



cole's notes

Worried? Sure- but not panicky

Don't press the panic button quite yet, folks. Two losses does not a losing season make, though it's a little more serious when a team incurs those losses in the first three games of the WFL schedule, as the Bears have done.

It appears, from the first few league games, that no one team is going to breeze through without losing a game or two, and Jim Donlevy has gone as far as to predict that the West might be won with a 6-2, or even 5-3 record in the eight-game, five-team league schedule.

Saskatchewan, who were the pre-season favorites to win their second consecutive league title, could have easily lost their season opener to the Bears, and were beaten the next weekend in Calgary.

UBC, who scared heck out of everyone by thumping Manitoba 38-7 on the first weekend of play, is suddenly back down here with the common people after Saskatchewan whipped them 43-17 on Saturday.

Bears now feel that Calgary can be beaten, despite the loss to the Dinos Friday. They dominated the first half against Calgary, and only Alberta's failure to put points on the board on several good scoring chances let the Dinosaurs out from behind the eight-ball.

Besides the tightness of the league standings, there are a couple of other rays of sunshine shining through the clouds, which Donlevy must be happy about.

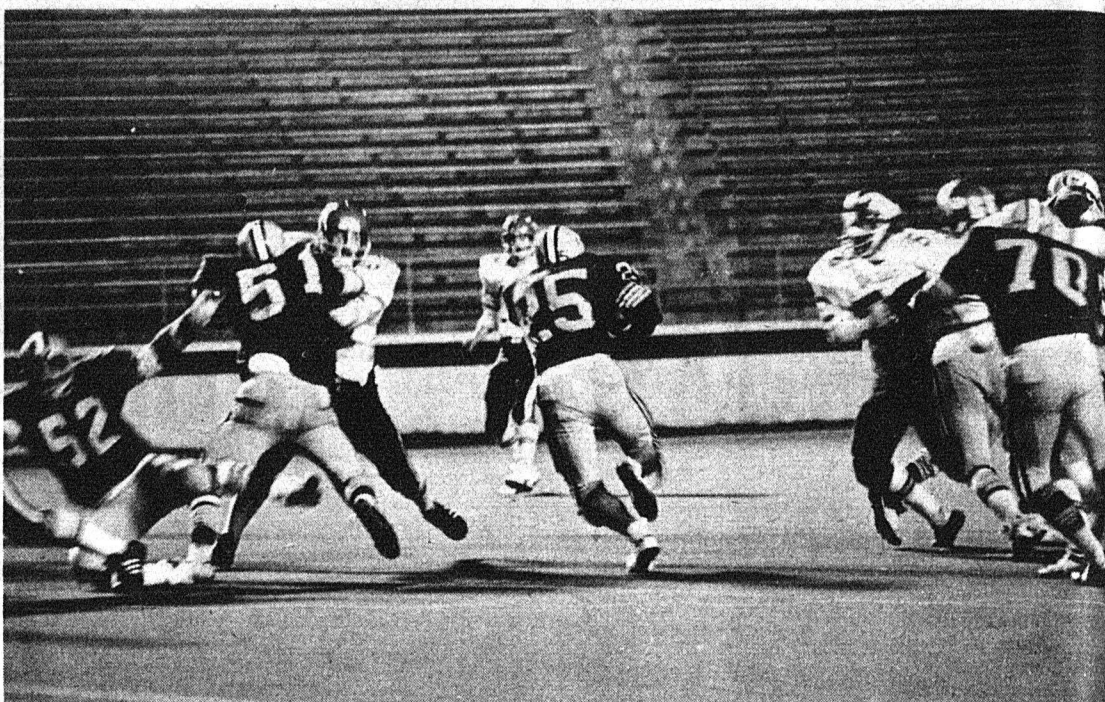
Bears may have found a second good running back to complement (and take some of the pressure off) Dalton Smarsh. Pat Barry, who moved from wingback to replace injured Buddy L'Hirondelle, showed surprising speed and second effort in a couple of important long-yardage situations Friday, and may take over that spot permanently, as neither L'Hirondelle nor predecessor Jan Klesko have been too impressive in a rushing capacity.

What else could the coach possibly have to cheer about? Well, while an 0 for 2 evening in the field goal kicking department doesn't automatically conjure up the image of efficiency, Joe Poplawski's two long attempts were just wide by inches, and Bears appear to at least have the ingredients of an adequate kicking game under control. Brian Fryer punted the ball eight times Friday for a 44.5 yard average.

The Bears have also finally begun to use Poplawski to full advantage as a pass receiver. Last year's "High School Athlete of the Year" in Edmonton, Poplawski may be the Golden Bears' ace athlete in years to come, much as Fryer is now.

Alberta's offensive line had an excellent game Friday. Both Larsen and Bryant had all kinds of time to throw the football, and Smarsh's third consecutive 100 yards-plus game is a credit to the work of the men up front.

The defence, though, was right out of the picture against an admittedly strong Calgary offence. The Dinosaur offensive line walked all over Bears' front four, while a defensive back says he had "sore arms from arm tackling all night" - if so, he must have been the only one in Bears' defensive backfield (with the exception of veteran Don Guy) who was tackling at all.



Mike MacLeod (51) and Rick Grove (70) spring Dalton Smarsh (25) loose for some of his 116-yard rushing total.

Bears thumped by Dinnies

by Cam Cole

The inexperienced Golden Bears defence faced a very tough, explosive offence for the first time Friday and, sad to say, their youth was showing, as they were beaten 33-21 by U of C Dinosaurs.

Led by running back Dan Diduck, who rushed for over 200 yards, the Calgary offence pretty much manhandled the Alberta defensive line, while quarterbacks Don Siler and Greg Watson took turns embarrassing the Bears' deep coverage with long pass completions.

Diduck, who is only 5'9" and 175 pounds, seemed able to rip off long gains at will, and his rushing total would have been even more impressive but for a 70-yard touchdown romp in the first quarter which was called back for holding.

Calgary coach Mike Lashuk alternated Siler and Watson on almost every play, after going with Siler for the entire first quarter. Brian Larsen, who started at QB for the Bears, called an excellent first half, but could only put 7 points on the

board, as Joe Poplawski narrowly missed a couple of long field-goal attempts.

Bears threatened on one other occasion, but lost possession when they elected to gamble on third down at the Dinnies' 37-yard line and Calgary recovered a fumbled pass to Poplawski, which would have kept their drive alive.

Alberta led 7-6 at the half, scoring on a 54-yard pass and run play from Larsen to Fryer in the first quarter. Near the end of the half the second of two tremendous boot-top catches by Shane Wylie netted the Dinnies their six points, but the convert attempt by Lindsay Hay was wide.

The Bears lost the game in the third quarter. Starting from their own 26 after receiving the second-half kickoff, Calgary marched downfield with runs of 8, 5, 11, 12, and 13 yards by Diduck, and capped it with a 30-yard touchdown pass to Larry Leatham, who caught the ball in front of cornerback John Houghton and outraced him to the endzone. Little did they know, Bears troubles were just

beginning.

Calgary's kickoff eluded Dalton Smarsh, who could not control the ball as it rolled out of bounds at the eight yard line. Then Larsen committed a "rookie mistake", throwing a 15-yard interception into the waiting arms of Calgary's John Petrucci, who was finally run out of bounds one yard shy of the endzone. Diduck plowed for first of three touchdowns on the next play, and Alberta fouled themselves in a hole they couldn't climb out of.

A 75-yard pass and run from Watson to Leatham set up a ten-yard touchdown run by Diduck, in the course of which he shed at least five Alberta tacklers, and Bears were down 26-7, still in the third period.

Bryant replaced Larsen briefly, and marched the Bears into scoring position before injuring the thumb on his throwing hand. Larsen came back in, but the drive fizzled with an incomplete pass a gamble from the 3-yard line.

Once again, it was Diduck who led the way out of Calgary territory. The unstoppable fullback topped off consecutive runs of 12, 9, 3, 9, 8, 14, 14, and 6 yards with a 4-yard run for his third touchdown.

Bears saved themselves from complete embarrassment with a 44-yard pass to Poplawski for a major score, and a 5-yard touchdown smash by Smarsh with 33 seconds left, but it was much too little, much too late.

Despite the score, the statistics (though they may be for losers) weren't that helpful in Calgary's favor. Diduck had 202 yards on the ground, boosted Calgary's rushing yardage to 321, compared to 209 for Alberta. Larsen and Bryant, however, combined to complete 18 of 29 pass attempts for a 299-yard total, while Siler and Watson were 9/18 for 209 yards.

Dalton Smarsh again rushed for 116 yards on 23 carries while Fryer (8 catches, 57 yards) and Poplawski (5/57) were the game's lead receivers. Calgary's top pass catchers were Leatham (4/116) and Wylie (4/65).

The victory gives the Dinosaurs first place in the WFL, with a perfect 2-0 record. Saskatchewan, who defeated UBC 43-17 Saturday, is behind with a 2-1 mark, while UBC (1-1) and Alberta (1-2) are tied for third. Manitoba did not play this week and remains winless in two games.

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