

Missed three by Morrison ends hoops Bears season

PAUL OWEN
Sports Editor

Mike Melnychuk did it in 2005, and Alex Steele pulled it off last season, but when it fell to CG Morrison to keep the Golden Bears' playoff hopes alive with a buzzer-beating shot, the second-year guard from Victoria couldn't replicate the feats of previous seasons.

"It's one of those shots that if we make it we're living, and if we miss it we're done," Alberta guard Andrew Parker said.

Down 88-85 to the Saskatchewan Huskies in the third and deciding game of the Canada West basketball Central Division final, Morrison, who had already scored 24 points, took an inbound with 5.9 seconds to play, but pulled up well shy of the three-point line and air balled his game-tying attempt, giving Saskatchewan the victory on Sunday afternoon.

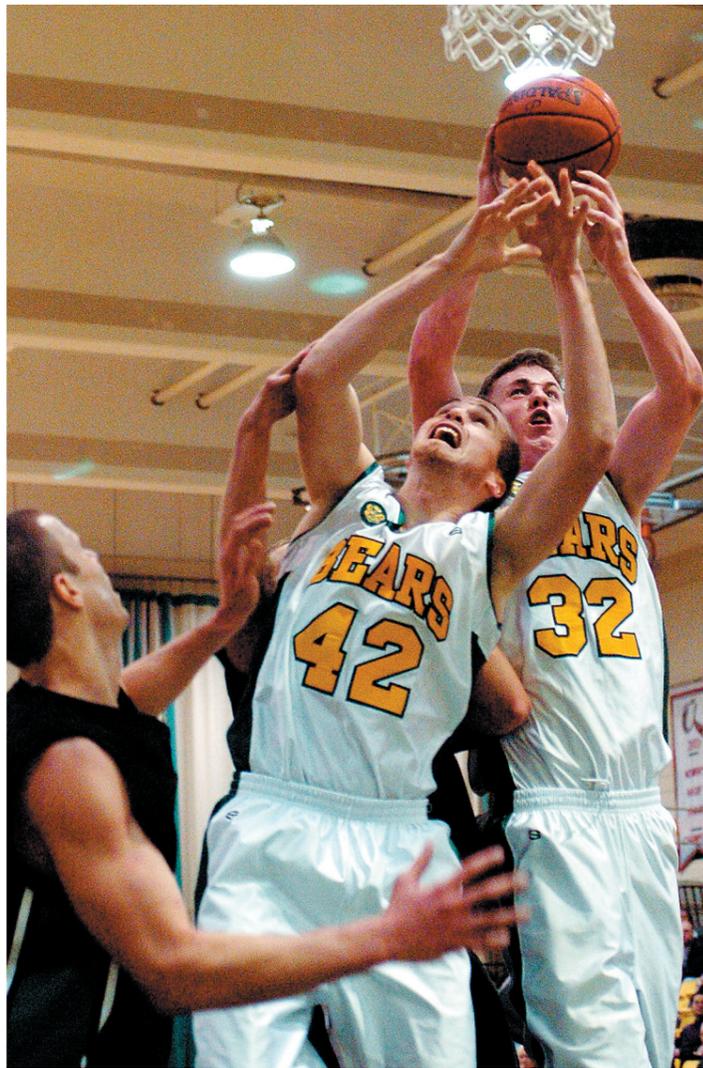
"I know that you can get the ball the full-length of the floor in 5.9 seconds. I think [CG] shot it a step or two early because he was afraid the buzzer was going to go," Alberta bench boss Don Horwood said. "From my perspective as a coach, I wish I could have called a timeout and tell him he could make it the length of the floor in 5.9 so that he wouldn't feel threatened by the shot clock."

"There are so many things you can look back on and say you wished you could have done, but it's over, so there's not much [you can do]," Morrison added.

A .327 field goal percentage cost the Bears in Friday's first game, as they scored only 16 points in the first half en route to a 64-51 loss. Saturday's 76-54 Alberta victory turned the tables—it was the Huskies who made only a third of their shots from the floor. Sunday's offensive outburst was the first time in seven meetings this season that the two teams found themselves evenly matched: the smallest margin of victory in the previous six meetings was twelve.

"It's funny because the first two nights one team was always cold, and then [Sunday], both of us were feeling it. We knew it would be that way; we don't usually play each other close, but we knew the third game would be close," Morrison said.

The start of Sunday's game appeared to be another blowout as the Bears took



LEANNE FONG

SAME TEAM Jeff Stork (42) and Scott Gordon (32) fight for a rebound in Saturday's win. The Bears lost in three games to the Saskatchewan Huskies.

a ten-point lead halfway through the first half. But, after scoring 37 points in the first dozen minutes, the offence dried up for Alberta, and the Huskies rallied to close the half on a 23-6 run, finishing with a 50-43 lead.

Saskatchewan's lead would grow as big as twelve in the second half, but Morrison, Steele and Parker got hot from beyond the arc for Alberta and hit six of seven three-point attempts as the Bears made it a one-possession game.

"It's tough going out like this; it's not what I pictured," said fifth-year guard Tyson Jones, who—along with Steele and Parker—was in foul trouble for most of the game but still added eight points and six assists. "The talent that we had on this team and how we were

playing all year, and seeing our team improve throughout the year—we had our ups and downs, but we had more positives than negatives. It's disappointing to go out like this."

The Huskies victory marks the second season in a row that the Bears have bowed out to Saskatchewan in the playoffs and the fourth consecutive season that saw the two meet in the playoffs: Alberta beat the Huskies in the 2004/05 division final and the 2003/04 division semifinal before losing last year's division final.

"Whether I'm losing to preschool kids or to Saskatchewan, it hurts, but this one really hurts because I know we can beat Saskatchewan," Jones concluded.

THE PEP RALLY

by Paul Owen

Pandas Volleyball

Canada West first-team all-stars Tiffany Dodds and Jocelyn Blair led the Pandas to a 3-1 upset of the Manitoba Bisons in Winnipeg on Saturday night to win the conference title. Dodds, who was also named Canada West MVP had 18 kills against the Herd and added 19 more in Friday's 3-2 victory over Trinity Western, which put the Pandas in the final. The Pandas will enter Nationals in Calgary on Thursday as the top seed.

Bears Volleyball

They may have disappointed on the court, but five Bears walked away with individual honours over the weekend. Terry Danyluk was named Canada West Coach of the Year, while fifth-year Justin Wong took home the conference's Libero

of the Year award. Setter Brock Pehar and outside hitter Joel Schmuland were named first-team conference all-stars, while middle Derek Proudfoot wound up on the second team.

Swimming

Both the Bears and Pandas improved by four spots over last year at CIS Nationals, with the men finishing in eighth and the women eleventh at the meet in Halifax. The top swimmer on either side was Doug Rawlick, who placed fourth in the 1500m freestyle event. Both the men's and women's 800m freestyle relays made the finals as well, finishing in seventh and eighth respectively.

Wrestling

Anthony Kulak won his third-straight gold medal at the conference championships in Saskatoon on 17 February, while Jarret Wall won bronze in the 72kg weight group and Jenna Yamashita took

home a bronze in the 51kg category for the Pandas. Both men and women finished in fifth place.

Track and Field

Despite being in what head coach Georgette Reed expected to be a bit of a down season as some top athletes took the year off, the Pandas track and field team took home silver this weekend at the Canada West Championships in Winnipeg, while the men finished fourth.

Neville Wright picked up a gold medal in the 60m dash and was joined on the podium by teammate Ryan Adams who won bronze, while the women's 4x200m relay team also took home gold. Matt Doherty took home a pair of silver medals in the shot put and weight throw. Joining him a step from the top were Jason Moss in the triple jump, Janelle Khan in the 300m and the men's 4x200m relay. Calgary won the women's conference banner for the third consecutive year, while Saskatchewan won the men's.



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