

Alan Small



Cranston injury not serious or new

by Randy Provencal

Sid Cranston must think he's living under some sort of curse.

For the third year in his four with the University of Alberta hockey Bears, he won't play an injury-free season. The Bears captain twisted his knee as he was hit from behind in last Friday's 8-7 win over the University of Calgary

how the swelling goes down in the next few days."

At first, it didn't look good for the veteran; now things appear brighter. He skated Tuesday for the first time since his injury, and, while it was just a light skate, it does show quick improvement.

"It's not great but it's not too bad," Cranston said. "It's getting stronger every day. But (the coaches) aren't allowing me to do a whole lot."

As a protective measure, Cranston is wearing a knee brace. "It gives me a little more confidence now," he said.

It's not like the Bear hasn't been through this rigamarole before.

In his first year, he "blew out my right knee," which "practically kept me out for the whole year."

Freshman fluke? Nope.

In his second year, "I wrecked both of my ankles and then sprained my other knee."

Sophomore's bad luck? He hoped so.

In his third year, Cranston remained injury-free for the entire

"In my second year, I wrecked both ankles and sprained my knee." — Cranston.

Dinosaurs, and isn't expected back in the lineup until the Dec. 2-3 series with Manitoba.

"It's a sprain in the medial collateral," Cranston explained of his cantaloupe-sized left knee. "I'm quite doubtful for this weekend, but I think Manitoba could be a realistic goal. It depends on

"Hey Al, did Calgary ever lay a beating on the St. Mary's Huskies on Saturday," my friend said. "That Torrance fellow sure throws a good football. It's too bad I didn't see him play when he took on the U of A. By the way, I didn't read *The Gateway*. How did the U of A do in football?"

"Well they had problems," I replied. "They won one game out of eight. It doesn't sound all that hot. But they played well."

"Al," my friend said, "how can you play well and win only one of your games." I tried to chalk it up to bad luck, tough competition, and poor execution, but he was buying my cheap talk about as well as the other gender buys it on a Friday night at the pub: not well. Not well at all.

"When did you turn into a politician?" my friend replied. "Back in high school, you always said when a stiff was a stiff. The next thing you're going to say that Herb Raglan will be the next great hockey star. Get a grip."

I had to admit, I've been a Casper Milquetoast of late, but I didn't believe that people could have noticed my lack of intestinal fortitude. "They had some good players," I fudged. "Four of them became All-Canadians."

That stalled my friend's argument a little bit, but he struck back. "How come both basketball teams and both volleyball teams lost last weekend to Calgary. Do they have something on us that we don't?"

"It's still early in the season," I said, quickly ducking the question. "The U of A should come through later in the season."

That didn't stop the pit bull tendencies of my coffee klatch colleague. "When did you become a lackey of the university? Why don't you tell people what really is going on? Why don't you tell the public that the U of A was 1-9 in head-to-head matchups with Calgary last weekend?"

I explained to him that *The Gateway* did, but not explicitly. There was a write-up of the only U of A triumph — the 8-7 hockey win — but also of their loss in Calgary, the basketball losses, and the volleyball losses.

"I thought the U of A had a proud athletic tradition," my friend said.

"They did," I said. "They don't want to tell anybody about it." That reminded me: I still haven't got my university stats yet.

I told my pal that if he wanted stats this week, he'd better read another paper, or phone up Athletics directly. "I'm tired of begging for them," I said. "My hockey pool gives me more up-to-date information."



Rob Galbraith

Cranston cringes

Bear Sid Cranston lies on the ice in pain after spraining his knee. It is his third knee injury in four seasons as a Golden Bear. He only played 61 seconds last weekend, and probably won't play until two weekends from now against Manitoba.

season, winning the CWUAA scoring title in the process. "It felt good to play a full season," he fondly recalled.

He won't experience that feeling in this, his final season with the Bears.

Some guys just can't win.

Hoop Bears looking south for victories

by Alan Small

Like the NFL, parity reigns in Canada West men's basketball. Of the six games this weekend, only one was decided by more than ten points. Blowouts will certainly be hard to come by this year.

"Who knows what's going to happen," said Horwood after the Bears loss on Saturday, "last year,

we went 1-7 to start the year yet we still made the playoffs."

The Bears would like a similar finish to their season. They can do without another horrible start, however. They can do something about improving their record this weekend when they travel to Lethbridge to take on the Pronghorns.

The Horns have a lot to do

with the increased parity in Canada West basketball this season. In their first pair of games, they defeated the Saskatchewan Huskies by one and nine points. This weekend, they'll be hosting the Golden Bear cagers in "The Pit", where they have a huge home-court advantage. "The Pit" is where the Huskies fell last weekend. The Bears will be hoping they don't suffer a similar fate.

Lethbridge, an experienced club, will be led by fifth year, 6'4" guard Ryan Heggie, who was in the top five in scoring during Canada West play last season. Doing most of their work inside will be Paul Blaskovits, who at 6'8" and 242 pounds is an imposing forward who likes the physical game.

One of the reasons why Canada West basketball is so close this

year is that all the teams are in a rebuilding phase. Every team is trying to find that knockout punch, that one player that they can get the ball to in the late going to score them a basket.

Not only has Alberta lost a couple of dominating players from last year — Chris Toutant and Rick Stanley — and are trying to find their way through the basketball wilderness without them, but Victoria lost Cord Clemens, a 7 foot dominating post, and UBC lost J.D. Jackson, one of the top three-point shooters in the country last year.

Saskatchewan has a totally new starting lineup, as all five starters were in their last year of eligibility

"Last year, we went 1-7 to start the year yet we still made the playoffs." — Horwood.



Bear Mike Frisby (44) is seemingly surrounded by these four Dinos from last week's action.

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last year. Among them was Byron Tokarchuk, one of the most used meal tickets in Canadian university basketball. Only Lethbridge and Calgary have kept their starting lineups intact from last season: a major reason why both of those teams are 2-0 so far.

The Bears will have to pass the ball better this weekend: last weekend they burned themselves with easy turnovers. Poor passing was the major reason they were swept last weekend by Calgary.

IN THE PAINT: Friday's game will be broadcast on FM88 CJSR, starting at 8:15 pm.