



PETE YEE

UNTOUCHABLES The Bears, including Justin Vanloo (34) and CG Morrison (10) shared the ball, but not with the other team, in Thursday night's 21-point victory over the the Waterloo Warriors.

Parker and Steele lead Bears to GBI sweep

Hard-working fifth-year guards lead points—and team—on way to three straight preseason tournament victories in Main Gym

BEN CARTER
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The Bears basketball team, following an impressive sweep in this weekend's Golden Bears Invitational (GBI), would be justified in being a little bit more excited about the upcoming CIS season.

The squad dominated this weekend's tournament convincingly, defeating the University of Waterloo 89–68, York University 93–72, and the University of Ottawa by a whopping 31 points, 88–57.

The weekend triumph followed up another successful preseason tournament last week in Victoria against more of last season's top teams.

"Those guys showed me out there that they're capable of competing with anyone in the country, and tonight they carried that over," said head coach Don Horwood following Saturday night's victory over Ottawa. The Bears are 5–1 in the preseason, and have put up a number of impressive showings.

Bears point guard Alex Steele, who has had several standout games so far and was a GBI All-Star, was quietly encouraged by his team's performance. He was reluctant to make a prediction on what the weekend will do to Alberta's national ranking or others, expectations for them.

"If we do get ranked, it will be a good thing, and we'll be happy about it, but we know it's just a number—it doesn't get you to nationals," he said.

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ANDREW PARKER
BEARS GUARD

If they do want to get to the CIS Championships, the Bears will have to elicit dominant performances like they got this weekend from all of their key players, including Steele and tournament MVP Andrew Parker.

The latter's athleticism and skill set was on full display this weekend: he averaged 19.7 points per game, including his performance versus Waterloo on Thursday night, in which he racked up 29 points and made seven of his eight three-point attempts. Parker was an energetic force all weekend, encouraging teammates and remaining animated on the court, and it's a role he feels comfortable with.

"I can see myself as kind of a motivator. I just want guys to be excited to play ball," he said. "I

expected us to win, I expected us to play well, but I did not expect to be MVP."

Perhaps less surprised was his coach. Horwood sees Parker's emergence as a power on the court as the culmination of several years of dedication and practice.

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DON HORWOOD
BEARS HEAD COACH

"I know how hard he's worked for this. The past three years, no one has put in [more] amount of time working on his game as Andrew Parker," he said. "He's flat-out worked for everything he's got, and as a coach, you love to see a guy get rewarded for hard work."

In addition to his shooting accuracy, Parker was able to stay out of the foul trouble that has plagued him. He only got one personal foul in Saturday night's game.

"We have been on him in practice pretty hard

about reaching fouls, and he's learned that lesson and stopped reaching all the time, and consequently, he can stay in games," Horwood said.

As for the opposition, Waterloo, York, and Ottawa were all 1–2 this weekend. With Parker and Steele on the tournament's all-star team were Ottawa's Dax Dessureault, York's Tut Ruach, and Waterloo's Cam McIntyre.

Waterloo pulled off probably the biggest upset of the weekend, defeating Ottawa 99–92 on Friday night. Waterloo assistant coach Curtis Dauber was greatly encouraged by his team's victory over Ottawa, who is expected to be one of the top teams in CIS this year.

"We've been struggling, trying to find ourselves and get on the same page, and what we did tonight was a huge step for us," he said. "We're young and really inexperienced, but they showed me something tonight."

Waterloo weren't the only team looking forward to the regular season during the weekend. The Bears begin theirs on the road next week against Thompson Rivers University, and Horwood is understandably excited about his team's chances.

"As I said to the guys after last week, our expectations are way higher now. We're not letting up on these guys," he said. "There's no reason now to have anything other than the highest expectations."