

Hilko in tough with young hoopsters

by Mark Spector

If Panda basketball coach Diane Hilko were a Christian in ancient Rome, she would probably give herself a better than average chance of beating up on the lion.

A positive thinker? You better believe it. But if anyone needs to be, it's Hilko.

A recent summary of the Panda basketball program looks like this: after peaking in the 83-84, 84-85 seasons with fourth place finishes in Canada under 11 year head coach Debbie Shogan, the club began somewhat of a rebuilding program last season. But despite the loss of three starters (including national team member Toni Kordic), rookie coach Sherry Melney led the Pandas to a second place finish in Canada West before losing to Lethbridge in the playoffs. For that Melney was named both CWUAA and CIAU Coach of the Year.

This year, however, the changing of the guard has been completed with the retirement of forward Trish Campbell and guard Debbie O'Byrne, while star guard Shelaine Kozakavich has played out her eligibility. Ditto for Annette Sanregret, who returned after a couple years off to earn All Star status on three different tournament teams, as well as the Canada West all Star team for the Pandas last year.

So with no experienced guards and only center Lisa Janz to count on for some leadership, how can

Hilko be optimistic? "When I started at Brock University, we were the second worst team in Ontario. In my fifth year we finished fifth in the country."

"We had only eight kids on that team, but the reason that we won was that we were in shape," says Hilko. "Our coach ran us and ran us in practice."

But surprisingly enough, the Vince Lombardi coaching style isn't what this year's Pandas have to look forward to come training camp in a week or so. "I just try to be myself," explains Hilko. "I learn from my mistakes, enjoy my successes, then carry on."

A simple lady, with a simple coaching philosophy: "If someone has a shot from the scoring area and doesn't take it, they'll hear from me. I believe that if something is working, you stick with it until the other team figures out a way to stop it."

But then comes her fatal error, if you will. "We will be a quick team," she claims. "We'll run the fast break whenever possible." That sounds all well and good, but there are certain inconsistencies there.

The potency of a fast break lies with the guards, the area at which the Pandas will be the weakest. With both starting guards gone from last year, Alberta is left to rely on rookies, and/or the possibility of ex-Panda Jenny Webking returning to the fold. So far, Hilko has only heard the rumors but hasn't seen Webking in person yet. She

wasn't at the sign-up last Thursday.

But one ex-Panda that will be back is 6'1" center Yolanda Kruyer. She will be moved outside to a forward position and will play alongside Alberta provincial teammate Kathy Keates (5'11"). With fifth year center Janz (6'0"), the Pandas will be more than adequate at the forward position.

"In Canada West there's not as many teams, so you can't take any one of them lightly," admits the three year head coach of the U of Ottawa. "But you have to practice and play (to prepare) for the best teams in the country. Then when you meet a weaker team there should be no problem."

And for a young Panda team there should be no problem . . . in three years. Unfortunately, a serious lack of experience and depth leaves them looking at no higher than fourth best in Canada West this season.

Panda basketball coach Diane Hilko brings three years of coaching experience to the U of A.

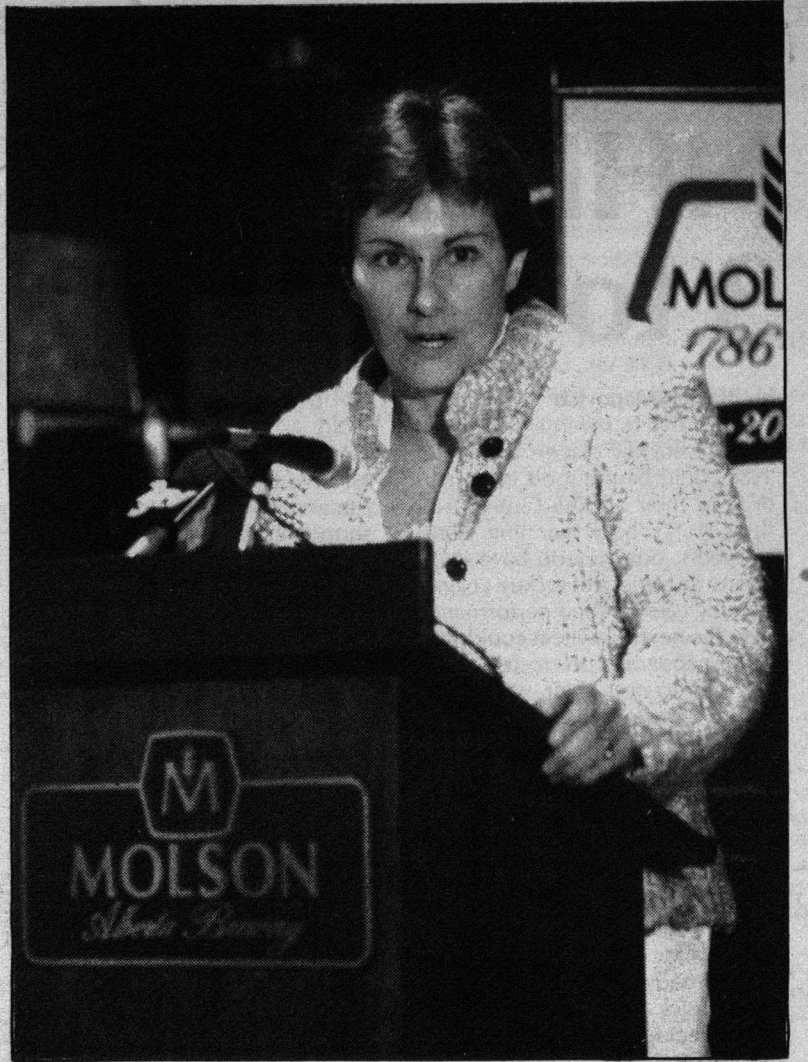


photo by Rob Schmidt

Moores, Spring return to bench

by Mark Spector

In a long anticipated move, the U of A Athletic department and head hockey coach Clare Drake have named Billy Moores as an assistant coach for the upcoming season. Ex-Winnipeg Jet Don Spring will fill the other assistant spot for the defending national champion Golden Bears, it was announced last Thursday.

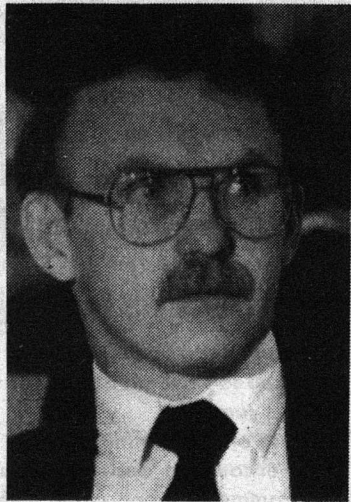
Moores, a long time coach under Drake, left Alberta last season for a head coaching position with the Regina Pats of the tier I Western Hockey League. "I went to Regina because I felt that I needed the head coaching experience," said Moores. "I was hoping that it would lead to an assistant spot in the NHL, but that didn't work out."

Moores had held the head coaching reins at the U of A before, taking the Golden Bears to a third consecutive CIAU championship in 1979-80, and then filling in for Drake again in 1983. And although it's no secret that retirement is not too far off for the 26 year veteran Drake, Moores is playing coy about the possibility of succeeding the Dean of college hockey coaches. "That hasn't even crossed my mind," he claims.

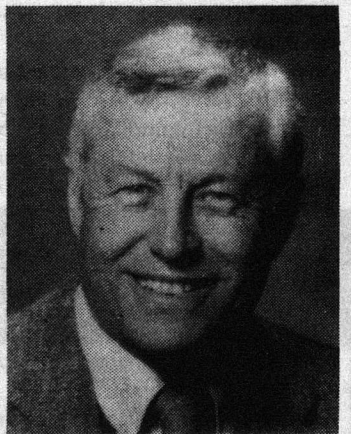
The other addition to the Bears' coaching staff, Don Spring, replaces Jack Cummings, who has taken over as head coach for Fort Saskatchewan of the tier II Alberta Junior Hockey League. Spring played for two national champion teams at the U of A between 1976 and 1979, and then went with Drake and three other Golden Bears to the 1980 Lake Placid Olympics.

Spring turned pro with the Winnipeg Jets in '80 and spent four years there before toiling a year in Germany two seasons ago.

Bear Facts - The Golden Bears open camp this Thursday and will



Billy Moores (above) returns as Clare Drake's (below) sidekick. But the question is, how long that arrangement will last...



run daily practices up until the **Golden Bear Invitational** which runs **Sept. 26-28** . . . There will be no **U of A Junior Invitational Tournament** this fall. Scheduling problems occurred when the **AJHL** bumped up the beginning of their season by one week . . . Athletics has named **Nancy Jette** to the post of **Head Athletic Therapist**. Jette will replace **Ray Kelly**, who retires after 31 years at the U of A.

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