

# Basketball Bears show two sides in season-opening wins

Lacklustre Friday and impressive Saturday create inconsistent weekend sweep

NICK FROST  
Sports Staff

The fans at the Main Gym this past weekend were introduced to a Bears basketball team that at time looked very green and at others came off golden. The University of Alberta men's basketball team had a rather dichotomous weekend which saw them narrowly escape with an 84-76 win over the Thompson River University WolfPack on Friday night, but follow it up on Saturday with an emphatic 92-59 victory over the Fraser Valley Cascades.

Playing without starting point guard CG Morrison, who was suffering from concussion symptoms after being attacked, along with teammate Gary Pelton, on Whyte Avenue last weekend, the Bears looked like two entirely different teams in the two games. After an uncharacteristically sloppy performance on Friday and the exact opposite Saturday, the Bears should consider themselves fortunate to have come out of this weekend's action with both victories.

"I think the guys were disappointed with themselves [Friday night]," Bears head coach Don Horwood admitted. "You know, we only won by eight in a game that we probably should've won by 20 or 25, and we feel that we just, overall, didn't play very well."

Alberta found themselves only up by two points at the half against TRU,

thanks in large part to an eleven-point first-half performance from guard Alex Steele.

"At [Friday night's] game, everything felt a little bit rushed," forward Scott Gordon explained. "Our guys were just starting to come down, but we weren't quite running our plays as well as we usually do, and for our defence—and, pretty much, overall—the effort just wasn't there."

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SCOTT GORDON,  
GOLDEN BEARS FORWARD

After Friday's near-debacle, Horwood looked for ways to both fire his team up and still allow them to pace themselves, so that a similar performance wouldn't be seen the following night.

"We had a shoot-around for the guys after Friday's game and, you know, I certainly felt for them," Horwood said. "We're better than that, and we could've played better than that. I thought we had really

consistent play from most of our players [Saturday night]—they came out ready to play."

The Bears appeared to have plenty of jump against UCFV in both halves, accented by a number of strong individual performances, including guard Andrew Parker—whose questionable technical foul in the first half for hanging onto the rim a bit too long, seemed to spark both the team and the crowd—and Scott Gordon, who put up a game-high 16 points and eight boards.

"I just think that, overall, the team played really well together," Gordon said. "We ran our plays, we executed on defence—which was a big help—and everyone was just shooting well. All of the rookies that we were playing with were just banging threes, and so, overall, I think that the team aspect was definitely there, which was the most important thing tonight."

Alberta ended up leading the Cascades in almost every statistical category—offensive and defensive—shooting .547 from the field and adding 18 assists and 16 steals to near-double UCFV.

"They finished a lot better than we did," Fraser Valley head coach Tom Antil said. "Tonight, we were, for certain, lacking in experience at this level. You know, we're a young team in this league, and we were given a lesson in patience, and a lesson in finishing up what you start."

## THE PEP RALLY

Written by Paul Owen

### Pandas Soccer

The Pandas soccer team followed up a second-place Canada West regular season finish with a disappointing weekend in Regina at the conference play-offs. With a bye into the semifinals, the Pandas took on the UBC Thunderbirds but came out slowly and wound up with a 2-0 loss. This wouldn't have been a disaster since three teams from Canada West will make nationals, except top-ranked Victoria—the national hosts and one of those three teams—also lost in the semifinals. Alberta beat UVic for bronze, but it didn't matter as UBC, Trinity Western and Victoria will all be advancing to the national championships and the Pandas will be left to cry into their bronze medals.

I'd accuse UVic of throwing their semifinal against TWU in order to make sure that the three BC teams made nationals, but the Bears soccer team put in a similar shit-tastic performance over the weekend, so I'm chalking this one up to neither team having anything to play for.

### Pandas Volleyball

It must be nice to open a volleyball season against Brandon and Regina because despite facing the closest thing they've had to a rebuilding year in a decade, the volley Pandas have looked like national champs in quickly dispatching their eastern rivals in their first two weekend series.

After sweeping the Bobcats last week to open their season at home, the Pandas put on a similar display this weekend in the Queen city as they put down the Cougars. In Friday night's 3-0 victory, Alberta didn't allow the Cougars to score 20 points in any sets, while Saturday took

only one set longer as the Pandas reeled off a 3-1 victory. The ease of Alberta's success is even more shocking when you consider that Regina was the fifth-ranked team in CIS.

### Bears Volleyball

The defending national runner-ups continued their dominating attempt to prove that despite losing five starters they are still one of the top teams in Canada with a pair of straight-set victories in Regina. The Cougars stunk worse than the Wascana in both losses, coming close in only one set all weekend.

### Pandas Hockey

I owe *Manitoban* sports editor Romer Bautista an apology. When he informed me that the Pandas had lost 4-2 to the Manitoba Bisons on Friday, I called him a liar and directed a string of profanity in his direction. After all, Alberta has the most dominant women's hockey program in CIS, and I didn't even know the Bisons women played hockey until checking the schedule last week. Anyways, the Pandas rebounded with a 4-1 victory on Saturday night to move to 7-1-0 on the season. It was also the Bisons' first ever win over Alberta.

### Swimming

In an upset to end all upsets, the Pandas swim team defeated the Calgary Dinos in a meet in Calgary this weekend. Of course, the top nine swimmers from the perennial silver medallist Swimmasauruses were in Vancouver for a meet against perenial better-than-Calgaryists UBC, so it takes a little bit of the thrill of victory away. The men also held close, losing to the Dinos by a mere five points. Lethbridge once again proved they can't swim by finishing a very distant third in both sexes. Is there any sport that the 'Horns are good at?



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