

Sports

Bears set to defend Canada West

by Mark Spector

Bears basketball coach Don Horwood sits in his office, walls covered with various different drawings of highways. "I'm on the highway of life," he explains "and sometimes I'm just not sure whether its a passing lane, or a crossroads, or what."

Horwood has a right to be in a joking sort of mood. Training camp opens this week and the Bears can't wait to tip off the season as defending Canada West champions. People around the league are still shaking their heads over that one.

Alberta started the 1984-85 season by losing their first nine ball games. They miraculously managed to lose the first four contests by a total of eight points altogether.

So how does a team that goes 0-9 out of the gates win their league? Horwood really isn't to sure.

"Amazingly enough, we are defending Canada West champs. But after the start, we had a pretty fair club last season." And he has the stats to back that statement up.

Last season Alberta was 16-16 at years end. They were also 10-4 at home in Varsity gym. But it took one of the most memorable play-offs in U of A basketball history for the Bears to pull it off.

Alberta defeated number two Lethbridge, and then number one Victoria for the first time in 33 tries to claim the crown. All of this in a

playoff that they never would have been in had they not been the hosts.

But this year they will have to earn a spot in the playoffs by being one of the top four teams in their conference. And Horwood aims to get them there.

For the first season ever, the Bears are going to run two teams. Along with the varsity team, Horwood will keep a sort of a junior team that will play in the Edmonton Mens Basketball league.

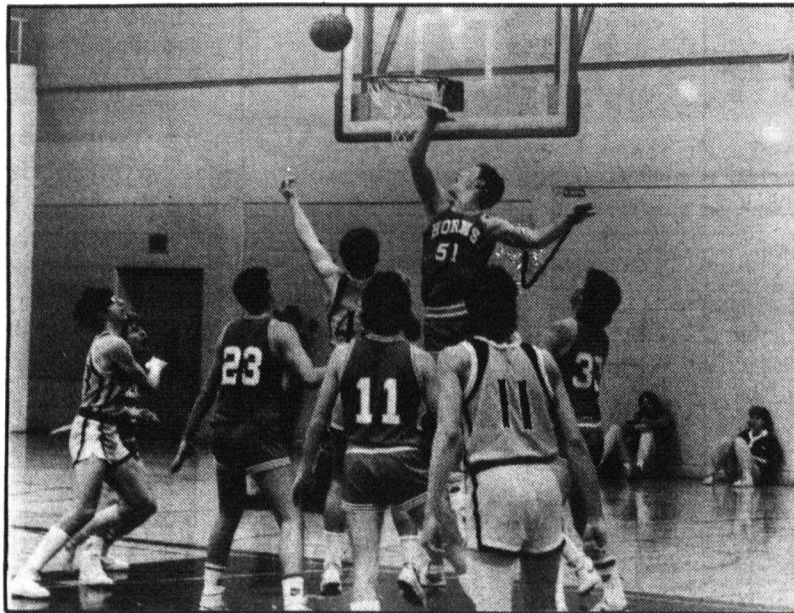
"We're looking at carrying from 15 to 18 players. Twelve players will dress as Golden Bears, and the rest will see lots of floor time in the mens league. Also, the guys who are sitting on the bench for the Bears can get some time in with the number two squad."

The only other team in these parts to do this with their program is Victoria. Ken Shields Vikings have a junior varsity squad that competes with the many junior colleges in that part of Canada.

The Vikings were also Canada West winners for seven consecutive years before last season.

And Alberta will have a good chance of repeating this season. The Bears lose only five players from last year's club.

Last season's starting post Mike Suderman has retired from the team. Suderman has had a history of back problems, and has decided



1985 Canada West championship game.

Photo Bill Doskoch

to devote more time towards his wife and his Church. Also gone are Tom Demeo (playing football), Gord Klootwyk (working for Alta. Ambulance Services), Dick Price, and Tim Becker. That is the bad news.

The good news is that five players who are coming to camp spent the summer playing for the Alberta under 21 team.

Posts Mark Baker and Scott McIntyre and forward Keith Pushor spent their summer on the court and should be ready for the season:

Also, highly touted rookies Ed Joseph (M.E. Lazerte) and Sean Chursinoff (Sir Winston Churchill in Calgary) were on the all-Alberta squad.

These two newcomers are expected to make the squad. Two others that were also expected to make the team were Brian Loates, a 6'6" post out of Ottawa, and Brian Maskiewich, a 6'7" post out of St. Josephs high in Edmonton.

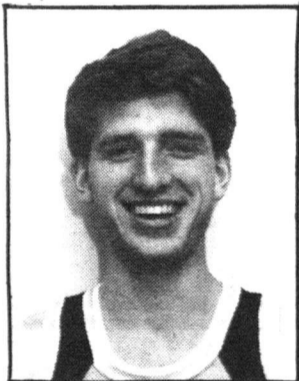
Loates could not get in to the U of A so will go to Medicine Hat college to upgrade. Maskiewich's

marks were also touch and go, but he was lured down to SAIT in Calgary. This has, and always will, be a thorn in the side of Canadian universities, because the college system has very loose recruitment restrictions. They can sweeten the pot much more than the universities can, plus a high school player will see more floor time at the college level.

Other promising rookies this season are 6'2" Sam Safadi (St. Joes) — a good sized guard capable of playing the point; Dave Young (McNally) — "Maybe the best shooter among all of our guards," says Horwood. Possibly lacks the leadership ability needed for a point guard; Peter Brown, 6'8" (Eastglen); Mark Smith 6'6" — possible post.

Basically, the Bears just can't wait for the season to get underway. Things didn't even start to get fun until the last four games last year, and a number of the returners have been training all summer.

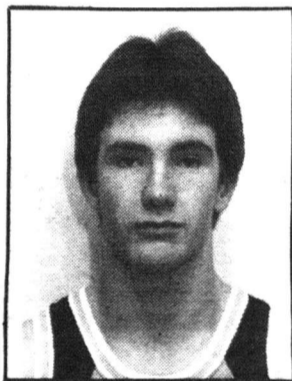
The team will rely a lot more on sophomore forward/post Scott McIntyre, who put on some weight over the summer. Also, guys like Chris Toutant, Dean Peters, and Mike Kornak will be looked to for their experience. But no matter what happens, the Bears can expect better luck this year than last, and also more respect.



Mike Suderman - retired



Head Coach Don Horwood



Future post Scott McIntyre



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