

# “Toughness” key to the playoffs

by Danny Schnick

Mental toughness will make the difference between a good year or a mediocre year for the basketball Bears, says coach Don Horwood.

Horwood is optimistic that from what he has seen in practices his team now has this quality.

“The boys have been really aggressive in practice — especially offensively.”

“I’ve been really pleased with the shooting. We seem to have more poise — we are less impatient and have better shot selection,” he said.

Horwood is confident that the offensive domination in practice is a sign of good attack rather than a poor defense. But the real test for the Bears’ improved play will be in a game situation. Simulations in practice cannot reproduce game pressure and intensity.

Over the last few years the Bears have shown only flashes of brilliance. Surprising everyone by winning the Canada West title in ’84-’85, the Bears showed much promise. But last year Alberta slipped to a very average 4-6 CWUAA record and 15-14 overall.

The mental toughness that Horwood talks about was obviously missing in a few games last year. First place is invariably taken by Vic-

toria, but a sweep of the weak UBC and at least a split with Calgary likely would have vaulted the Bears up three places to second.

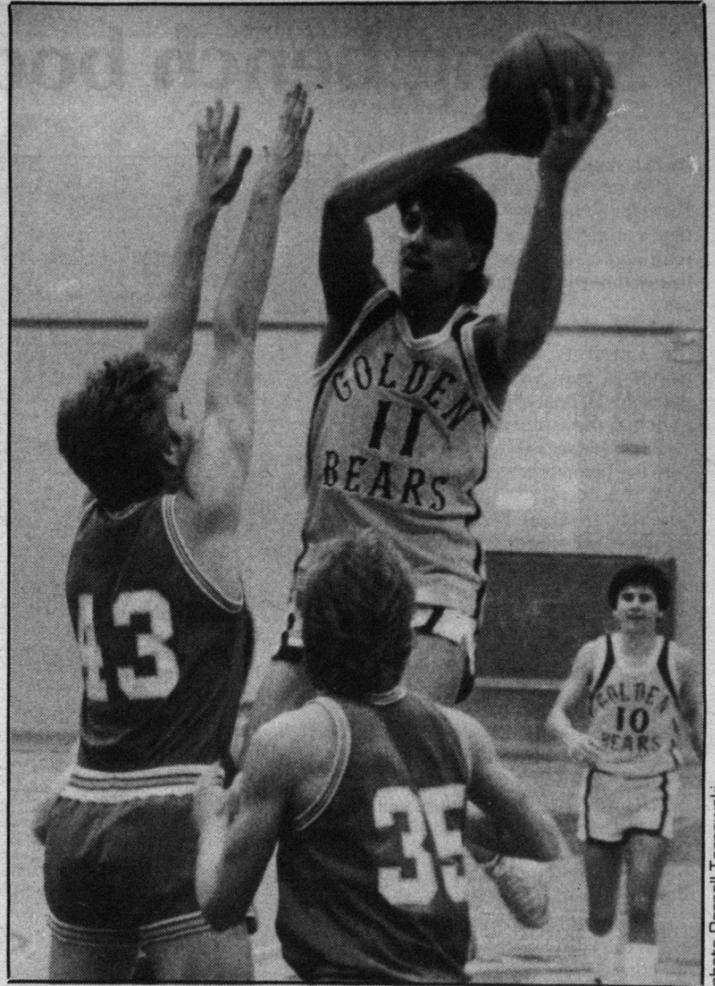
With the likes of fifth year men Mike Suderman, Mike Kornak, as well as Dean Peters in the line-up, it is hard to understand why the Bears aren’t annual CWUAA 2nd place finishers. It seems that the Bears have to come through with more efforts like last year’s 72-71 win over the Saskatchewan Huskies. The key to victories like this one, says Horwood, is mental toughness. The lack of it is the cause of losses like the one-pointer to Calgary and two-pointer to Saskatchewan.

“This year we have to play our best when it’s close — we have to go into every game feeling we can win,” emphasized Horwood.

“The fine line between first and third is mental strength.”

Whether or not Horwood and his staff can teach the needed mental toughness remains to be seen.

**Free Shots** — The number of bodies at Bears’ practices has been a little thin lately due to injuries. **Lorne Blatt** will be out six weeks with a stress fracture of the tibia. **Mike Kornak** (bruised heel), **Ed Joseph** (chipped bone in foot), and **Scott McIntyre** (sprained ankle) returned to practice this week.



Mike Kornak, in his last year on the team, must play a mentally tough game if he is to please coach Horwood.

photo Pennell Tamowski

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## Humor

doesn't work, you go on national television and say, with a hurt tone in your voice, "I paid \$3.98 for this Cheapo model electric razor and it works so badly that I now look like Yassar Arafat." In theory, the public will be appalled and write nasty letters to opposition MP's so that they will have something to rave about ("Can the Prime Minister tell me why we allow Cheapo razors to send their product to Canada?") and "Why is the Minister of Sports growing a beard? Is he getting a kickback from Cheapo Razors?"). The public might even stop buying Cheapo products. However, it is possible that the Cheapo company would counter this by paying Arafat \$15,000,000 to do three commercials for them. This is also good, as it would keep him out of Middle East politics for at least nine weeks.

Now, go back to the books. University students don't have it so easy that they can just sit around reading student newspapers all day, you know.

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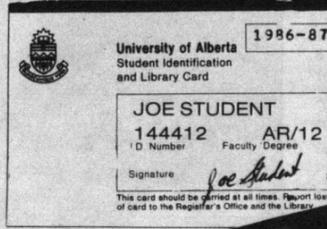
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