by Karl Wilberg

Saturday's 2-1 Bears victory over the U of C demonstrated the spirit of intercollegiate sport. In spite of dismal weather and sparse fan support the two Alberta teams played an exciting fast game.

In fact the game proved the point of college sport. The point of intercollegiate sport is not to attract thousands of people for a large gate. The point is to provide students, as players and trainers with a program that allows a rigorous academic and competitive schedule.

Soccer, at the U of A is played at a top level and is among the best in Canada. This achievement has been made without sports scholarships, massive alumni, or fan support. Consequently, none of the disadvantages, often found in the US, of heavy promotional committment occur.

If the team does badly coaches will not be the victim of unfair press or fan campaigns. Neither will players receive personal pressures that can prevent a realistic assessment of ability. Instead, players and coach can participate as serious athletes, not gamesters who perform for a crowd. That is a first priority but not one that excludes fun and fan participation. Rather, fun and increased spectator support must exist in mind of the first priority.

It is likely only a couple years before large numbers of students attend matches because a good thing cannot remain hidden. The game is exciting and easy to understand. Its international success is obvious when abuse is hurled at the referees in four versions of English.

The usual automatic posturing of agony or of being fouled that goes with incidental contact adds to the experience. However, the players are performing, in both senses, for the success of the team and not for a crowd. The Bears or Dinos would not have worked much harder for a huge crowd because they were already playing all out.

The first half started with the Bears employing an exciting new attack. Instead of a 4-4-2 formation the Bears introduced a 4-3-3 arrangement. Lorenzo Antonello was brought up from the backfield and, according to coach Peter Esdale, used to "win the ball and hold it". Once accomplished, Antonello was to "lay the ball to the flank and to Rudy (Bartholemew) and Ase

Antonello followed Esdale's instruction and, in combination with forwards Bartholemew and Ayobahan, created many scoring chances. The forwards used the flanks often in the first half to press the attack. Still, the Calgary defense was solid and forced the Bears to kick from poor angles.

(Ayobahan)."

The frustration of the U of A's as well as the U of C's attacks pointed to strong defenses on both teams. Only once did a strictly defensive lapse result in a goal. Halfway into the half Calgary's Chris Daniels put a good ball into the Alberta net. The Bear defense had underestimated a high long ball and Daniels seized the chance to beat the defense. This goal was surprising because the Bears had maintained pressure on the Calgary defense. Esdale's strategy had worked out but was not completed.

At the half, Pat Johnson, out with a bruised ankle, termed the Dino goal unlucky and indicated that it would be a matter of time before the Bears

Bears win allways



Ase Ayobahan, on left, is one of Bears new front line set-up.

scored. His statement, in context of the Bear's aggressiveness, seemed accurate. In fact, Johnson was proved correct.

The half began with Bear forwards frustrated by Dino goalkeep Phil Conway. Conway played well and let loose few balls. The game until the last 30 minutes was in balance. Forwards from both teams were not successful.

Esdale hoped that the 4-3-3 arrangement would allow the Bear's forwards to win air balls and loose balls. The new set-up came through at the 65 minute. Antonello, working the center near Calgary's goal, timed a leap to head a crossing ball past Conway. The tying goal was notable because of heavy traffic at the center.

The next 20 minutes were dominated by both defenses. Finally, the Bears successfully

pushed up and Antonello sent a high cross to Marc Olivieri. Olivieri, in front of the net, was pushed and awarded a direct penalty kick. Olivieri booted the ball past Conway, who may have tipped the ball, into the net's low right corner.

The Bear's 2-1 lead encouraged Calgary to spring back but were foiled by a sprawling Bill Akum. However, the Bears regained the ball and ended the game. Goalkeeper Akum has certainly recovered from an injury received during the Bear's West coast swing.

The Bears have a chance at the West play-offs if Victoria loses one of its two remaining games. The Bears too must win against the U of S next weekend. In any case, the soccer team is an exciting asset to the U of A sport program and without a doubt represents the increasing interest in soccer.

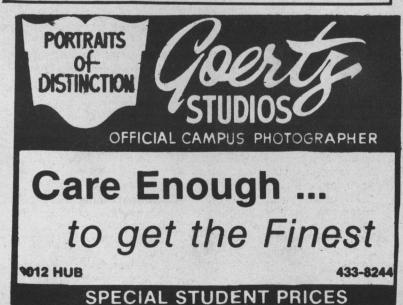


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