

Bears survive turnover trouble

Alberta gets two wins from weekend, but there's still room for improvement

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It took a pair of big second halves from fifth-year guard Alex Steele for the Bears basketball team to overcome 52 turnovers and defeat the Regina Cougars (4–2) and Brandon Bobcats (5–1) this weekend in the Main Gym.

Steele scored 17 after the break on Friday after being held scoreless in the first half to down the Cougars 79–71 and added 23 in the second on Saturday en route to a game-leading 25—and a 106–93 victory over the Bobcats for the Bears (5–1).

To the irritation of head coach Don Horwood, however, Steele also picked up two fouls early in both games.

"I'm trying to get Alex to slow down a little bit so he can make decisions better," Horwood said. "He gets out of control, and he gets in foul trouble when he's out of control. We need him on the court, of course. I thought in the second half, he started to play with a little more poise."

"Typically, I'm the type of player that as the game goes on, I seem to get better," Steele added.

Though Alberta led by double digits for most of the game against Regina, the 27 turnovers they committed left Horwood upset with his team's play after the game, calling it "terrible."

"We looked like a junior high team out there," he said. "Guys are playing without confidence; [...] they can't make the right decisions: they make bad passes, bad decisions. It's asinine."

"Neb's our best three-point shooter; he couldn't put the ball in the frickin' ocean."

Andrew Parker and Richard Bates both posted double-doubles to add to Steele's big numbers. Parker had 14 points and twelve rebounds, while Bates notched 17 points and 13 boards, seven of which came on the offensive end, which upset Cougars head coach James Hillis.

"If Bates pushes us under the hoop, if Bates comes over our back and gets



TARA STIEGLITZ

WIND IN YOUR HAIR Alberta's Neb Aleksic flew right by the Brandon defense.

a rebound, that's fine; Bates standing by himself on the offside of the hoop for a rebound, well [...] that's a mistake our guys don't want to make," he said. "Bates is going to get offensive rebounds if you do everything right, so you don't want to leave him."

Saturday's game saw the Bears turn it over 25 more times, but Horwood was quick to note they mostly came off of 17 Brandon steals, not poor passing.

"Yeah, we had some turnovers there against their pressure, but they're tough; they're very quick and very

active," he said.

Alberta led by eight at the half against the Bobcats, but fell behind early in the third quarter before ripping off a 19–5 run to stretch their lead back to 13. It was a sharp contrast from the way the team had dealt with adversity in their previous three games.

"We stayed composed; we didn't really get down. We didn't really worry about it tonight—we had the feeling that we were up all night and we could get back in it," said Steele, who scored 17 of his 25 points in the third quarter.

NCAA Bowl format doesn't need a facelift

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the idea of "student-athlete." Adding two or three additional playoff games would only serve as added pressure to athletes and could occur at no other time but December, during final exams and holidays. Expecting professionals to play regularly into the new year is very different than asking the same of 20-year-old students who likely won't play football beyond their next few years in school.

In addition, a playoff system is antithetical to the culture of American college football. A season-changing win or loss can happen to any team at any time. The best teams—the ones with national championship aspirations—are in must-win situations every week.

Rivalry games, conference championship games, and any number of other contests are of the utmost importance. Games sometimes don't seem significant until they've ended and an undefeated team has gone down in flames to a lower profile opponent. It's the magic of college football.

The only thing that adding a playoff would do is make the game easier to follow. It would quickly turn college football into the sort of easily digestible product that the NFL produces each week, where the regular season is just the lead-up to several weeks of playoffs. Television viewership for these playoffs would no doubt increase at the expense of the thousands of previously significant games played by smaller, less marketable teams.

The howls for a "proper" playoff die down when the national championship game produces a champion whose credentials can't be disputed (as it has for the past two seasons). There's no clearer indication of which team is the best in the country than the winner of the game played on the biggest stage.

There's a reason that no other sport in North America inspires the devotion college football does. Serious disruption of the system isn't worth it.

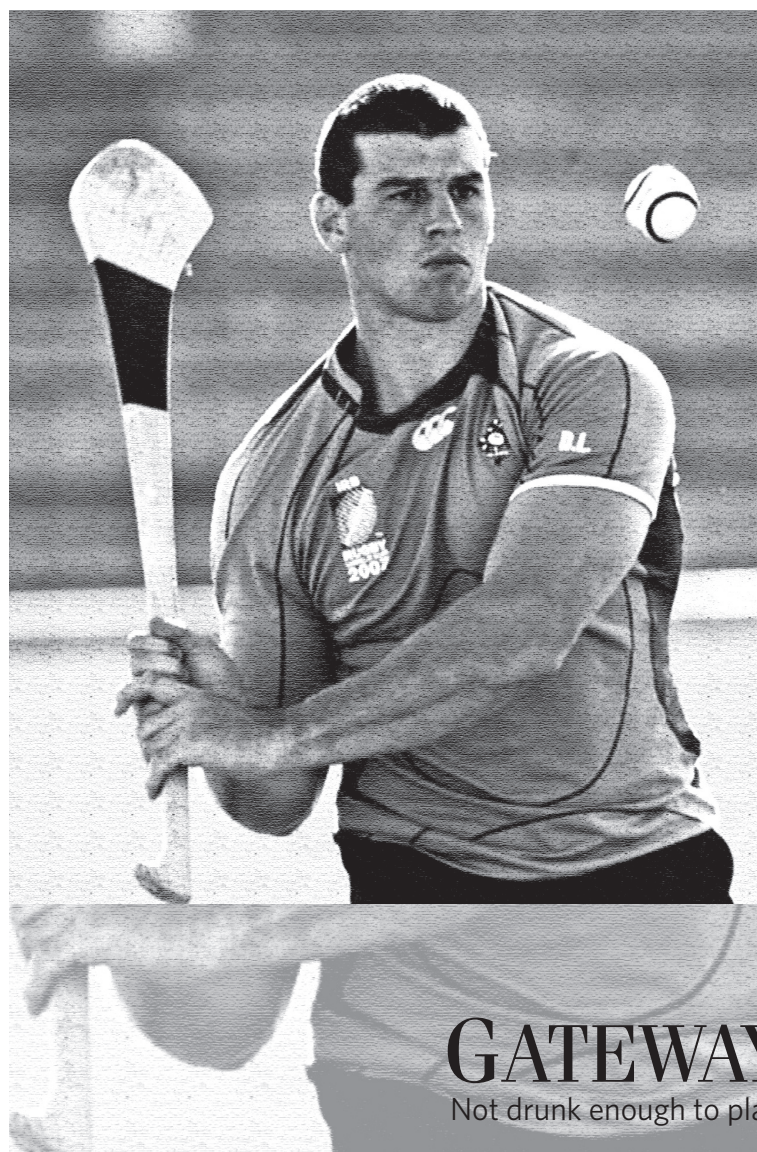
Canadian football will end this weekend, but south of the border, the season is just starting to get interesting. This is especially true of college football, which will see its post-season picture sorted out in the next few weeks. As that happens, the yearly barrage of calls for reform by adding a true playoff system will begin.

The argument against this change is less often heard but makes much more sense. The addition of playoffs would significantly alter—and quickly ruin—the culture of college football that has thrived for so long in the United States.

As it is right now, teams play out their seasons, and the winners of the six most prominent conferences, as well as four at-large teams, play in one of five Bowl Championship System (BCS) games. The two teams with the best rankings (as determined by a BCS computer formula) meet in the national championship game, creatively named the BCS National Championship Game, while the other eight head to the Rose, Orange, Sugar and Fiesta Bowls.

There are many problems with the implementing a college football playoff system, but they all boil down to the same theme: as simple and obvious as it seems, college football, in so many ways, isn't professional football.

There are about two dozen football-factory schools in the US for whom college football is more of a business than athletic program. But beyond those, the vast majority of NCAA football programs strive to live up to



All over the world, Irish immigrants have tried to spread the popularity of hurling, their favourite home-grown sport, to little avail.

Considering that hurling basically consists of hitting a small, hard ball with an axe-like stick at head height and speeds of up to 160 km/hour, with no protective gear, it's not much of a surprise..

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