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Bears break the ice

by **Bernie Poitras**

Now that Alan Eagleson's August hockey bonanza, the Canada Cup, is nearly over, the hockey world can lend its attention to more pressing matters - namely the Golden Bears hockey team and their upcoming season.

At a crowded press conference held last Friday at the Butterdome, Bears' hockey brass released the 1984-85 schedule along with some details of upcoming tournaments. Scheduled are five tournaments sandwiched before and during a 24-game season.

The five tournaments are: The U of A Juniors Invitational Tournament, this coming weekend, which will feature five AJHL teams and Bears' freshman squad. The five junior teams are: St. Albert, Ft. Saskatchewan, Hobbema, Ft. McMurray, and Sherwood Park. The teams will be divided into two pools with the winner of each pool competing in the final. One week later the regular Bears team will host the 2nd Annual Molsons-Bears Invitational and this will consist of the Bears, the U of Lethbridge, NAIT and defending tournament champions, U of Saskatchewan.

On Oct. 5-7, the Bears travel to Saskatoon to play in the 5th Annual U of Saskatchewan Huskies Classic. Then on Oct. 25-28 it's off to Calgary and the Molson International Hockey Challenge hosted by the U of Calgary Dinosaurs. Anchorage, Alaska will be the setting for the First Interstate Classic on Dec. 27-30.

The reason for the last two tournaments is due to a restructuring in the schedule to accommodate a new team, the U of Lethbridge.

In a 24 game schedule, the Bears would face their three opponents eight times. With the addition of one more team, the number is reduced to six. This left two empty weekends to fill in, hence the two additional tournaments.

The regular season will begin on October 12-13 in Saskatchewan and the Bears' home opener is slated for the following weekend, Oct. 19-20 versus UBC. It will span six

months with the playoffs starting in the first week of March.

Other notes of interest included the announcement that four players from last year's team will attend NHL training camps this month. They are: goalie Ken Hodge, and defencemen Tim Krug, Parie Proft and Colin Chisholm. Hodge and Krug will attend the Oilers camp, Proft will try to make the Vancouver Canucks, who drafted him in the third round of the 1981 NHL entry draft. Chisholm will go to Buffalo's camp as he was the Sabres' seventh round pick in the 1982 draft.

If, one day down the road, all four players make it to the pros, it will bring the number of Golden Bears who have gone on to play in the NHL to seven. While this is no

doubt good news, it is also somewhat surprising. The reason being that pro scouts have long stayed away from Canadian Colleges, opting instead for American colleges or junior leagues.

According to Bears' head coach Clare Drake, those scouts are only now coming to have a look at the promising talent.

"I don't think that they (Canadian colleges) have been looked at carefully," said Drake. "The perception of Canadian colleges is that they haven't been identified yet, they've been overlooked to some degree."

Now however, noted Drake, "there is a pro scout at almost all college games," and pro teams have been contacting him in respect to possible drafting, in this case, Bears' players.

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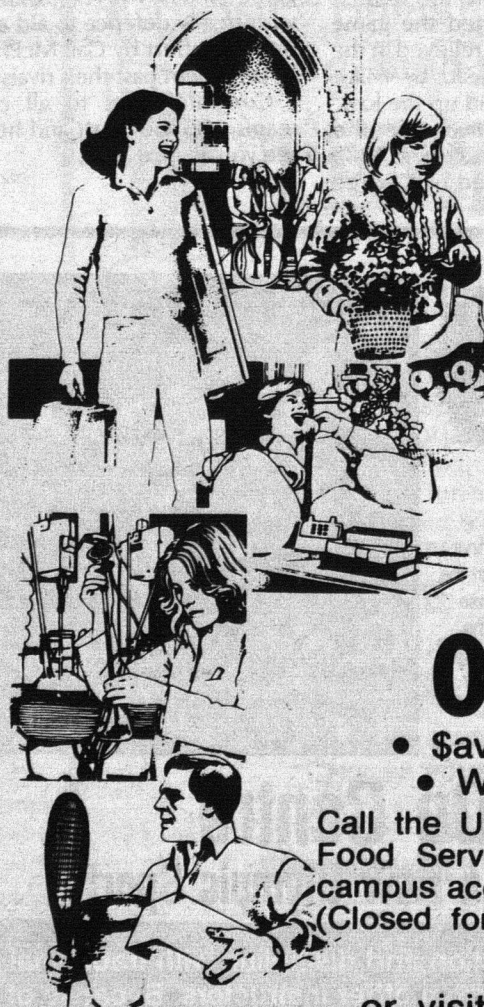
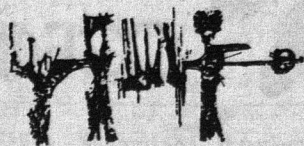
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