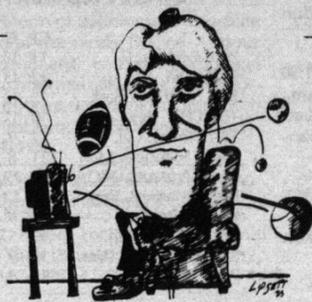


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Mark Spector

"Want them to go home and cry?"

Poor Susie Smith.

The Pandas volleyball coach was in my office the other day lamenting the fact that her teams "desire" was questioned briefly in a Gateway article by Alan Small. All they had done was joyously initiate a rookie player in front of a packed Varsity Gym after a humiliating 3-0 sweep by the U. of Calgary Dinnies.

It was the Pandas third straight seasonal loss and they had been outscored 45-21, scoring two and seven points in two of the games.

"What do you want them to do," questioned Smith, "go home and cry just because they lost?"

So what exactly do teams do after they lose games anyways?

I can tell you that the hockey Bears' dressing room is a rather solemn place after a loss. Even when it hasn't been preceded by two more defeats. Clare Drake, a 26 year veteran coach, would have it that way.

The Golden Bears are a championship team.

Jim Donlevy's football Bears grew accustomed to losing this past WIFL season. They lost seven times, only tasting victory once. Their demeanor, to the man, was a modest one after a setback.

In a year and a half of covering the Edmonton Oilers I have yet to witness those jocular dressing room antics that you read about in jocular dressing room books, at both ends of the Coliseum corridor.

Those only take place amongst the winners, Susie.

"As long as it's not done in a church or an airport, there should be no problem with it," was how she justified the way her veterans taped the rookie to that chair and pushed her out in front of the packed Varsity Gym. Of course. The latter two places are way too sterile. Too public and cold.

The people there wouldn't realize that those mirthful young girls had just been "smoked out of their own gym" as Mr. Small so aptly put it.

By the same token, the guy sitting in the stands doesn't realize that the team practices for four long, hard hours a day, as Smith was quick to point out. He (or she) would be quick to ask a few questions about such a scene.

Having dealt with that, let me interpret for you what a joy this woman has been to work with since her arrival on this campus just a scant three months ago. Out of the 15 coaches here in Panda and Golden Bear country, Smith is the only one that insists that press must ask her before interviewing any of her players.

She is also the only coach that asks to look at photos before they are printed. "Just bring them by practice," said she, so that she could give them the once over. She is no doubt a photo expert.

Susie Smith, quite frankly, is a pain in the butt if you are a reporter.

And the unfortunate thing is that her players will suffer for it.

Bob Steadward, Chairman of Athletics, knows that the first step to filling the stands at the U of A sporting events is to attract the students. Yet Smith, in her ultimate wisdom, can't find time over two days to talk to a reporter from the Student's newspaper.

Glen Sather, Edmonton Oilers coach and G.M., uses the press to his advantage, manipulating their stories to spark his team.

Susie Smith does the opposite.

And her players pay for it.

by Mark Spector

"The funny thing about the basketball schedule is that the way it's set up you have to peak twice a year," said assistant Bears hoop coach Steve Roth.

Well if that's the case, there is no better time than this weekend for the Alberta Golden Bears to hit that first peak. Because it's going to take the best effort that Alberta can give to walk away with the title at their own Golden Bear Invitational for the first time in its three year existence.

They came awfully close last year after defeating the favored York University in an exciting overtime semi-final, but alas, the Saskatchewan Huskies rained on their parade with a 79-74 tournament final beating.

This year, however, the Bears are a more well-rounded team.

"No question," states Roth, "we're starting three seniors (5th year), one third year player, and one second year player, plus we've got a stronger bench (than last year). Except for the fifth year guys, everyone else has a lot of years left. It's a really nice mix."

But that's no fluke, says head coach Don Horwood. "You want to have that every year. You've got your seniors to provide leadership, and every year you bring in two or three new guys so you never really have to have that rebuilding year."

Like almost every team on every campus in the country, the hoop Bears have banded about the term National Champions their fair share. However, until they can prove to themselves that they really are that good the CIAU crown is still far away.

The perfect place to start doing that is this weekend right here in the Varsity Gym.

"The key point (for the players) is believing in this," says Horwood. "I've been telling the guys for two years that we can beat anyone in the country. This tournament will demonstrate that one way or another."

"It's three games right in a row, that's the way it will be in Halifax (the site of this year's finals) and that's what it takes to be national champions."

Alberta finds themselves in somewhat of a questionable position heading into the tournament, as they will face Bishops in their opening game tonight at 8:15. The problem is that they know very little about the Gaiters from Lennoxville, Quebec.

When they drew up the tournament schedule some time ago, Bishops was somewhat of an unknown quantity. Since then they have gained some notoriety, posting a preseason record of 8-3. The Bears meanwhile are at 7-5 after a trip to the States where they lost three in a row. Those losses were

Horwood's Club set for Golden Bear Invitational



Photo Bill Doskoch

Action from the final in last year's G.B. Invite. The Bears lost this one to Saskatchewan, and will try once again as they play their tourney opener against Bishops tonight.

expected, however, and actually two out of the three turned out to be moral victories as Alberta kept close to some powerful American competition.

The rest of the draw looks like this: Regina versus UBC at 2:00, '84 champs Manitoba takes on a Regina squad that dropped the Bisons twice last weekend at 4:00, Whitworth plays Calgary at 6:15 in what initially looked like the tougher side of the draw, and then the Bears and Bishops at 8:15.

Friday's games go at 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, and 9:00 with the Bears playing the late game should they beat Bishops, and the 5:00 contest if they don't. Saturday's title game goes at 3:00 p.m. to avoid any Grey Cup confrontation, while the rest of the teams play at two hour intervals starting at 9:00 a.m.

Tourney Tales - TSN will be airing live the

two semi's plus the final on Saturday . . . Horwood said that Eastern competition is getting harder to find because they've been getting beat whenever they come here. Western has lost their first game here, and York has won only once in two appearances. Windsor lost three straight here last year . . . the Eastern teams will receive around \$2000 in compensation each for making the trip west . . . and if you don't think that this tourney has become the top University Invitational in Canada, when Alberta gets invited out east, they can only offer about \$500 for travelling compensation. This is also the only one that gives each player on the winning team a championship ring . . . someone will win a trip for two to the Grey Cup in a draw to be made at the late game tonight. You have to be there to win.

Looks like a couple of lessons on the load

by Mark Spector

Both the Pandas and Bears volleyball teams are off to Saskatoon this weekend for a pair of matches against their University of Saskatchewan counterparts.

The two Alberta teams were defeated by the University of Calgary last Friday, but came on to beat U of Lethbridge in a pair of lopsided 3-0 wins on Saturday night.

The Bears are at an even 2-2 so far on the season after a coastal split where they lost to UBC but defeated Victoria.

Coach Pierre Baudin has to be pleased, especially when you consider the fact that the Bears won only two Canada West matches all season last year. But if they were looking to extend their one game winning streak, they just might have picked the wrong place to do it.

The Huskies are in first place with a 4-0 record, and they have lost only two of 24 games thus far. They have also won Canada West for the last two seasons, going undefeated last year with an unbelievable record of 45 games won against only five lost.

Alberta never won a game from them in

'85-'86, going down 3-0 three times. Avoiding a pair of sweeps this weekend would have to be a moral victory for an improved mens squad.

For coach Mike Payette's wrestling Bears it will be much the same situation as above, as his team heads to beautiful Burnaby Mountain and the Simon Fraser University campus just outside of Vancouver.

"We won't get to stay for the game but at least we'll be around for the festivities," said Payette of being in Vancouver on Grey Cup weekend.

They start the weekend with a dual meet (one one one) against Pacific University from Oregon on Friday, which is an exhibition before the real exhibition: The Simon Fraser Invitational. Alberta will compete against the two afore-mentioned teams, the University of Alaska, and "six or seven other American schools," according to Payette.

Their toughest competition will be from the SFU team, however, which is comprised

of members of what Payette calls the best wrestling club in Canada. The Burnaby Mountain Wrestling Club produced both a bronze and a silver medal winner at the '84 Olympics, and they have several members on the SFU team as well.

"We're certainly not as strong as I'd like us to be," admits Payette. "The High School system in Edmonton has become very weak over the last few years, and we're almost starting from scratch with the guys that we have this year."

Veteran 121 lbs. wrestler Tony Bacon is hopeful for the meet, as he should be able to deal with a knee injury and be able to go. John McMullen, who usually fights at the CIAU Heavyweight level of 190 lbs., will have to fight wrestlers that weigh up to 220 lbs. Because SFU competes in American conferences in all of their sports, they use American rules, thus the difference in weight categories.

"We're just looking for improvement in our guys," said Payette, "having the guys never quit; having them show mental toughness."