

Jack (of Beanstalk fame) has nothing on Bears

by Darrell Semenuk

Bears 58 T-Birds 57
Bears 77 T-Birds 56

The U of A Golden Bears tried on their role of giant killers for the first time in league action this weekend at Varsity gym and upended defending league champions UBC Thunderbirds in two close contests.

Bears are one of the smaller clubs in the Canada West University Athletic Association and the T-Birds have one of the tallest squads led by 6'8" Jan Bohn and 6'11" Mike McKay.

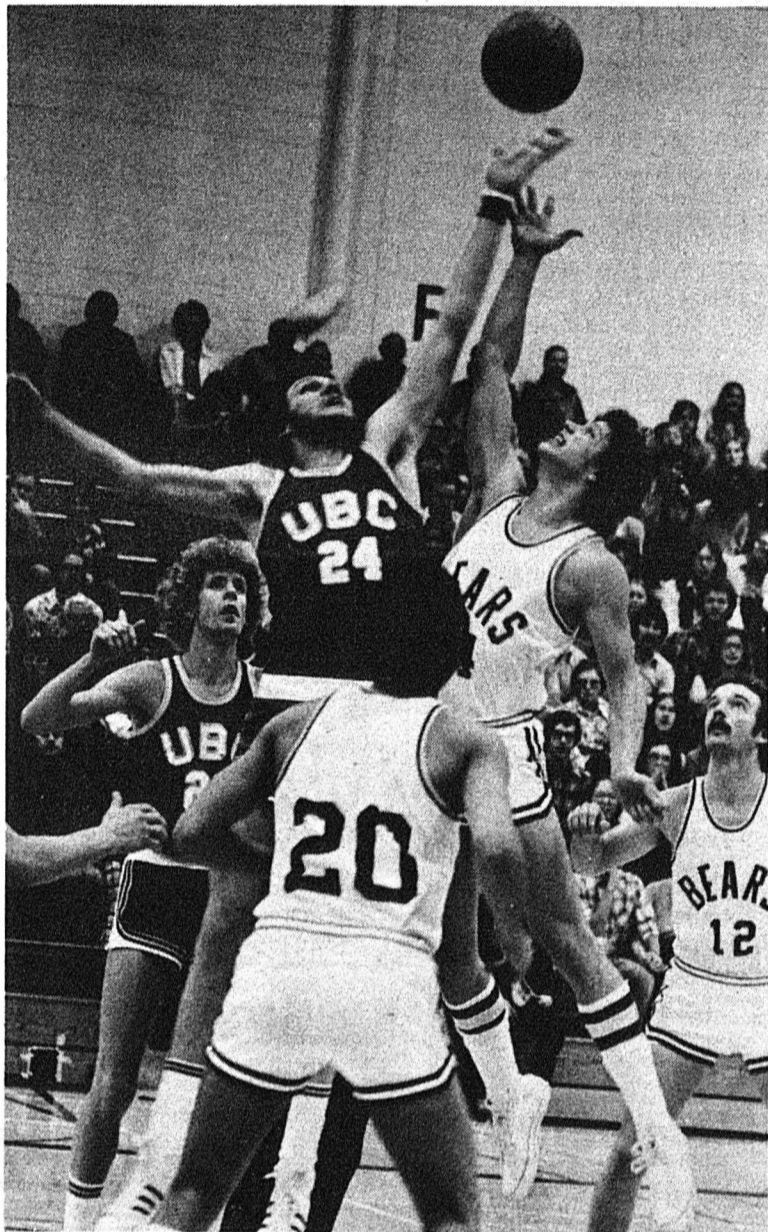
In Friday's match the Bears started well and had built up an 11 point lead with less than 2 minutes remaining in the half. UBC then reeled off 4 consecutive baskets to trail 30-27 heading into the final 20 minutes.

Two baskets in the opening 30 seconds put Bears ahead by 7, but UBC came charging back with 14 points in the next 15 minutes including 8 by McKay.

T-Birds lost their lead briefly with 10 minutes left, but were ahead again by 5 with 3½ minutes to play. Doug Baker pulled in a rebound off a missed foul shot by Mike Abercrombie and hit a turn around jumper to cut the lead to 3. Dave Holland then hit on a jump shot and Bears trailed 55-54.

UBC failed to convert 2 turnovers by the Bears into any points and Holland tipped in a Doug Baker shot to put the Bears ahead to stay. Baker added the last 2 points which turned out to be the winning basket and putting Alberta ahead 58-55.

The last 60 seconds provided plenty of nervous moments for fans and players alike with both teams chasing loose balls on the court. UBC came close with Jan Bohn stealing a pass from Mike Abercrombie to come within one, but the Bears controlled the ball for the last 14 seconds to preserve the victory.



Dave Holland may jump higher, but he'll still have to go some to outreach the upper branches of the 6'11" UBC tree called Mike McKay (24).

Keith Smith led Bears with 14 points shooting a hot 54%. Doug Baker had 12 points and also pulled in 7 rebounds as did Bain McMillan. Mike McKay had 16 points for UBC and Jan Bohn led all players in rebounds with 17.

The rematch, although won by 21 points by Alberta was closer than the score would indicate. The game was tied 9 times and the lead changed hands 6 times.

The Bears as in the first game were able to handle UBC's big men inside, and T-Birds lack of a good outside shooter hampered their offense. The Bears scoring was handled by

Bain McMillan and Doug Baker who both went on 20 minute scoring sprees.

McMillan had 14 points in the first half and added 2 more in the final 20 minutes. But the second half belonged to Doug Baker. Bears came into the second half leading by 5 but blew the game open with Baker finding the range, throwing in 24 points and finishing with 30 points and 9 rebounds.

Dave Holland again used body positioning to effectively box out McKay and hold him to 13 points. The Bears dominated in field goal accuracy hitting on 42% of their shots while UBC managed a cold 28%.

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