



PETE YEE

CALM UNDER PRESSURE CG Morrison (10) has brought a steady hand to the Bears backcourt in his first season.

Morrison A-okay at the point

PAUL OWEN
Sports Editor

It's been a rare sight over the past few seasons to watch a new Golden Bear earn big minutes on Don Horwood's basketball team. Horwood says that guys coming out of high school or the college ranks often need a year before excelling at the CIS level. That's why the quick rise of point guard CG Morrison has been such a shock.

A second-year transfer in his first season out of Camosun College in Victoria, Morrison earned the starting point guard position out of the exhibition season, beating Scott Leigh for the job.

"The first few [exhibition] games, Scott Leigh was ahead of CG because CG was a little bit hesitant," Horwood says.

"As CG has become more confident, now you can see what he can do. As a pure point guard, he's running the offence. I didn't know if he'd get to this level this quickly."

Horwood's desire for Morrison peaked when he ended last season in need of a floor general.

"I heard of [Morrison] the year he came out of high school, but at that time I thought we had enough point guards so I didn't recruit him that hard. Then after last year, I realized

that we had to get some point guards: Alex [Steele] isn't a natural point guard, he's a better two-man, Tyson [Jones] isn't a natural point guard and Gavin [Fedorak] was gone," Horwood explains.

The decision to come to Alberta was an easy one for the soft-spoken Victoria native, who felt he would mesh fine with the team assembled at the U of A.

"[Alberta] looked like the right situation: I like the look of the team and the look of the guys and thought we'd fit in well together," he says.

His addition has filled the void left in the Golden Bears backcourt when Mike Melnychuk left at the end of 2004/05 as Alberta's all-time leader in assists. Morrison has averaged 2.5 assists per game and 11.3 points per game while shooting a blisteringly efficient .556 from the field and .625 from three-point land (second in the conference) and keeping his turnovers down.

"CG is doing what I thought he could do. It took him a little while to get adjusted—when he came in, the first few games he played he was a little reluctant to shoot the ball, I had to tell him to shoot that open shot," Horwood says. "His biggest strength is his intelligence. He's a pure point guard; he makes point

guard decisions. He's not looking to score first; he's looking to find his teammates first. If you've got a point guard who's looking to score first, then you've got four other guys standing around watching what's going on."

"[I need to be] the point guard—lead the team," Morrison adds. "I've got to score, distribute the ball and get everyone touches."

The biggest adjustment Morrison has had to face isn't in the talent of his foes but in their size and stamina.

"The [opponents] are a lot faster and stronger. The biggest adjustment for me is just the shape I have to be in to play at this level. At first all the running was tough to get used to," Morrison says.

Horwood agrees that Morrison has the talent to succeed in CIS basketball, noting that he's proving it with his play.

"Right now there's not a whole lot [to work on]; he shoots the ball when he's open; he penetrates; he finds the open man; he's unselfish; his defence is good—we'll often put him on a top player on the other team," he says. "The beauty of CG is he recognizes when he needs to score and when he doesn't need to score, and right now I can't really pick a weakness in his game."

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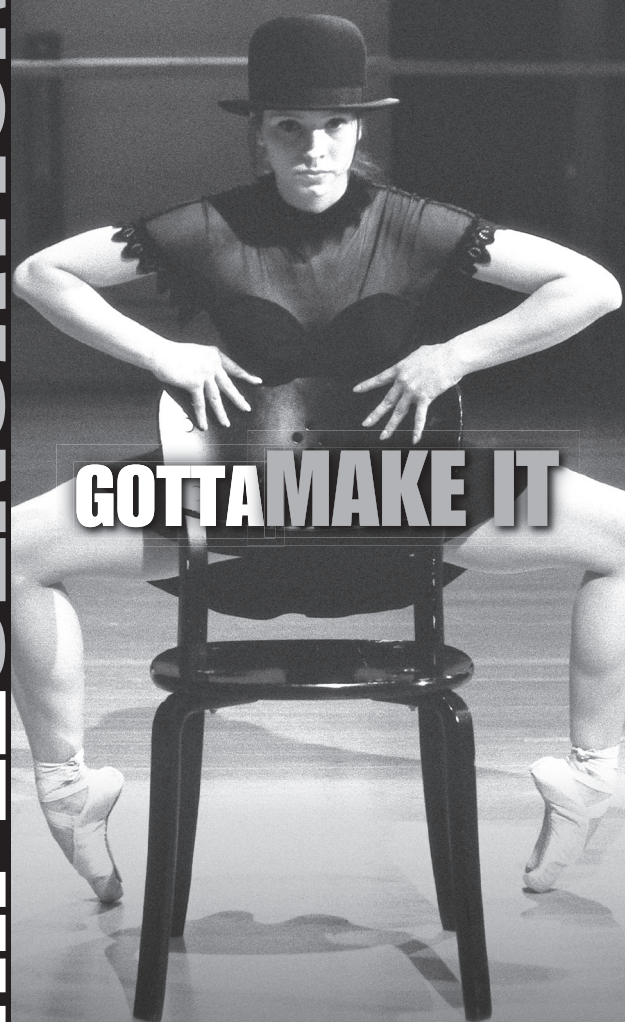
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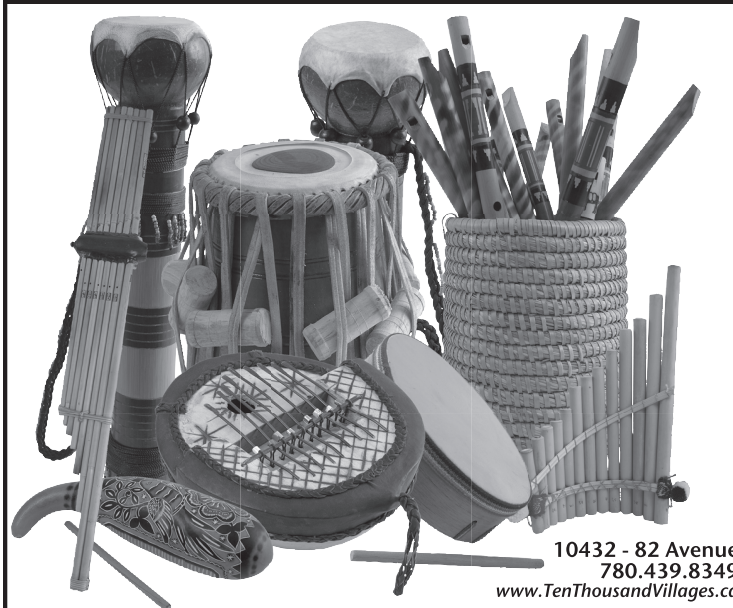
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