



TARA STIEGLITZ

DOWN BUT NOT OUT The Golden Bears can't take on Regina lying down, or they'll find themselves out of the playoffs.

If Bears win, they'll be in

A victory over Regina on Saturday night will put Alberta into the post-season

JANELLE SLOYCHUK
Sports Writer

Tension will be as high as the stakes when Alberta Golden Bears football team (4-3) faces the Regina Rams (3-4) in a struggle to secure the final Canada West playoff position.

The Bears' 28-11 loss to the Saskatchewan Huskies last weekend and Calgary's shocking upset of UBC (4-3) has left Alberta, UBC and Regina all vying for the third and fourth playoff spots in Canada West. UBC has guaranteed themselves a post-season berth, but if they lose, an Alberta win or overtime loss will lock up third position in the conference for the Golden Bears. A loss in regulation will most likely mean the end of the Bears' season, a fact not lost on offensive coordinator Terry Eisler.

"This week the pressure starts to build and we certainly are going to have to be able to deal with the pressures that are involved with a playoff game," he said. "I think our guys are up to it and it's a challenge for us—both coaches and players."

The tenth-ranked Bears will have to reassess some techniques and improve upon others after the hard loss to the Huskies. The Bears are last in the conference in passing yards per game and have completed a mere 46 per cent of their throws. While the Bears defence has been winning them games, it too has had its down moments: over a third of Simon Fraser's points on the year came in one game against Alberta.

"I don't think we're going to change a whole lot, but we've just got to do a little better than we did last time," Bears defensive coordinator Darryl Draudson said.

Draudson's defence will be charged with slowing down Regina's top-rated passing attack, and getting in quarterback Teale Orban's backfield with pass rushers such as Danny Bass Jr, who leads the conference in sacks with eight. Alberta also boasts the second best pass defence in the conference.

"What we have to be able to do is try to change our coverage so that their quarterback can't just be able to drop back and feel comfortable about what he's seeing," Draudson said. "Our approach to when we're playing any team is to try to make the quarterback uncomfortable; make him worried about the pressure."

Eisler noted that Regina also poses a threat defensively. Linebacker Clark Gates leads the conference in tackles for losses, while fellow linebacker Steve Wilson is tops in tackles with 76, 20 more than Bass in second.

"[Regina is] taking less risks," Eisler said. "We're going to have to make sure we execute better than we have in the past and really make sure we put a solid game plan together versus the defence."

The game kicks off at 7pm at Foote Field on Saturday night and can be heard live on the TEAM 1260 through the sweet sounds of Blake Dermott and Bob Stauffer.

PLAYOFFS

Here's how the Canada West playoffs breakdown. The first tiebreaker is head-to-head record and the second is head-to-head point differential.

UBC (4-3, 1-1 head-to-head, +11)

Finish third if: They defeat Manitoba or Alberta loses in regulation.

Finish fourth if: They lose to Manitoba and Alberta wins, or they lose and Regina wins by 24 or more.

Alberta (4-3, 1-0 head-to-head, +1)

Finish third if: They beat Regina or lose in overtime and UBC loses.

Finish fourth if: They beat Regina and UBC wins or UBC loses and they lose by less than seven.

Miss the playoffs if: UBC wins and they lose in regulation or UBC loses and they lose by seven or more.

Regina (3-4, 0-1 head-to-head, -12)

Finish third if: They win by 24 or more and UBC loses.

Finish fourth if: They win in regulation by seven or more and UBC loses, or they win and UBC wins.

Miss the playoffs if: They lose, or they win in overtime or regulation by less than seven, but UBC loses.

Rem Murray is a floppy-necked former Masterson nominee who is now playing in Finland.



Ross Prusakowski has never had dystonia.

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