

It's probably not a good idea to start off the new year on the wrong foot. However, I'm feeling daring, so let the rutabaggas fall where they may.

There are a couple of things that I'm not too happy about, so here goes. Number one, the new name for the left half of the former Western Canada Intercollegiate Athletic Association, Canada West. As someone remarked, it sounds more like an insurance company than an athletic conference. Apparently Victoria disagreed to a relevant name like the Rockies conference because they were almost as far away from the Rockies as Edmonton is, or some other equally vital reason. Compared to the great visions created by the new Great Plains Conference, the name has the inspiration and originality of Harry Strom. But, as they say, it's that you win or lose and not how you pick the name that is important, or something like that.

Secondly, the scheduling of both basketball and hockey this weekend at home is just a little much. This is the second time this year that Edmonton has been the scene of four college sporting events in one weekend, and I think that this type of scheduling can only be detrimental to interest and crowds at the events. The average fan can take only just so much sport in one weekend, with the result that either the basketball Bruins, who with two great wins this weekend against UBC moved into a tie for the lead in the league, or the hockey variety of the Bears, who are at the top of the standings won't get the crowds they deserve. I'm sure the logistics of drawing up a conflict-free schedule are difficult, but surely some better arrangement could have been invented.

Anyway, enough muckraking for the first issue.

Getting back to the basketball Bears, I think most of the doubts that many people, including me, had about the chances of the team have been dispelled. With their two wins over UBC last weekend, Barry Mitchelson's crew have proven that they are a great team.

And Mitchelson's rotating zone defence is probably the talk of the league. It kept the Thunderbirds at bay and forced a lot of turnovers. The defence, in which the Bears react to the ball, caused the T'Birds to shoot from the outside lot, and everyone knows that the probability of sinking a 25-foot shot is a lot less than that of making a five-foot one.

Conversely, the Bears have shifted from their outside offence of the past couple years to more of an inside one. Utilizing the height and talent of Mike Frisby the bears have shown that they can score points.

Frisby, by the way, is really coming into his own. I don't know whether it's the playing time or the expert tutelage of Mitchelson, but Frisby's presence on the court was the real difference between the two teams this weekend. His 6'8" frame makes him the most conspicuous figure on the floor, and his play makes him more so. Mike is an excellent rebounder, and has a dandy jump shot in which he drags three or four defenders up into the air with him to watch the ball go in the hoop.

But credit should go to all the Bears, as they gave an excellent team effort. The play of Bob Morris, Marty Lyons and Brian Hart deserve special note, but the team performed so well as a unit that one might be so daring as to attach the label "consistent" to them, something no one has been brave enough to do for a couple years.

To paraphrase Campus Lyfe, on that happy note, let us conclude.

Bears nab share of first Frisby stars in twin wins

by Ron MacTavish

UBC 64, Bears 78
UBC 69, Bears 72

The mark of a championship team is the ability to win games in a variety of ways, by being flexible enough to adapt to conditions that present themselves during the course of the game.

This description of the Montreal Canadiens appears to be applicable to the basketball Bears who in a weekend series with the UBC Thunderbirds showed classic form in their victories over the then league leaders.

Friday evening the Bears blew the game wide open with a flurry of points at the close of the first half which allowed them to leave the court with a 39-29 lead. They maintained their lead throughout the rest of the game surviving a T-Bird surge which saw the score narrow to a 64-62 count. The desperation tactics of the T-Birds resulted in a series of fouls which allowed the Bears to put the game out of reach with the final score being 78-64.

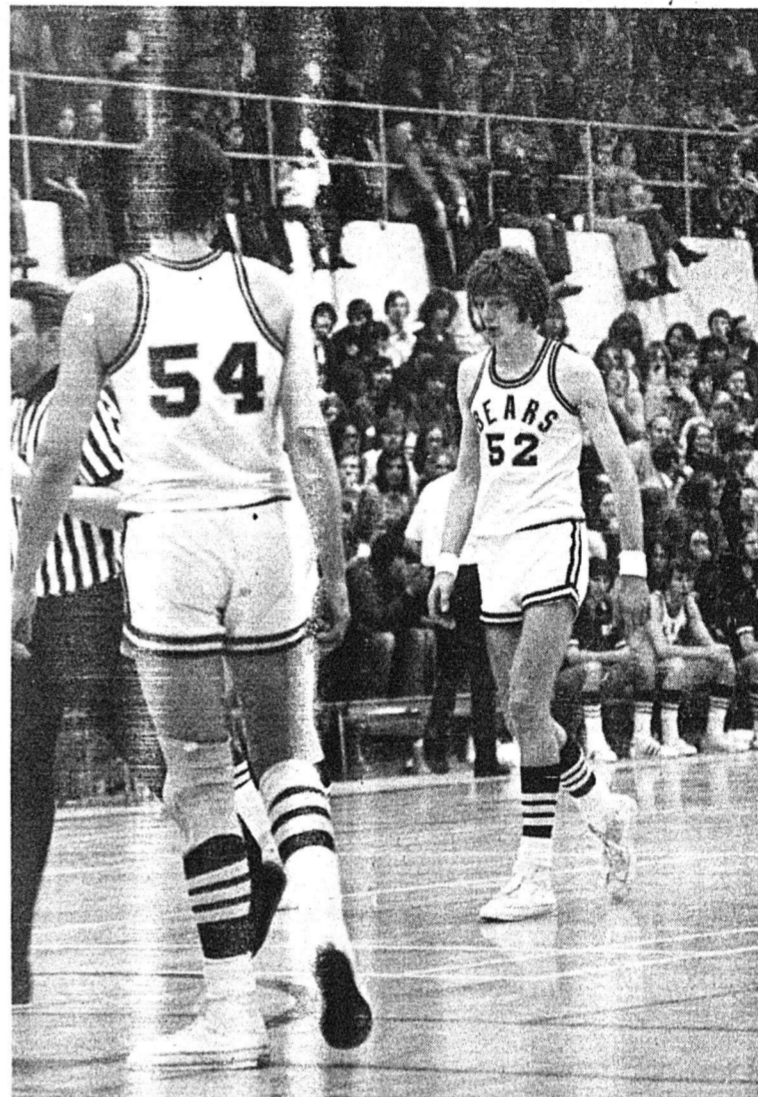
Foul shooting was an important facet of the Bears win with the team potting 20 of 22 attempts, but the play of big Mike Frisby was the dominant factor in the victory. Playing an outstanding game at both ends of the court, Frisby contributed 24 points while gathering in 17 of the Bears 42 rebounds. Frisby used his four inch height advantage over Bird's centre John Mills to release his turn around jumper, a shot which is virtually impossible to block. Bob Morris added 19 points for the Bears while Stan Callegari was a one man offence for UBC with 22 points. Callegari scored on 11 field goals all of which come from the outer limits of the parking lot, a compliment to the Bears aggressive match-up zone.

Bears Coach Barry Mitchelson best summed up Saturday's 72-69 win by commenting, "We never panicked, we just played our game".

The Bears were never able to grab the lead until the 15 minute mark of the second half and even this lead was short lived as the teams traded baskets for the next few minutes.

The Birds ability to keep the game close was in part due to the spirited play of John Mills who forced Mike Frisby into early foul trouble. Frisby was forced to the bench for major portions of the second half, but his return to the game with eight minutes remaining seemed to spark the Bears. The former Colorado State star pumped in two baskets which gave the Bears a lead they never relinquished.

Despite the individual heroics of Frisby whose 17 points was the Bear high, it was obvious to all 3,700 fans who attended the final game that the whole team was deserving of praise. Early scoring by Wallace Tollestrup and Tom Solyom, who hit his first four shots, kept the Bears in the game during the first half.



THE BIG DIFFERENCE

...was the big man, 6' 8" Mike Frisby(52).

Marty Lyons who must be the most consistent player in the league contributed his usual strong rebounding performance while adding 15 points, and as always it was Bob Morris with 11 points who directed the Bears attack.

Darryl Gjernes netted 26 points to lead the Thunderbirds who were again forced to contend with the Bears defence. This zone frustrated league scoring leader Ron Thorsen who managed only 23 points for the

weekend series. The presence of the Bears big men in the middle of the key prevented Thorsen from employing his dangerous driving game and only the strong shooting of Callegari and Gjernes kept the Birds in either game.

In the final analysis it was the new found poise of the Bears which characterized the Bears victories. This rapidly maturing ball club seems on the verge of toppling the perennial champion Thunderbirds, with only the pitfalls of over confidence lying in their way.

Ice Bruins runners-up

While the basketball Golden Bears distinguished themselves by defeating the U.B.C. Thunderbirds to capture top honors in their own Klondike Klassic at Varsity Gym over the holiday season, the hockey Bears had to settle for the runner-up position to the T'Birds in the Hockey Canada Invitational Tournament held December 28 and 29 in Vancouver.

In the first game of the tourney the Bears produced one of their better efforts of the season to upset the favored University of Toronto Blues 3-1. The Blues are defending Canadian Intercollegiate Athletic Union hockey champions and a perennial powerhouse in collegiate hockey in this country. Scoring for the Bears were veteran left winger Jack Gibson with a pair of goals and Captain Steve Carlyle with a single marker.

The following evening in the championship game the Bears failed to approach matching their performance of the previous night while the Thunderbirds played excellent hockey and exploded for four

goals in the third period to post a solid 5-2 victory over the Bears. Although the Bears did manage to outshoot the hometown T'Birds 44 to 32, they were unable to get untracked for many good scoring opportunities and most of their shots were of the harmless variety. Leading the U.B.C. scorers with two goals was defending W.C.I.A.A. scoring champion and former Edmonton Oil King star Bob MacAneeley, with Doug Buchanan, Brian DeBiasio, and Rich Longpre each counting a goal apiece. Tallying for the Bears were Carlyle on a breakaway and speedy rookie winger Jerry LeGrandeur.

The tournament all-star team was composed exclusively of players from the two western teams. Gibson on left wing and Carlyle on the blueline were selected from the Golden Bears, while goaltender Ian Wilkie, (another former Oil King), defenceman Steve Fera, and right winger Rich Longpre were picked from the Thunderbirds. In addition, Longpre was also chosen as the Most Valuable Player in the tournament.

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