



MARIA BOWLER, THE MANITOBBAN (CUP)

RUMB LE YOUNG MAN, RUMBLE Cornerback Jason James returns a kick in the Bears' 29-14 loss to Manitoba last week.

Clan try to shake moniker of 'weakest team' versus Bears

Team that can't score meets the team that's allowed 182 points in three games

ROSS PRUSAKOWSKI
Sports Staff

There's the good, the bad and the ugly, and in CIS football this year nothing has been uglier than the Simon Fraser University Clan. Three games into the season, the Clan haven't lost a game by fewer than 37 points, have amassed only 680 yards of total offence and have been described by University of Manitoba head coach Brian Dobie as "the weakest team" he's seen in eleven years in Canada West. An assessment even the SFU head coach has a hard time disputing.

"Well ... That's a ... [Dobie's] entitled to his opinion and does it make him right? I don't know," first-year Clan head coach and former Golden Bears offensive coordinator Frank Boehres said. "It's one of those things that I don't take personally, I just believe in what we've got going, the coaches I've got and the players I've got, and we're marching forward."

Though not exactly a ringing defence of his troubled squad, things aren't all bad for the Clan (0-3), as they'll host an Alberta (2-2) team on Sunday that's struggling and may have lost its most dangerous weapon—running back Tendayi Jozzy—to an injury. With it unlikely that Jozzy, the CIS rushing leader, will be able to

play this weekend, backup running back Matt Jarvis will need to have a big game—something he's shown he's capable of, rushing for 76 yards on just 13 carries this season.

"We prepare everyday so we can beat our opponents, and that doesn't change whether it's Manitoba or Alberta or if certain players are out," Boehres said. "Canada West is a tough conference and we know that and we just trust the process that we're getting better and we're working on the right things and we'll let the games handle themselves."

While SFU is trying to put on a brave face, this season's struggles mark rock-bottom for a program that was among the upper-echelon of CIS just four seasons ago when they defeated the Bears in the Hardy Cup final. Since capturing that Canada West title, the Clan have dropped to CIS infamy thanks to their 3-16 record over the past three seasons, and also the only team to remotely challenge the 2001 edition of the Mount Allison Mounties, who lost one game 105-0, for the title of the worst team ever in Canadian university football.

Despite all of SFU's struggles, the Bears won't be taking them lightly according to their head coach Jerry Friesen, who had his share of tough

seasons early in his tenure as Alberta's bench boss and had some sympathy for his former assistant's struggles in the lower mainland.

"It's a matter of patience, and the patience lasts years here [in CIS football] because you don't have that immediate change like you do at the professional level, where you can bring players in and out," Friesen, who led Alberta to a 1-7 record in 2002. "Here it goes in relation to recruiting years and now for coach Boehres, he's had a tough time and it's just a matter of him staying on track and being patient."

"There may be tendency to take them easy, but that's something that, as coaches, we have to make sure that we don't let that happen," Friesen added. "That's just a part of mental preparation and the focus is, like it's every game, more on what we do versus what our opponents do. We've got to improve on several aspects of our game, which we control and now it's just a matter of finding out to see what we have to do against SFU."

While it will be hard for fans to see if the Bears join the parade of teams thumping the Clan this season as the game is at SFU, you'll still be able to catch every minute of SFU futility live at 8pm Sunday, 1 October on the TEAM 1260.



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