

NEXT ISSUE

They don't do the interviews, they don't get the glory, and they don't take the blame for losses, but assistant coaches are nevertheless an important part of the success of the U of A's athletic teams.

Watch out next Tuesday and Thursday for the Gateway's two-part series profiling some of the lesser-known members of the Bears' and Pandas' coaching staffs.



PETE YEE

ROPING THE CALF Alberta wasn't able to take down Regina, but they hope to get off to a better start against UBC.

Fight or flight as Bears take on T-Birds

They haven't won a game so far this football season, but U of A head coach Friesen hopes they turn their luck around by pulling out a win against UBC

PAUL OWEN
Managing Editor

of coming together.

"We're at the point where we're getting better each game on our pass defence, but that'll be the biggest challenge: we've just got to keep getting better at it, and hopefully keep producing those [improved] numbers. That's just a matter of time and getting our defensive backs comfortable. Athletically they're very fine, but it's just a matter of making sure they're comfortable working with each other," he explained.

had the opportunity to run 48 plays. That's 15-20 plays less than you're usually given in a game, so we've got to make sure they have more opportunities," he said, noting that the defence and special teams need to take a hand in this.

"There's two factors: give them better field position—and that's via special teams, punt returns—and defensively, we're making sure we turn the ball over more times."

Friesen also pointed to two youngsters being thrust into important roles this season: quarterback Quade Armstrong, who is the Bears' number-one play-caller after splitting duties with senior Cam Linke last season; and Hugh O'Neill, a first-year kicker out of Ross Sheppard high school. Both are filling in nicely for a beleaguered offence that took much of the blame for Alberta missing the post-season last year.

"[Quade has] improved every game. Right now, he's probably into a 35- to 40-minute game, and we've just got to get him up to a 60-minute game."

"[Hugh O'Neill] gives us the opportunity to make decisions that we haven't had to make in awhile. He gives us the confidence to go down the field without having to go the whole way [to score]," Friesen added of the kicker who replaced linebacker Scott Stevenson, who was thrust into emergency kicking duties last season.

The Bears hit the turf at Thunderbird Stadium in Vancouver at 3pm on Saturday. The game can be heard on the TEAM 1260 Radio with Bob Stauffer and former Eskimo Kevin Lefsrud.

The Golden Bears football team hopes to reverse what has been a season of slow starts as they head to Vancouver for a matchup against the UBC Thunderbirds this weekend.

Off to their worst start since 2003, Alberta (0-2) has yet to score a first-quarter point this season, falling behind 12-0 and 17-0 early during losses to Saskatchewan and Regina.

Head coach Jerry Friesen noted that his team will need to get fired up earlier in games if they hope to be successful.

"We've got to start off better. We haven't been really heating up until the middle of the second quarter, and we have to come out better," he said, adding that facing two of the top offences in the country didn't make things any easier on his squad.

"If we wanted to start in the fire, we just did. Saskatoon has [a top] receiving core, and then we go up against one of the best quarterbacks in Canada [against Regina]. That's not to take anything away from the UBC guy; [Doug] Goldsby's an outstanding quarterback. It's just a matter of making sure that we end up going and making him uncomfortable in the pocket."

Keeping Goldsby under control will be key for a defensive secondary that has given up over 800 yards in the air through the Bears' first two games—especially when they also have to worry about three-time conference all-star Chris Ciezki running out of the backfield for UBC.

Still, Friesen is hopeful for his group, which he said is showing signs



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