

Lethbridge, Golden Bears split on the court down south

by Philip Preville

The Alberta Golden Bears basketball team opened their season this weekend at the University of Lethbridge, coming up with a come-from-behind 81-78 victory on Friday, but then losing 86-70 on Saturday.

The Bears were down by about 12 points all game on Friday night. The Bears then switched from a man-to-man defense to a zone with 12 minutes remaining. The Pronghorns failed to adjust, and that gave the Bears the opportunity to catch up. Sean Chursinoff then put the game away for the Bears with two free throws with seconds remaining. Chursinoff scored 20 for the Bears, while Chris Toutant and Ed Joseph added 15 and 12 points, respectively. Post Ryan Haggie scored 19 for Lethbridge.

"It was a good come-from-behind victory for us, being the first game of the season and on the road. I'm happy with the spirit," Bears head coach Don Horwood said, with irritation and frustration in his voice.

On Saturday night Alberta got a taste of their own medicine, as the Pronghorns switched defenses and consequently confused the Bears long enough to put it out of reach.

Toutant put in an exceptional individual performance on offense, scoring 30 for the Bears. Guard Jamie McClelland tallied 22 for U of L.

The Bears were only down by two at the half, 35-33, and they hadn't even played a very good half, according to Horwood. "I thought, hey, we can't play much worse than that in the second half. I was wrong."



The Bears did not get strong performances from their post players, and it caused lots of problems on offense for the U of A. "We ended up doing a lot of outside shooting on Saturday," said the head coach, "and Lethbridge was able to disregard our post players and concentrate on stopping our guards."

Indeed, all the shooting that the Bears did helped Toutant score 30

on that night. The Bears are very proficient at guard, and other teams know it.

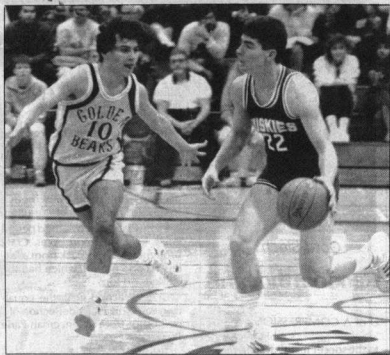
"That's why we need some good scoring from our posts," says Horwood. "We have to be able to open things up for our guards."

"We need better production from (veteran post players and starters) Mark Baker and Scott McIntyre. I wouldn't blame the loss on them, though. I don't think our guards got the ball into those two enough for them to be effective. It's something we'll definitely work on."

There were a few bright spots over the weekend for the Bears, however. Rookie post Rick Stanley contributed a performance in Friday night's win that won praise from his coach. "Rick didn't score a lot (about five points), but he was a presence on offense and defense, and that gave us some flexibility."

The Bears' defense also caused 35 Lethbridge turnovers on Saturday, but their defense was still below par as Lethbridge managed 86 points nonetheless.

One has to consider that the Golden Bears were not well-prepared for these games, having only been able to fit in two exhibition



Pressure on guards like Sean Chursinoff (10) held the Bear offence in check.

games against inferior opposition before this weekend. With improvement in mind, the Bears head to Saskatoon this weekend for the Iron Man Classic. They will play the University of Regina (assistant-coached by former Bears coach Steve Roth) on Thursday night, then U of Saskatchewan on Friday, and U of Manitoba on Saturday.

The Bears will then return home to give locals their first look at the team when they play Lewis-Clark State on Monday night, before they return to Saskatoon for their next two CWUAA games against the University of Saskatchewan.

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for the
Gateway

Pressure on Pandas this weekend

by Alan Small

The Panda basketball club prepped for its upcoming season by taking on their alumni and club of select high school players from Grande Prairie.

In the first match, they lost 72-70 in overtime to their alumni. Even though at one point they were ahead 55-48, a mental lapse by the defense let the Alumni catch up.

"After they scored a basket, we forgot what to do," Pandas head coach Diane Hilko said, "we got mixed up and confused."

Although they got a disappointing result, Hilko was pleased with the result.

"In the first half, our defense kept us in. Our offence wasn't patient in the first half," Hilko said.

While their offence wasn't up to snuff in the first half, the 38 turnovers the defence made got the fast

break moving. They were only five down at the half.

Linda Mrkonjic scored 16 points and 9 rebounds while Joanna Ross scored 15 points and nabbed 15 rebounds. Sue Tokariuk scored 27 for the Pandas while Panda assistant coach Lisa Janz netted 10.

Sunday, they faced a select club of high schoolers from Grande Prairie in a 60 minute game.

A pressuring defence had the Pandas in knots in the first half.

When they came out in the second half, the Pandas held the Selects off the scoreboard for eight minutes and romped to a 104-74

victory.

"We couldn't get inside during the first half," Hilko said, "during halftime, we talked about what we had to do."

Hilko is pleased with the look of her troops so far.

"When we go to time out and I tell them what to do, they react accordingly," Hilko said.

FOUL SHOTS: The Pandas go down to Calgary this weekend to take part in the annual tournament. Bishop's, McMaster, UBC, Toronto, Lethbridge, and Laurentian will face Alberta and the host Calgary Dinies.

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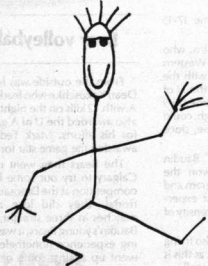
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