



Part of a happy dressing room throng, Barros (1) recovers from a long bout with the foamy stuff in the cup.

by Cam Cole

photos: Lacey & Popikaitis

With two very sound performances (and an extremely shaky one in between), the Golden Bears finally succeeded in personally defeating their traditional tormentors, the Toronto Varsity Blues, for the CIAU's University Cup.

The victory Sunday, clinching the title, marked the first time Bears have ever beaten the Blues in a post-season series - the only other times Alberta has won the championship. Blues had already been eliminated by someone else.

The Green and Gold were led by the inspired play of Ross Barros and Dale Henwood, and excellent team efforts in two of the three contests.

Golden Bears 5 - Varsity Blues 0

Toronto's first-string goaltender, Mark Logan, came down with the flu Friday, and his replacement, Dave Hulme was victimized by a much-improved Alberta shooting percentage and the equally-improved UA powerplay.

Though Bears' first shot on goal didn't come until the second half of the opening period, they managed to get the only goal, while Toronto was playing two men short. Barros spotted Bryan Sosnowski breaking for the net, and fed him a pass from the point, which Sosnowski redirected past Hulme.

Toronto continued to outplay Bears in the first half of the second period, allowing Alberta just 2 shots in the first 13 minutes, but once again UA capitalized on a break, with Clark Jantzie flipping a rebound into the open Toronto net, after Oliver Steward had missed on a breakaway.

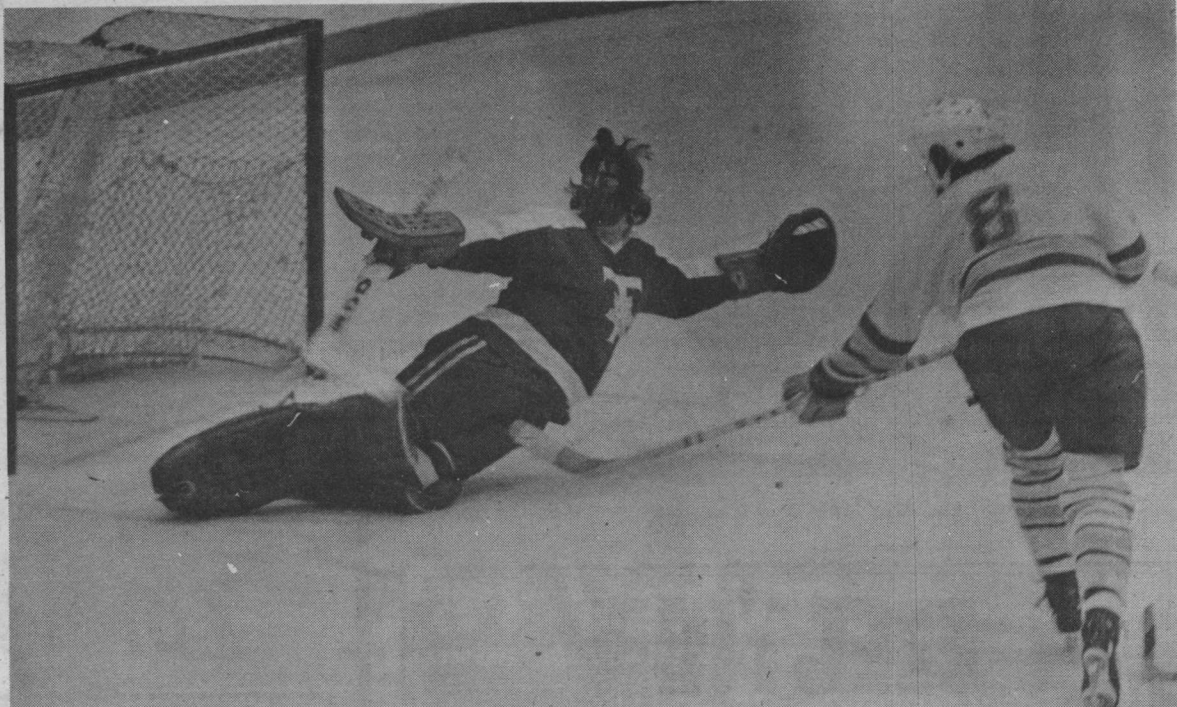
Alberta broke the game open in the final period, as Toronto abandoned their defensive play in an effort to get back in the contest.



Dale Henwood and Ross Barros - the one-two punch that brought the cup back to Alberta.

At 6:27, Jim Ofrim batted his own rebound out of the air for Bears' third goal. He scored again four minutes later, a power play goal, standing at the corner of the net and tipping in a goalmouth pass, and Brian Middleton's shot from the point with Henwood on the bench in favor of an extra forward on a delayed Blues' penalty, closed out the scoring.

Henwood earned his most difficult shutout of the season with 23 saves, including a breakaway by Kent Rhunke, a 25-goal scorer in the regular season, who was voted runner-up as the MVP for the series.



Bryan Sosnowski (8) tips in Bears' first goal of the series.

Blues' coach Tom Watt was impressed by the Alberta powerplay, and disappointed at his team's lack of polish around the Alberta net. "Sure, we were missing our goalie, but let's face it," said Watt, "When you don't score any goals, the best you can hope for is a 0-0 tie, and that isn't likely to happen when you come this far."

Golden Bears 2 - Varsity Blues 3

Bears' trainer Ray Kelly came up with an immensely appropriate expression to describe how flat the team was for Saturday's game, but unfortunately, it's unprintable.

Alberta gave away two of Toronto's three tallies, the other was a high shot from the faceoff circle that somehow got through Henwood.

That is not to say Alberta's goals were classics, either. The first was a backhanded rebound through a maze of legs, and the other was no shot at all.

Rhunke opened scoring for Toronto at 9:20 of the first period, after a miscue by

defenceman John Simkin directly in front of Henwood. Rhunke made several moves before deking Henwood and firing the puck past the sprawled goalie.

Blues made it 2-0 less than a minute later, when Ivan Macfarlane beat Henwood high from a bad angle, but 20 seconds after that, Kevin Primeau's backhand put Bears back into the thick of things.

Alberta tied it up at 6:14 of the second period, when Oliver Steward couldn't control a pass, but didn't really lose it, and the puck was carried through a tangle of arms and legs more by momentum than anything else.

The teams checked each other to a standstill in the third period, and it was only a question of which team would make the fatal mistake.

At 11:34, Steward coughed up the puck in front of Henwood, who made two saves, in the resulting flurry, but couldn't prevent Howie Hampton from shovelling home the second rebound, for the winning marker.

Toronto outhit, outchecked, and outscored the Alberta squad, who looked worse than at any time since their slump around Christmas time.

"I wish we hadn't beat them 5-0 Friday," said Clare Drake, "Maybe 1- or 2-0 would have been better. I'm not saying we were overconfident, but our guys can't help thinking they scored those three goals in the last period ... and kind of took over. Toronto was definitely deserving of the win, though."

Watt was much happier with Blues' overall performance. "I'm really proud of these guys, you know?" he beamed. "They just keep getting up off the floor."

Golden Bears 5 - Varsity Blues 2

Blues served notice very early Sunday that they had come to win. At the 52-second mark, Toronto defenceman Al Milnes unleashed Blues' first shot on goal, and the shot glanced in off Dale Henwood's stick.

At 4:58, Bruce Crawford banged in a rebound on a very impressive-looking Alberta powerplay, but Kent Rhunke put Toronto back in front 2 minutes later with a low shot that caught Henwood going the wrong way (Toronto's 5th shot). The Alberta netminder shut them out the rest of the way.

Ross Barros' first goal of the day, on a power play, tied it once more, before the halfway mark of the period.

Steward scored with only 7 seconds gone in the second period, and Bears were well on their way. Jim Ofrim used Clark Jantzie perfectly, as a decoy, on a 2-on-1 break, forcing Logan to cover the possibility of a pass, then placed a 20-foot wrist shot just inside the post, low on the short side.

Before the period ended,

Ross Barros kept the powerplay functioning at 100% efficiency, with his second tally, and Bears staved off a concerted rally by the Blues in the third period to preserve the three goal lead.

The havoc from "We're number one", "Barros and the Bears", and assorted other chants was still going strong during individual presentations, more than 30 minutes after the game's conclusion.

It was a strange contrast between the joyous chaos outside and the morgue-like silence inside the Toronto dressing room. Media people tip-toed in and out, asking questions and getting answers in hushed tones.

"I guess you'd have to point to their powerplay again", said Watt, "they scored six of their twelve goals when we were shorthanded."

"It's a lot easier when you're ahead, sitting on a lead," he added, "but I don't want to take anything away from Clare's club - they deserved to win. We were ahead a couple of times, but they came back. You've got to give them credit."

In the Bears' room, vast volumes of beer, "the champagne of the working class" according to Drake, were poured into the 'bowl of the University Cup, teammates, coaches and manager embraced; the coaches were thrown in the showers, as is customary on these occasions.

Dale Henwood examined the new watch he received as MVP. "I need it, too," he grinned, "Mine stopped at quarter to twelve last night, and I couldn't get it going again."

Ross Barros kept walking around in circles - and every once in a while he'd shake a hand or give an autograph. "I don't think I know what's going on, yet."

Oliver Steward, who played his best hockey in this series, said if he ever saw himself referred to as "diminutive" in a newspaper again, somebody was going to pay.

Just one big, happy family.



Clare Drake and rink manager Ron Urness haven't been this happy since '68.