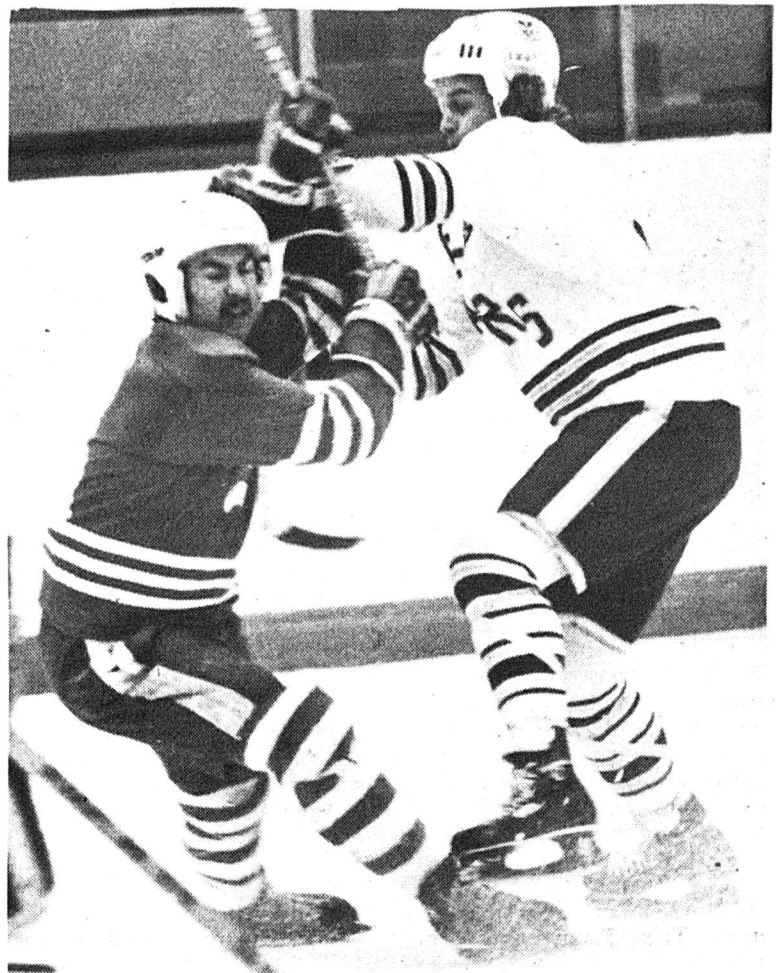
BEAR FACTS

Devaney suffered a minor shoulder injury in the third period of Sunday's game. The extent of the injury is uncertain until x-rays are taken. Devaney had just had the cast removed from his wrist, which was injured early in the season.

Ted Poplawski lowered his goals against average to 1.44 after this weekend's play. Overall the Bears have a 2.06 average.

In other weekend action the improving UBC Thunderbirds split with the Calgary Dinosaurs in their series.

UBC comes to Varsity Rink next weekend for a doubleheader against the Bears.



Bears' Mike Bachynski (right) teaches an unidentified Saskatchewan Huskie how to do the tandem hustle. Photo by Jim Connell

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