

# Hockey Bears slightly behind

The Golden Bears hockey team is not in their normal spot atop the Canada West standings, at the half-way point. Their 8-4-2 record is slightly behind their 10-4-0 record of last year. Hot stove league gossip has "identified" a few problems, so I thought I'd test them statistically.

Problem number one: goaltending. The Bears allowed 59 goals in the first half last year; 48 so far this year. On the surface it would seem that the "goalie-baiters" are out of line on this one, but as any hockey fan knows, there is more to goaltending than just total goals for and against.

Let's look at one-goal and overtime games; obvious pressure situations, where the team needs big-save goaltending to win. Last year, after 14 games, the Bears had lost both their OT decisions, and were 1-1 in one-goal games in regulation time. That's 1-3 in pressure games. This year, the Bears have lost one

and tied two in overtime, and they've won three and lost two games which were decided by a single goal. Their overall record in "pressure" games is 3-3-2 so far this year.

The Bears are also not being blown out. They've give average of 3.67 goals against per loss, compared with 6.33 per loss last year, fuelled by their 10-9 OT loss to UBC at home.

Netminding is not the problem. Problem number two: toughness. Are the Bears just not physical enough this year? So far this year, the Bears have taken 110 penalties for 254 minutes (a 220 penalty, 508 minute pace); last year the Bears took 303 penalties for 703 minutes, so they are definitely less physical than last year's team.

However, their opponents aren't taking advantage. The Bears' foes have drawn 108 penalties for 243 minutes (216 and 486 pim forecast over the full season); again down

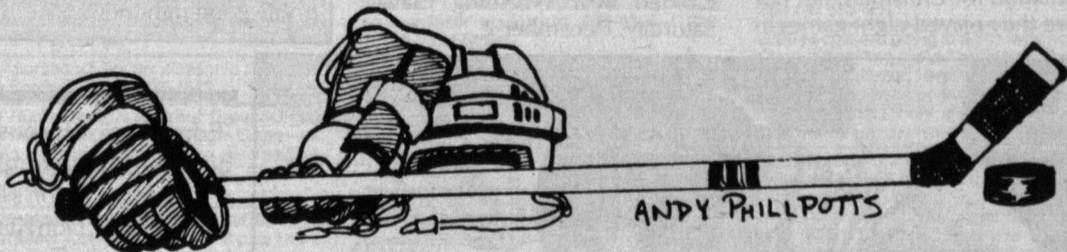
from last years 313-for-707 pace.

Penalty killing is at about the same percentage as last year—76.8 per cent this year vs. 81.7 per cent last year—but the '88-89 Bears scored 15 shorthanded goals, while they have only one this season. The powerplay is hurting this season, at 24.6 per cent, fourth in the league. Last year they finished at 37.6 per cent, best in the West. That brings us to the third area of concern.

Problem number three: offence. The run-and-gun team of last season is gone, with the much-reported departure of several key seniors. At mid-season they had 106 goals. This year, they have 61. They were plus 67 on the powerplay (71 for minus 4 shorthanded against) so far this season, they are plus 15.

Obviously, the Bears are suffering with the lack of scoring, but that was to be expected with their graduation problems. Their goaltending is not much different from last

**RECORD—p 16**



by Ajay Bhardwaj

Golden Bear assistant coach Peter Esdale went to college with NBC host/play-by-play man Marv Albert and with former Philadelphia Phillies' third baseman Mike Schmidt. Albert played goalie in hockey. As for Schmidt, Esdale says, "Everyone used to go see him. Everyday you went, you knew he'd hit a home run. He'd hit it out of the park and over the rink which was just behind the park." ...

Freshman Golden Bear Todd Goodwin has six goals in seven games this season. He's already displayed his biggest asset, his blazing speed. "The coaches showed a lot of confidence in me to dress me against Calgary," Goodwin said. The Dinosaurs play on an international size rink, giving players like Goodwin a chance to free-wheel. "They put me out in four-on-four and three-on-three situations, that's where I can help the team." Goodwin has also acquired the nickname Fred. "He looks like a 'Fred'," a passerby said.. The Bears recently received some new equipment, which was donated to them by Cooper...

University of Saskatchewan sniper Ken Morrison is struggling. The

slick fourth-year man finally scored a goal to tie ex-Golden Bear Stacey Wakabayashi's record of 107 in Canada West play. He was four goals shy of the record when the Huskies and the Bears played here in early November. Morrison is still four points behind the team's leading

## In the Crease

scorer, Wayne Bucsis, who's only played ten games. Morrison has 18 points to Bucsis' 22.

At the half way point of the season, Morrison has but seven goals. He's had 40 and 36 the previous two years. However, he enjoyed an eight-point weekend against Lethbridge and was named



Canada West Player of the Week...

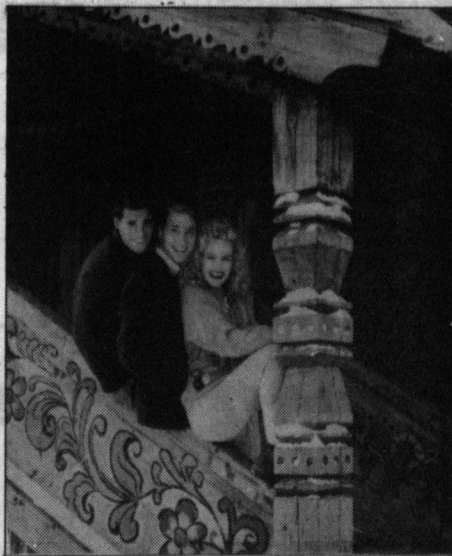
Over the Christmas holidays, several Canada West teams will be doing a little bit of travelling. UBC will go to a tournament at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, where they will play, of all teams, the Golden Bears. The Bears will also go to Los Angeles. The University of Manitoba Bisons will go up north to take on the University of Alaska, while the Brandon Bobcats head south to play in North Dakota.

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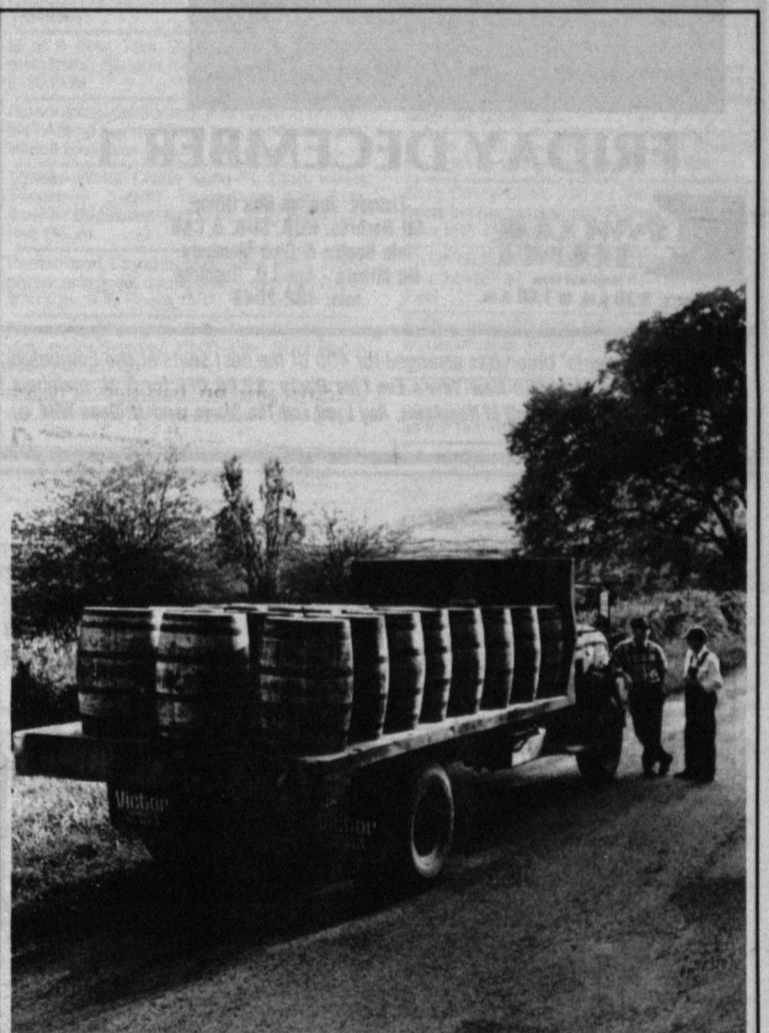


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