

## SPORTS

## Suderman makes All-stars

The Bears basketball team was not expected to do well in 1984. Coach Brian Heany had left for Toronto and the Bears' two Western Conference all-stars, Leon Bynoe and Fred Murrell were not returning. However, head coach Don Horwood led the team to a respectable finish (fourth in conference play, third in the play-off tournament) and found an all-star of his own, Mike Suderman.

Suderman had practiced but did not play with the Bears in 1983, after he transferred to the U of A from Trinity

Western College in BC. This year, his first in the CWUAA, the 6'4", 210 pound forward was fourth in conference scoring with an average of 17.9 points per game. He led the conference in field goal percentages at 67 per cent and was second in free throws at 90 per cent. Suderman was named to the first All-Star team in three pre-season tournaments and ended the season on the CWUAA first All-Star teams for league play and the Championship Tournament. Recently the Gateway talked to Suderman about his first year at the U of A.

Interview by Kent Blinston, Photos by Bill Inglee



boisterous albeit small

**Gateway:** You came to the U of A from a place most of us have never heard of Western College. Why did you start there?

**Suderman:** Out of high school I was offered a few places to go. I was looking for a smaller school, close to home. Trinity Western is a Christian school and I was looking for that as well.

**Gateway:** I've been told that it is the dream of every BC high school basketball player to play for the U of Victoria. Did you have an offer from them?

**Suderman:** No, I guess Ken Shields (U of Vic coach) never got ahold of me. I really didn't know what the university scene was when I was coming out of high school and I was looking for a place where I could play right away instead of sitting on the bench.

**Gateway:** So after two years at Trinity and one all-conference pick you decided to

move on. Why did you choose the U of A?

**Suderman:** After my second year at Trinity the coach there resigned and I'd never planned to graduate from Trinity so I was looking for a university somewhere. I was looking at UBC, U of A and a couple of other Canadian universities. U of A had a very good Phys Ed program and my fiance, now, is from Edmonton and that kind of influenced my decision.

**Gateway:** So, fiance aside, academics are very important to you.

**Suderman:** Oh, definitely. I won't be playing basketball all my life, probably just for a couple more years so it's important to get the education.

**Gateway:** Sitting out the season last year must have been awkward for you. In high school and college you were always the star of the team and now you were not even

playing. How did you adjust to that?

**Suderman:** It was a change, it was the first year that I hadn't played basketball in eight years. Actually I didn't mind the break; it was nice to have a different routine, although I did miss the competitiveness of basketball. I played on a senior men's team, which was kind of a filler, it wasn't nearly the same as intercollegiate competition. I was glad to play again this year.

**Gateway:** But you didn't just play this year. A couple people retire, there is a new coach, and all of a sudden you are being touted as the star of the team. You even had your picture in color on the cover of the schedule. Was that a lot of pressure?

**Suderman:** No, not really. I think the only pressure that was put on me was by myself because even though people had some expectations of me, I think I had to prove it to myself. There's pressure later in the season to perform, but that's the kind of pressure I don't mind at all; that's the pressure I like. It makes you push and play harder and try to achieve. And by mid-season I was just one spoke in the wheel, one of the players fulfilling a role. We all complemented each other very well.

**Gateway:** The team got off to a very rough start playing American teams, mostly away from home. Did that hurt the Bears in getting ready for conference play, or did it help to play the stronger competition?

**Suderman:** I would say it hurt us in the long run because we didn't get to see Canadian competition early in the year; I think it would have helped us in the rankings to have beaten some Canadian teams early in the season. I think if we had been ranked a few times we would still be playing right now. (Note: the Bears missed a chance to play in the National Final Tournament when a wild card berth was awarded to an Eastern team with a higher final ranking). One or two games like we played against the Americans are good because you see the level that basketball can be played at but playing five games was too much. I don't have to have it beaten into me.

**Gateway:** Has the unpredictability of the rankings this year bothered the team?

**Suderman:** Definitely. Especially after the weekend we beat Calgary and Lethbridge in the pre-Canada West Tournament. (Note: the Bears beat two top-ten teams and did not advance to the top ten the next

week.) Most of us feel we didn't get a fair shake there. We beat four or five of the top ten teams this year and I think we should have been ranked, at least once or twice. Next year we'll be stronger and they will have to rank us.

**Gateway:** In the last few years basketball in Western Canada has been a contest to see who will finish second to U of Vic. (Vic have been national champions since 1980 and western champions since 1978.) Has that been disheartening, and when is that going to change?

**Suderman:** Since U of Vic has been so strong it has brought up the standard of basketball in Canada West. Finishing second to U of Vic is nothing to sneeze at. This year they beat Lethbridge in the western final by only two points. When we played them the night before with seven minutes to go we were up on them by two points. I think that's an indication that U of Vic weren't as strong as the year before, and with Eli Pasquale, their mainstay, gone next year, they are on their way down.

**Gateway:** How are the Bears looking to improve next year?

**Suderman:** The main area we can improve on is playing to our potential for forty minutes of the game instead of just seeing glimpses of it. There are times this year when we've played absolutely brilliantly, and we just have to do that for the whole game. I think we could be in the top three in the country if we could do that. For myself, I've been presented with a new challenge: going out to the wing. I've played there before but I'll have to work on my quickness and my outside shooting.

**Gateway:** After the U of A, where can you go with basketball? Are you looking towards playing with the national team someday?

**Suderman:** There is a chance for a national team tryout next year if I have a good season again. After U of A there is the possibility of playing semi-pro in Europe. I don't really have any chances of going pro. If I had the opportunity to play for the national team I would. That's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Also, I've always been associated with Athletes in Action, they're a team with Campus Crusade for Christ, and I wouldn't mind playing with them for a year or two either.

