

SPORTS

Hockey Bears lose nationals

TORONTO — For the Golden Bear hockey team, the long and winding road led them to the wrong door.

After their capturing the western title against the Saskatchewan Huskies, after their sensational comeback against the Manitoba Bisons in the western regional, and after their two come-from-behind wins against the Toronto Varsity Blues, which put them into the national final, the Bears were unable to overcome the York Yoemen's 3-0 lead in the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union championship game.

The door of glory was slammed in their face. Cold reality, a 3-2 loss to the underrated Yoemen.

The Bears did not play anywhere near their capability. Their first period performance was as shabby as an actor's who has come down with a bad case of stage fright on opening night. Yorks' all-Canadian right-wing Don McLaren, also the tournament's most valuable player, outsmarted Bears' all-Canadian goalie Ken Hodge on three occasions (two on the power play) in the first period alone.

Clare Drake, Golden Bear's head coach, cites championship jitters as the reason for the Bears lack of presence.

Eva on
the road



"The players were not overconfident, but were nervous. We were uncharacteristic in the first period. I thought, because we were very nervous, we played very badly. It's one of those things that's hard to explain.

"None of our players have been to a national final, but then again neither have any of the York players. We usually straighten out around the 10-minute mark, but tonight (Sunday) we played with very little poise. We started slowly, and our slowness lasted too long. As it turned out it was too much to come back from," said Drake.

The Bears did regain their composure in the second and third periods. Although having a number of scoring opportunities, the Bears outshot York 32-19, only two shots managed to get past York's tour-

nament all-star goalie Mark Applewhite. It was a case of too little, much too late.

Dave Souch, named Bears' star of the game, gave the Bears their first goal of the night at 15:29 of the third period. With one second remaining, John Reid scored the final goal. The Bears were one goal short of putting the game into overtime. There was to be no miracle-on-ice Sunday night.

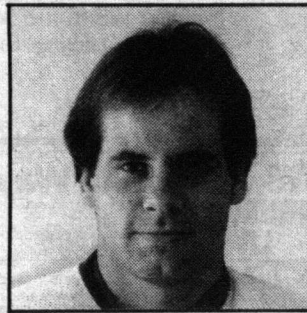
"Their goaltender played exceptionally well. I think maybe the puck could have bounced better for us a couple of times, but that's part of the game. We put a lot of pressure on them towards the end, but they certainly did what they had to do. I have to give a lot of credit to York. They played a very disciplined game. They're a fine team.

"I am really proud of our players too. They showed a lot of character. We've had to battle back the last three or four games, like against Manitoba. Our guys never quit, they kept coming until the end. Unfortunately, we just ran out of time. I have to give them credit. They kept the hope alive and kept working," said Drake.

The loss of captain Ron Vertz only complicated matters further.

Vertz suffered a shoulder injury in the Bears' second match-up with the Blues on Saturday night. This left the Bears with only five defencemen in Sunday's championship game.

"One of the major factors for us was losing Ron Vertz. He single-handedly led us back on a couple of occasions, like last weekend in Manitoba. He is really the glue of our defence. Ron is a steady partner for Tim Krug and I think it really affected Tim's game, particularly in the first half. Tim had a very average game for him, but I thought he came on well towards the end. I think he really missed Ron. I know the whole team missed Ron," said Drake.



All-Canadian goalie Ken Hodge

The Bears' power play was another major downfall. They had five advantages, including one for four minutes, but came away empty handed.

"If you analyze it, probably it was our lack of control on the power play. The power play is the thing that ended up hurting us the most. It was partly due to the good defensive job that the other team did and partly due to the fact that we didn't have as much poise in this particular game as we have had in the past. Our power play over the season has been very good, along with our penalty killing. We just didn't have it in this tournament," said Drake.

For Dave Chambers and his Yoemen, this was their first CIAU hockey victory. Chambers feels that his team's confidence helped them to win the title.

"We felt we could forecheck their defence and we did. We had great netminding. Our goalie gave us saves when we needed them.

Everybody did their job. We played well the whole game. We have a tendency to let up, but against Alberta we knew we couldn't. I think they always felt they could come back and we obviously knew they had done that before. Our three first period goals helped us. We knew Toronto came close to them and we beat Toronto so we weren't in awe and saying oh jeez we can't beat this team. We were loose and went out and did the job," said Chambers.

For seven Golden Bears, this was their last opportunity to be heralded as national victors. Playing in their final game were: defencemen Tim Krug and Rick Carriere; right-wingers Dave Souch, Joey Engert, and Perry Zapernick; and centers Rick Swan and Breen Neeser. They can all be proud of the leadership they provided their teammates and of the contributions they have made to their team.

Krug and Swan were named to the tournament's all-star team, along with defencemen Parie Proft. Center Darren Boyko of Toronto and right-wing Guy Charbonneau of Ottawa were also named to the team.

Swan was named star of the game in the Bears first game against Toronto and Hodge was the star in their second confrontation.

The Bears were down 2-0 in their first game against the Blues. They cameback to win the game 7-5. Krug and Vertz added a goal apiece to tie the score 2-2 at the end of the first period. Stacey Wakabayashi, Neeser, Colin Chisolm, Souch, and Gerald Koebel were the other scorers for the Bears.

Their second meeting saw the Bears down 3-0. At 3:34 of the second period Engert scored the Bears' first goal, followed by Koebel. Once again, Dennis Cranston gave the Bears the needed goal. Having won the first game, a tie was all they needed to advance to the final against the Yoemen. York defeated the Ottawa Gee-Gees 5-3 and 6-5 for their spot in the final.

The Bears can still finish off their year on a winning note this Tuesday night as they face the NAIT Oopkiks at the Coliseum in the battle of Edmonton at 7:30 p.m.

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