

## Bears fighting for the playoffs

by Alan Small

The adage is "Anything can happen in the playoffs". An important catch to the statement is that you have to be in the playoffs to make anything happen.

If the Golden Bears basketball team make something happen this weekend against the UBC Thunderbirds, they will have a great chance to play when something is on the line.

A new attitude has hit the Bear camp for '89. In the first half, they killed themselves with poor shooting and dumb errors.

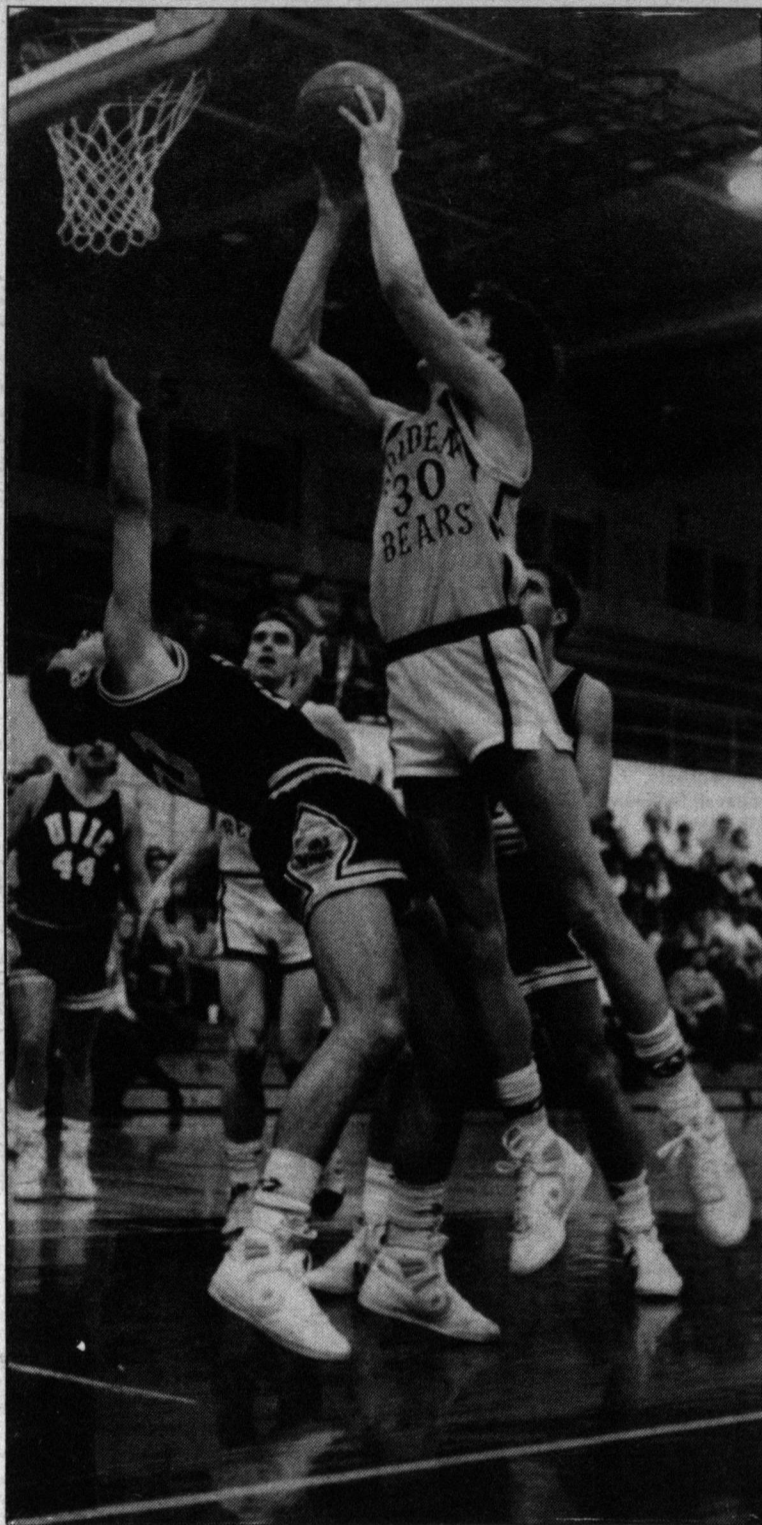
"Against Vic, we could have won the game if we could have

"Against the U of S, we were in control in both games." — Smith

made our free throws," Bear forward Mark Smith said, "against Calgary, again, our free throws cost us. Against the U of S, though, Sean (Chursinoff) and Dave (Youngs) went 100 percent on free throws. We were in control of those games."

The Bears can take sole possession of fourth place if they sweep this weekend. The T-Birds are no pushovers, however.

"They have been really inconsistent this season," said Bear head coach Don Horwood of the T-Birds. During the Christmas break, they won the York tournament (over Brandon and PEI, both top ten teams) yet came back against Lethbridge gaining only a split. The loss was by thirty points. Horwood picked the T-Birds to push for the top spot in



Jeff Cowley

### Going for two.

Bill LaVergne readies a shot. The hoop teams host UBC Friday and Saturday.

Canada West this season.

They looked unspectacular at the Golden Bear Invitational, taking seventh place. However, they went all the way to the CIAU finals by doing the same thing two seasons ago.

The UBC hoop program also has been mired in controversy in the first half. Head coach Bruce Enns took a one month leave in November, leaving his assistants

to handle the team. Although Enns is back, the T-Birds still haven't enjoyed the consistency that's necessary for top university ball clubs, like the ones they've been the last two seasons.

The T-Birds have been led by guard Al Lalonde, who is third in the conference in scoring after eight games. Lalonde, who's been touted as one of their top players for a couple of years, has been

## Pandas looking to great '89

by Alan Small

The backboards at Varsity Gym are made of ice.

Panda head coach Diane Hilko put up signs reading "ICE" on the backboards to remind her players of the three words she's been planting in their minds all season.

"Intensity. Concentration. Execution. That is our emphasis for the weekend," Hilko said. "They see it every time they look at the hoop. It reminds them every two seconds."

The Pandas face the UBC T-Birds this weekend, and the playoffs are on the line. Both teams are 2-6 this season and are tied for the fourth and final playoff berth in Canada West. Whoever wins the series this weekend, will have a distinct advantage, when the two teams meet again in Vancouver during the final week of the regular season.

"We don't want to go in there

moved to the shooting guard spot, the vacancy left by J.D. Jackson, who is out this year because of academic requirements.

"He's really come into his own this year," said Horwood. Another T-Bird to watch out for is Mike Clarke, a burly 6'9" forward that has been near the top of conference in scoring ever since he broke in. This year, Clarke is in fifth, scoring over 16.5 points every start.

The Bears only won one game out of the four they played against UBC, who were 14-6 and the second best team in Canada West last year.

The series starts Friday night, immediately following the Panda-T-Bird game. Action continues on Saturday.

having to win both games," Hilko stated.

The Pandas will be keying on UBC's two top shooters, Raj Johal and Tessa Valg, who rank third and fifth respectively in Canada West scoring. Johal is shooting 17.3 ppg, while Valg, is on a 15.2 ppg pace.

"They are both good outside shooters," said Hilko. "they love to shoot the ball. They both shoot



well off the dribble and the pass." Valg alone has put the ball up 111 times in eight games, which is tops in the conference.

"We can dominate inside against them," Hilko said. Their main weapon underneath the basket is Joanna Ross, who leads the Pandas with an average of 12.2 points per game, good for ninth in the conference.

The main problem for the Pandas in the first half of the season was their inconsistency on offence. They haven't blown any teams out in their three wins this season. It is something they have to work on if they want to beat the T-Birds this weekend.

"Any offence will work as long as you run it properly," Hilko said, "we hope to execute better than we did last term. We had so many missed shots underneath the hoop."

Action takes place Friday and Saturday, starting at 6:30 pm.

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