

Lady Luck shines on Panda soccer squad

Pandas 5 Dinosaurs 1
by Rajan Bhardwaj

Friday the thirteenth is supposed to be an unlucky day. However, Lady Luck was definitely on the side of the U of A Panda soccer team as they defeated the University of Calgary Dinosaurs 5-1 Friday afternoon at the Faculte St. Jean field.

Neither team played well consistently, with the Pandas not playing as a unit, and the Dinosaurs not being able to generate the offence required to offset their inexperienced defence's mistakes.

The game was scoreless until the 23rd minute, when Panda Sheryl Ferry scored unassisted after Dino goalkeeper Kari Gunson fanned on a kick as she tried to clear the ball out of her goalcrease. A short seven minutes later midfielder Janine Wood put the ball in the net for her first of two goals in the game.

Despite their two goals, the Pandas were not playing to the best of their ability, and this showed as the Dinosaurs began to press as the first half wound down. Their defence helped the offensive cause by settling down and clearing the ball well under pressure, something they had not done up to that point.

Although the Dinosaurs did manage to mount an attack, they did not have success in putting the ball in the net. Some fine play by Panda goalkeeper Lisa Tilley and the defence turned U of C back time after time, keeping the score 2-0 at the end of the half.

Calgary's momentum carried into the second half. Lesley Duncan got in behind the Panda defence and spoiled Tilley's shutout bid as she

came out to challenge the midfielder.

After that goal however, the Pandas began to pull together, and the Dinosaurs couldn't keep up. After pressuring Calgary's defence for several minutes, midfielder Kelly Vandergrift blasted a shot home from 15 yards out to make it 3-1. Vandergrift scored her second of the game to make it 4-1, after the Dinosaurs gave up a corner kick.

As time went on, the Dinosaurs seemed to sense that the game was out of reach. Wood's second goal of the afternoon came when she sent a bullet from the top right side of the penalty box into the top left corner of the net. The Dinosaurs seemed to give up at that point, and neither team dominated the final minutes of the game.

Despite the Pandas' five goals, they still had trouble finishing in the attacking third of the field, as their attack seemed to fizzle out several times when they got into Calgary's zone. To offset this weakness, the Pandas are playing an "overlapping offence," where a defender or midfielder carries the ball up the whole field, using the give-and-go to thwart the opposition's defenders. Obviously this style works for the Pandas, who got all their goals from midfielders.

Panda coach Tracy David attributed the victory to the inexperience of the Dinosaurs, and not to the play of her team. "We didn't play well as a team out there today. Actually, we sucked. We're lucky to have won. Calgary's got a young team, inexperienced, but in a couple of years, they're going to be the team to watch."



Sean Costall

Trap that ball

Panda Sheryl Ferry looks on as her teammate tries to bring down a ball. The Pandas were brutal but they still managed a 5-1 win over the U of C Dinosaurs.

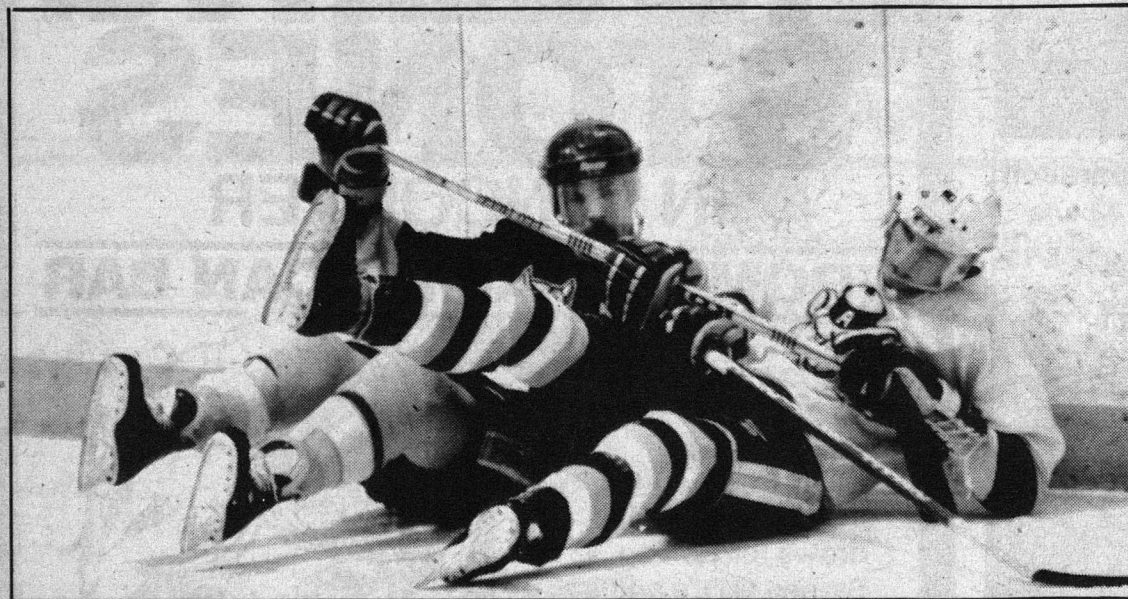
Calgary coach Keith Pritchard agrees that his team has potential. "We go really well in spurts, but we need to put it together." Calgary's weak spot was their goalkeeper. "Yeah, she's young, this is only the third game in her life she's played goalie, so she'll only get better."

Pritchard said.

The Pandas' next challenge will be the strong Lethbridge Pronghorns team on Saturday.

THROW-INS: Apart from her two goals, Kelly Vandergrift also had a strong game in the defensive third... the Pandas are hurting, with mid-

fielder Sherri Froc and forward Nikki Townsend out with knee injuries... the Pandas will be in B.C. next weekend and in Calgary and Lethbridge for rematches of this weekend's games on October 27th and 28th, then in Saskatchewan on November 4.



Bear comeback completes sweep

Alberta 4 Lethbridge 3
by Randal Smathers

The Alberta Golden Bears hockey club completed an opening-weekend sweep by downing the host Pronghorns 4-3 on Saturday night. The Bears were down 2-0 at the mid-point of the game, but came back with four consecutive goals to win.

"Lethbridge scored with about five minutes left," said head coach Bill Moores. "It was a little dicey there at the end."

"Both games were very tough," Moores said. "The first game was 2-2 at one point as well." Moores was pleased with the play of his team against a greatly-improved

Lethbridge squad. "They're much more disciplined this year," he said.

Lethbridge is also doing "a lot of little things well" this season, according to Moores. "Things like screening the man off of the puck carrier... and their goalie and their defensive play was pretty good."

Moores felt his team showed good patience in coming back against the Pronghorns, despite their goalie being apparently unbeatable in the early going.

The powerplay continues to be a problem early in the season, with the Bears going 2 for 11 on the weekend, but Moores is showing similar good patience to his team's.

POWERPLAY — p 13



Ajay Bhardwaj

He had set fifty NHL records, including four all star marks. He had led a team to four Stanley Cup wins in five years. He had single-handedly lifted a mediocre hockey squad to dizzying heights.

The man many people had thought too small, too slow to be a National Hockey Leaguer had won nine Hart Trophies, seven Art Ross Trophies, five Pearson Trophies, two Conn Smythe Trophies, and a Lady Byng Trophy, was on the brink of making history.

He'd accomplished it nearly 1,000 games ahead of his idol Gordie Howe's pace. Now his idol was watching him in a city which was fast becoming foreign to Wayne Gretzky. It was a town which had given him his living for

a decade, until he was sent off to a place where no one knew what the word hockey meant.

When the season began, Gretzky was thirteen points behind Howe's mark of 1850 career points. He picked up a point here, a couple there, until he stood at 1849. Then he returned to the scene of his greatest glories, to meet the friends who were also his foes: Act I.

A playoff-like intensity seemed to grip the players and the fans alike. It was the biggest crowd at Northlands Coliseum this season, a capacity of 17,503. Everyone had come to see history in the making. Everyone had come to see the Great One. They wanted to see the record fall, but they wanted to see their team win. At first the crowd didn't seem to know what to do.

However, when the mighty Gretzky tied the record on a pass to defenceman Tom Laidlaw (who?), who got it to Bernie Nicholls, who scored to put the Kings up 1-0, the place was bedlam. 17,503 stood and clapped and whistled and blew horns, like it was New Year's Eve. It was 4:32 of the first period.

Act II. This time the spotlight intensified on the leading man as he took center stage. Everywhere he went, there was a man in orange and blue. Sometimes it was his old buddy, Mark Messier. Other times it was the pesky Esa Tikkanen.

For fifty-four and one half minutes it seemed as if destiny were against him. His old mates foiled him time after time. His supporting couldn't match his lead.

Kevin Lowe blocked a shot in the slot area after Gretzky had orchestrated a play. Then Lowe gave a pass to Gretzky in what appeared to be the denouement, only to have a shot by a teammate deflect wide of the goal area.

With less than four minutes remaining in the game, and Gretzky racing the curtain, Nicholls hit the post after a pass from Gretzky. Now his team was down a goal and they'd pulled their goalie and exhausted their only time-out.

"Gretz" remained on the ice for the final three minutes. The audience, always notoriously known for its silence, began chanting "Gretzky-Gretzky-Gretzky." The game had

become secondary. The Oilers led 4-3 and the Kings were pressing for the equalizer.

Act III. Then Gretzky did what he does best. After soliloquizing before a faceoff in the Oiler zone, he disappeared. Then he reappeared. Right in front of goalie Bill Ranford. It was as if the moment had been building ever since he laced on a pair of skates. This was destined to happen.

He swept a rolling puck up high over Ranford with a backhand. 1851. The King bench emptied. The audience was ecstatic. Howe, Walter Gretzky, and Janet Jones came to center stage to share Gretzky's glory.

In typical Gretzky fashion, he thanked everybody: The fans, his teammates, his ex-teammates, his organization, and even the Oiler organization. Howe and Gretzky hugged. The torch was passed on. Time stopped for a while to admire the Great One's accomplishment. The clock had fifty-three seconds remaining.

Dave Taylor and Steve Duchense received assists; not Jari Kurri and Kevin Lowe. For a curtain call Gretzky beat the Oilers in overtime. 1852.