

CONDORS AIMED AT B.C. CHAMPIONSHIP

The team that stays together gets number one

by DAVE PAULSON
Citizen Sports Reporter

The main ingredients for making a top-ranked high school basketball team are, of course, talent and height. The Duchess Park Condors have both those, but have blended in another — longevity.

Four of the five Condor starters have been playing together since Grade 8 and the other came along in Grade 9. Since then they have played some 140 games together, winning more than 110.

They have already played in three provincial championships, placing 11th of 12 teams in Grade 9 at the B.C. junior championship; winning the same tournament the following year and placing fifth at the B.C. senior final last year.

Now they're favored to win it all this year, March 12 to 15 at the Pacific Coliseum in Vancouver.

There has been a long-standing fact in B.C. high school boys' basketball; Teams from northern B.C. simply were not good enough to compete with teams from the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

In past years, the north's representative (usually the Prince George Secondary Polars) made the annual trek to Vancouver and quietly lost its first two games. Nothing more was expected.

About the only achievements the north had to cheer about was Ron Thorsen of the Polars being named to the first all-star team at the 1966 B.C. final, then winning most valuable player honors the following year.

Thorsen is now regional co-ordinator of athletics at the College of New Caledonia.

Since these five Condors won the B.C. junior title in 1978, basketball people throughout the province have been waiting to see what kind of powerhouse they would be in Grade 12. Now they're in Grade 12 and nobody is disappointed.

In six polls rating the province's top 10 teams, released since the beginning of December, Duchess Park has been ranked number one in four and has never been lower than third.

The Condors have played 21 games against B.C. high school teams this season and have won 19. The two teams they lost to (Kamloops and North Surrey) are no longer considered threats to defeat B.C.'s top five teams.

Guards Karl Bush and Kent Stanley and forwards Pat West and Mike Suderman started together in Grade 8.

Six-foot, four-inch, 200-pound forward Brian Frenkel started in Grade 9.

The Citizen Sports

RON
ALLERTON
SPORTS EDITOR
562-2441

"I never had any interest in basketball until Grade 9" said Frenkel, whose favorite shot is the one-handed slam dunk.

Frenkel says being ranked number one puts added pressure on the team going into the B.C. final, but feels some pressure is relieved by competing there last year.

"It'll put pressure on us, that's for sure. But the experience of being there is phenomenal.

"The place (Pacific Coliseum) is so large it's unbelievable and it takes a while to get used to playing there."

Frenkel attended Seymour Elementary School prior to moving to Duchess in Grade 8.

West is the most versatile athlete on the team. At six-foot, two-inches and 180 pounds, West pulled down 26 rebounds in one game during last year's championship, en route to a second-team all-star selection.

He is the only basketball Condor who played volleyball for the Duchess Park team which placed fourth at the B.C. championship in Trail in December, being named to the first all-star team there.

West came to Duchess Park from North Nechako Elementary, where he started playing in Grade 7.

He says the thought of eventually winning the senior championship never entered his mind until last year.

"All we wanted to do was win in Grade 10, but thoughts of all this (winning the senior final) just happened last year.

"We've always really had the desire to make it, but good coaching sure helps. We've had four different coaches in the past five years and every one has seemed to be better," West explained.

They were coached by Gary Green in Grade 8, Dwight Botnen in Grade 9 and Don Gordon in Grade 10. Bill Gook has coached the past two years.

Since Grade 10, West says the team has averaged two hours of practice each day during the season.

Suderman, six-foot and 195 pounds, is the most dominant player and has been named an all-star in virtually every tournament he's played since Grade 10.

He says he prefers having played under different coaches, rather than having the same coach throughout his career.

"You learn different coaches' philosophies and you can also get used to a coach pretty quickly."

Suderman was asked to play for Duchess Park's senior team when he was in Grade 10 and is glad he declined the offer.

"I'm glad I played junior that year because we played against Vancouver teams a lot and I wouldn't have if I'd played senior."

"We learned that we could beat the Vancouver teams — we got the myth out of our systems."

Suderman started playing during Grade 7 at Seymour and was a team mate with Stanley, who started there in Grade 5.

Stanley, five-foot, 10-inches and 160-pounds, says the experience of playing with the other four starters for so long has been valuable.

"There are some things that are automatic between us. You're more relaxed, you know them and you know what they're going to do in certain situations."

Bush, whose guard partner for the past five seasons (Stanley) was an opponent in Grade 6, came to Duchess from Central Fort George Elementary and is six-feet and 150 pounds.

He doesn't think being top-ranked will have much bearing at the B.C. championship.

"I don't think that's a factor, really. Being ranked number one could work for you or against you."

Bush does feel their position does make it easier to get up for games, however.

"It seems like every tournament we go to everybody wants to beat the number one team."

The Condors played most of this season with four reserves, but might take just two to Vancouver.

Forward Brad Frenkel (Brian's brother) is in Grade 10, is six-two and 175 pounds.

Frenkel and the other reserve, Danny Foucher, played for the junior Condors who finished ninth in the B.C. junior championship last year in Burnaby.

Frenkel passed up a year of junior eligibility to play senior and is glad he did.

"I've gained a lot of experience. I started seven games at the beginning of the season, so that gave me a lot of confidence."

"I'm developing my skills more in senior than I would have in junior — defensive skills especially."

Frenkel started the game in Grade 7 at Seymour.

Foucher is the lone Grade 11 member of the team. The six-foot 155 pound guard attended elementary school at St. Mary's, but didn't start basketball until Grade 9.

"One reason I started is because all my friends started playing that year and also because of the trips."

Knowing this year's team would be powerful, Foucher wasn't sure if he could make the team, but tried out anyway.

"I wanted to play for them, but I was kind of reluctant because I thought I wasn't good enough."

Although the Condors haven't qualified for the B.C. championship yet, they are expected to have little trouble, as the north central zone championship begins Friday at Duchess Park.

Other teams are the Polars, Columneetza Cougars of Williams Lake and the South Peace Penguins from Dawson Creek.

The Polars are probably the second best team in the zone, but still lost to the Condors 105-38 in the final of a tournament two weeks ago in Dawson Creek. The Condors were also missing Suderman that game.

Duchess Park opens the tournament at 11 a.m. against Columneetza and the Polars meet South Peace at 1 p.m.

The losers of those games play at 7 p.m., while the winners meet at 8:45 p.m.

Play resumes Saturday at 11 a.m. with the winner of game three playing the loser of game four.

The championship game starts at 8 p.m.



Ingemar Stenmark back being fastest down the ski slopes.

WELL ORGANIZED

B.C. Games kick off well

by MARK ALLAN
Citizen Sports Reporter

The 1980 B.C. Winter Games in Kimberley have begun well. Competition started this morning in 10 of 20 events, with the other half taking place Saturday and Sunday.

A delegation of more than 30 people from Prince George is in Kimberley now, including 28 athletes, with 70 more arriving Friday for the final two days of competition.

Colin Reid from the Prince

George office of the B.C. recreation and fitness branch reached Kimberley Wednesday night to observe the proceedings.

He feels, "everything so far has gone quite smoothly... the people here seem to have everything under control."

The opening ceremony Wednesday night was held before a full house in the Kimberley Civic Centre and Reid says the entertainment, in particular, was "quite fantastic."

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IN KIMBERLEY

Bennett jabs Lake Placid

KIMBERLEY, B.C. (CP) — Praising the community spirit involved in organization, Premier Bill Bennett officially opened the B.C. Winter Games Wednesday night.

"I think the organizing committee could teach the Lake Placid Olympic committee a thing or two," Bennett told about 2,500 spectators and competitors at the civic arena in this East Kootenay city.

"And nobody is boycotting these Games," he added.

Bennett noted that there are more than 2,000 local volunteers involved in the second annual winter competition — from a city of about 7,500.

A Games flame was lit in the Platzl — the Bavarian-style downtown mall in this city which styles itself the Bavarian City of the Rockies — in December, but for the opening ceremony, a second flame was lit by two city students, both volleyball competitors at the Games.

Kim Kilback, a local figure skater, recited the athletes' oath, a new development to the Games.

New Democrat Sid Parker, the newly-elected MP for Kootenay East-Revelstoke, seemed out of place on a podium with a Social Credit premier and two of his ministers, but appeared to get louder applause when introduced than Bennett, Tourism Minister Pat Jordan or Lands Minister Jim Chabot, the local MLA.

Skater's mother bitter toward Games' judges

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Angry about judges' marks in Olympic figure skating, the mother of silver medalist Linda Fratianne said Tuesday her 19-year-old daughter may not defend her world title next month at Dortmund, West Germany.

"As far as I'm concerned, I wouldn't put her through that again," Virginia Fratianne said of last week's judging by an international panel at the Olympics at Lake Placid, N.Y. Her daughter could not overcome a third ranking in the compulsory figures, which count 30 per cent of the over-all score, and finished second behind gold medalist Anett Poetzsch of East Germany.

Fratianne won the world title in 1977, lost it to Poetzsch in 1978, regained it in 1979 and was favored for an Olympic gold medal.

Mrs. Fratianne said it appeared to her the judges were predisposed to give Linda lower marks.

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TWO HOCKEY LEGENDS

Bobby Hull to Whalers

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Hartford Whalers, whose lineup already includes one of hockey's all-time greats Gordie Howe, announced Wednesday night they had acquired superstar Bobby Hull from Winnipeg Jets.

The Whalers, who said they had signed Hull to a contract but gave no details, gave up future considerations to get the 41-year-old left winger, said Hartford operations director Jack Kelley.

The Whalers now have the only two men ever to score 1,000 goals each in major league professional hockey.

"We think Bobby can still contribute in the National Hockey League and play for two or three years," Kelley said. "Bobby has been skating and will be in Hartford Thursday and

will be skating with the team on Friday." Hull probably will not play in a Whalers' game until March 6 when Hartford visits Buffalo.

Hull last played on Dec. 12 for Winnipeg and has been sidelined with a shoulder injury suffered in a comeback attempt.

He has been reported on vacation in Florida for the last five weeks, trying to get his shoulder back in shape.

The transaction ended eight months of attempts by Winnipeg general manager John Ferguson to trade Hull. He was reclaimed from Chicago Black Hawks in last June's dispersal draft which stocked the four WHA teams that joined the NHL. Hull played 15 seasons with Chicago.

Herb Brooks would like job in NHL

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Herb Brooks, head coach of the U.S. hockey team that won a gold medal at the Winter Olympics last week, said Wednesday he'd love to coach in the National Hockey League.

Brooks, hockey coach at the University of Minnesota, said in a television interview he had been approached by a number of NHL teams before the Olympics.

"I've talked to three or four (NHL) clubs, prior to the Olympics, one a little more aggressive than the others," Brooks said. "I'm just going to sit and wait."