

# Steadily-improving Bear basketball team finishes season in third place

By JIM MULLER

The Golden Bears basketball team finished in third place in the WCIAA with a 6-8 record. They accomplished this with only three veterans, Bruce Blumell, Warren Champion, and Bill Buxton.

Blumell, in his fourth year, has been the steadiest player on the team. The co-captain's greatest contribution was his leadership and his scoring punch. Blumell does have one year's eligibility left, but plans to work on this Master's degree next year.

Champion, one of the best all-around players in the conference, has improved considerably this year. He plays the occasional bad game, but when he is determined to win, nobody beats the Bears.

### AMAZING ACCURACY

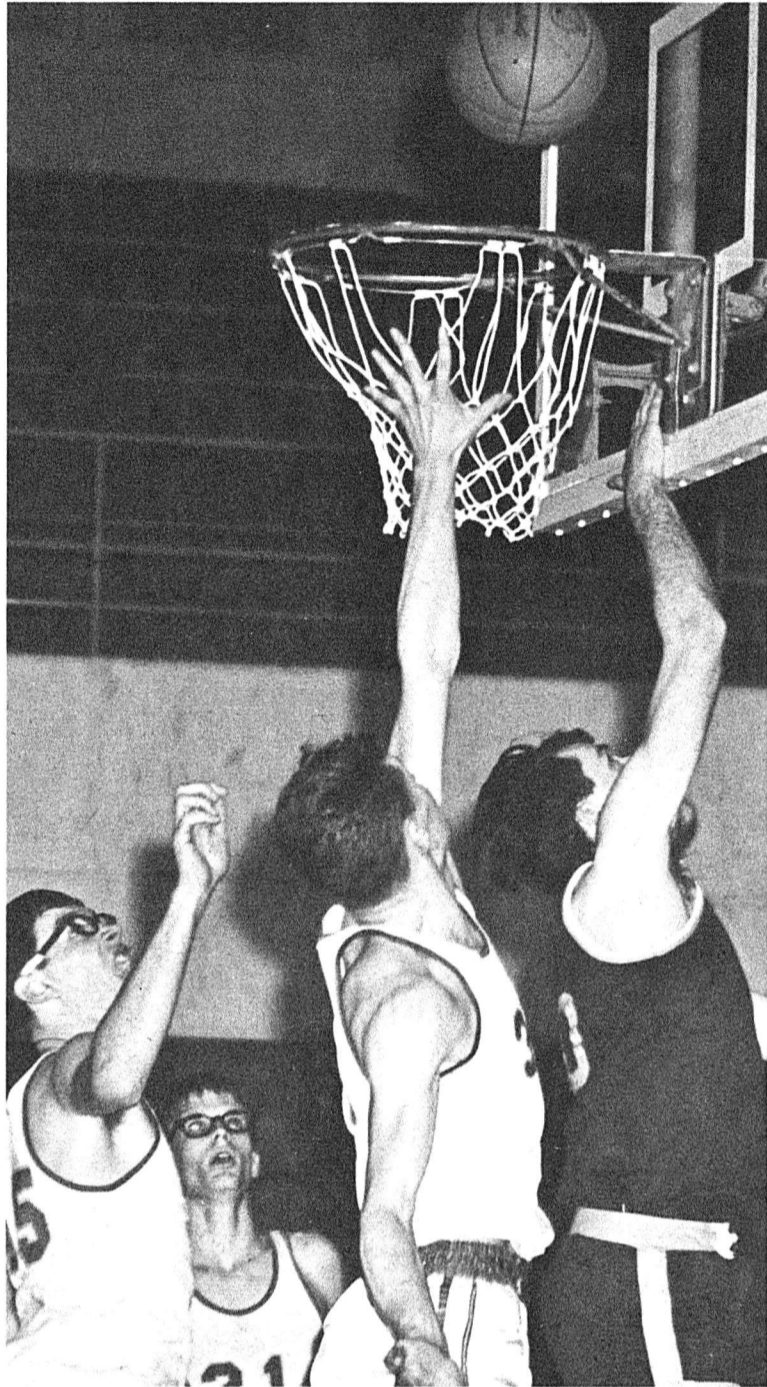
Buxton hits the 25 foot jump shot with amazing accuracy, but breaks the coach's heart by missing the layup. He is inconsistent, but has no lack of talent. Buxton is extremely valuable as he plays both guard and forward, and keeps the team relaxed with his weird sense of humor.

Rookie centers Larry Nowak and Bryan Rakoz have done a fine job in a difficult position. Rakoz, a steady performer, had averaged ten points a game. Nowak is one of the strongest rebounders in the conference. Both should improve with the year's experience.

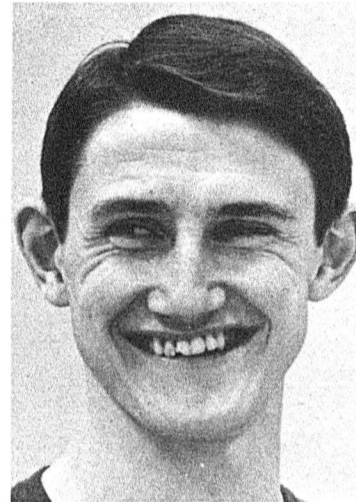
Al Melnychuk stepped into a starting guard position but may not be back next year. The quarterback of the Edmonton Wildcats will be playing football for some team next fall and may not find time for two sports.

### FINE GUARD

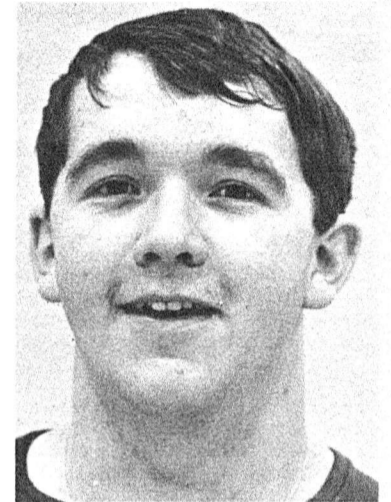
Jim Ebbels is a fine little guard. That is the problem. He is almost too small, especially when he insists on travelling in the "land of the giants" around the opposition's basket.



**WARREN CHAMPION, TEAM SCORING LEADER**  
... tips in two in winning effort against Huskies



**IAN WALKER**  
... forward



**AL MELNYCHUK**  
... guard

Dave Swann, 6'4" forward from Calgary, has had his problems this year. He began to reach his potential late in the season only to be slowed by a knee injury.

Ian Walker is another fine outside shooter. He is also a very aggressive rebounder and has improved defensively.

Ken Turnbull, big and strong, has shown that he also is a fine outside shooter. Unfortunately, he was also troubled by a foot injury.

The biggest improvement in the Bears has been in their team play. Early in the season, they would stand around waiting for somebody to do something. Their outstanding team play against UBC is a tribute to the fine coaching of Barry Mitchelson and Hank Tatarchuk.

UBC has dropped out of the WCIAA. Next year the Bears will face Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Cal-

gary and two new entries, Regina and Winnipeg. The Bears should fight Manitoba for the league title.

Coach Mitchelson phrased the attitude of the whole team when he said, "We have come a long way this year. Now, I can't wait till the basketball season begins again."

## Donna Bryks; four-year Panda veteran leaving

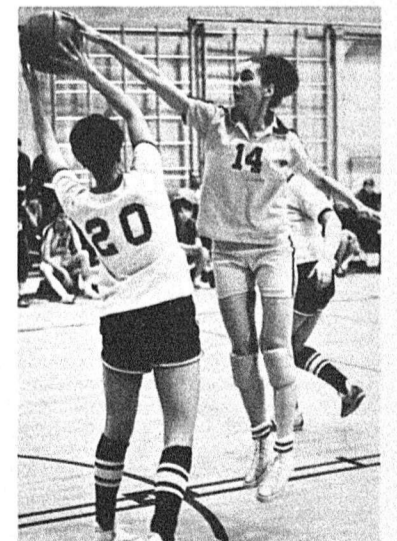
Another player who has played basketball at the U of A for four years is Donna Bryks of the Pandas.

Bryks, from Fort Saskatchewan, is quite talented and extremely popular. She scores points with a variety of shots—including a deadly 20 foot set shot, an amazingly accurate hook shot, and a jump shot.

She has her Bachelor of Arts degree, is presently enrolled in the Faculty of Education, and plans to obtain her teaching degree in summer school. At present, she is uncertain of where she will be teaching next year.

Bryks doubts if she will be playing basketball next season unless somebody forms a senior women's team. This year the deteriorating state of women's basketball in Edmonton was marked by the disappearance of the women's senior league.

"Playing for the Pandas has been a rewarding extracurricular activity. I am going to miss it," said Bryks.



**DONNA BRYKS**  
... Panda star

## Blumell's departure leaves big hole to fill

Number 22 stood momentarily. Then he quickly faked to the left, moved passed a defender on the right and went in for an easy layup. That has been the trademark of Bruce Blumell.

Blumell has been with the Golden Bears for four years. Under WCIAA eligibility rules, he has one more year. However, he plans to work full time on his Master's degree next year.

Blumell, although only 6'0" has had great success with the Bears. His good speed and exceptional ball handling ability made him extremely valuable on the Bears' fast break offence. This year, he had to carry the scoring load at guard and averaged 18 points a game with one of the best jump shots in the league.

Blumell joined the Bears after a brilliant high school career at Magrath. That team, which also featured Barry Mitchelson, John Hennessey, and Darwin Semotiuk, won the WCIAA championship. In his second year the Bears were narrowly edged out by the Calgary Dinosaurs.

### FINISHED THIRD

Last year the Bears started fast but lost the WCIAA championships to UBC. This year with a rookie laden squad the Bears finished third.

This year was probably Blumell's most difficult but the co-captain of the Bears met the

challenge. Hampered by an ankle injury in training camp, Blumell

worked hard and almost led the Bears to an upset over the Uni-



**BRUCE BLUMELL DRIVES IN FOR TWO**  
... co-captain and team leader leaves after four years

versity of Manitoba Bisons. The Bears lost a heartbreaker, 79-74.

The Bears were inconsistent all season. They were great one night and unbelievably inept the next. However, the team and Blumell were waiting for the UBC Thunderbirds.

In his last game in a Golden Bear uniform, he scored 15 points. More important, he provided determined leadership and the team followed his example. The result was a stunning 91-87 upset over the first place Thunderbirds.

"Bruce Blumell was one of the most dedicated, sincere, and hard working individuals I have seen at the U of A. He was always a good driving guard, and this year, after he developed his jump shot was an all-around threat," said Coach Barry Mitchelson of the Golden Bears.

### MADE THE SEASON

"The game against UBC really made the season for us. I think the team has a real chance to win the championship next year," said Blumell.

"I have enjoyed playing with the Bears. I wish them all the luck in the future," he added.

In the past four years, Bruce Blumell has displayed all the qualities desired of a U of A athlete—leadership, athletic ability, and fine sportsmanship. He has been a tribute to the U of A on and off the court.