



STU TREBELCO

GAME, SET, MATCH The Bears want to bring their big hits down with them to California for an NCAA exhibition tourney.

Bears setting their sights on Bisons, Californians

NICK FROST
Sports Staff

The first half of conference play in Canada West men's volleyball comes to a close this weekend as the Golden Bears (7-1) square off in a weekend set at home against the University of Manitoba Bisons (3-5).

The halfway point of the season is approaching, and the Bears have a month-long break in which to re-examine and continue working on the aspects of their game that put them at the top of the Canada West standings. Head coach Terry Danyluk's midterm assessment of his players is mostly positive; however, there are a few aspects that could use a little bit of fine-tuning.

"The most common thing that I keep talking about is that our depth has increased since the beginning of the year," Danyluk explained. "I think that we've got good strengths in all of our positions, and we've had some young guys step into the roles in middle positions this year that have done great jobs."

"Also, I think our ball control has improved since the beginning of the year, which is something I want to continue to work on."

While it may seem like an eternity

for the Bears until their next conference action in mid-January, they'll get plenty of opportunities to stay fresh and on top of their game during the lay-off. They will continue practicing until 15 December, followed by a two-week break. Over New Year's, they'll make an appearance as the lone CIS representative at an eight-team NCAA invitational in Santa Barbara, California.

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TERRY DANYLUK
BEARS VOLLEYBALL HEAD COACH

Exotic trips aside, the Bears' focus remains on this upcoming weekend, as they face the Bisons squad for the first time this season. Manitoba has won three of its last four matches and appears to be building some momentum up the standings. That's not surprising, according to Danyluk, given the success that Manitoba's program

has seen in past years.

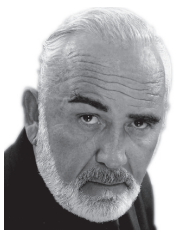
"Manitoba has a real strong volleyball tradition—they've won, outside of maybe Winnipeg, the most number of national championships in [CIS] history," Danyluk said. "It's a school that we've seen have a lot of comfortable seasonal play over the last ten or 15 years. Being a strong team with a strong tradition, it's a team that you can never take too lightly."

Alberta expects the strongest challenge to come from the Bisons' setting and passing abilities, notably from setter Drew Venables, who currently sits in the top five in Canada West with 9.43 assists/game, and Stefan Bouw, who complements Venables in terms of setting and poses a potential threat to the Bears on the left-side of the court.

"Venables is sort of their mainstay from past few years; he's probably one of the guys that can do the most for them," Danyluk said. "I think he's one of the guys taking on the leadership role and, as the starting setter, is getting a lot of contacts. I'd say, along with Stefan Bouw, those are the two guys that I think will pose the greatest challenge to our team."

Games begin at 7pm in the Main Gym both evenings.

Poetry interlude: How the Pats stole Xmas



MARC
AFFELD

Sports
Commentary

Belichick is coaching the best football in years—but I think he's gone crazy, that's one of my fears. Every Who down in Who-ville respects him a lot—but some folks, who live just North of Who-ville, do not!

Belichick's been acting more surly this season. Now, please don't ask why. No one quite knows the reason.

It could be, perhaps, that his shoes are too tight. It could be that his head isn't screwed on quite right—but I think that the most likely reason of all, might be that his heart is two sizes too small.

His fans were amazed by the teams he had beaten, 'til they discovered that he had been cheating. All that the fans wanted was for him to confess—he chose to be a dick and created a mess.

I can practically hear him in his cave right now: "I must stop our first loss from coming! But how?"

"I know just what to do!" Bill will laugh in his throat. And he'll make a quick Santy Claus hat and a coat. And he'll chuckle and cluck, "What a great

football trick! With this coat and this hat, I'll look just like Saint Nick!"

Then he'll break into your house with a smile most unpleasant across his whole face, and he'll take each present!

Pop guns! And bicycles! Roller skates! Drums! Checkerboards! Tricycles! Popcorn! And plums!

And he'll stuff them in bags; then the coach, very nimbly, will stuff all the bags, one by one, up the chimney!

This idea is stupid, and won't likely work, but he'll be dealt his first loss while dressed like a jerk.

Then maybe the true meaning of football will come through, and Bill will find the heart of ten coaches, plus two.

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