

# 07-08 Bison Men's Hockey Canada West Preview

## General Info

**Team:** Manitoba Bisons

**Name of Arena:** Max Bell

**Head coach:** Don MacGillivray/entering his 2nd year

**Conference:** Canada West

## Quick Facts

**2006-07 Canada West Standings finish?:** 7th place with 22 points; 3rd in Great Plains Division

**2006-07 Canada West Tournament/Playoff placing?:** Did not qualify for playoffs

**2007 CIS Nationals Placing?:** N/A

**2006-07 Overall Record?:** 14-24-0

**2006-07 Conference Record?:** 10-16-2

**Last Canada West Title?:** 1964-65 season

**Last CIS Title?:** 1964-65 season

**2007-08 Preview:** The Manitoba Bison men's hockey team is focused on the new season as they rallied but fell short in a bid for post-season action in 2006-07. The Herd notched 22 points (10-16-2) and was four points back of the nearest rival Calgary in the conference standings. The Bisons ran off a season-high five game-winning streak in November '06. The team battled to the final weeks of the season before being eliminated from post-season action for the first time since the 1993-94 season.

**Second year men's hockey head coach Don MacGillivray is optimistic and understands the challenges heading into the Canada West season.** "We are not going to talk too much about last season. The returning players are excited and we have had a very energetic and spirited training camp. It will be a very competitive conference and we need to make significant strides to climb up the standings this season."

Manitoba ramped up their non-conference schedule as there were several tight battles in camp. The Bisons have already played four Canad West opponents (Regina, Saskatchewan, Calgary and Alberta) this pre-season. The squad also played the Manitoba Moose Prospects in an exhibition game in Steinbach, MB on September 26, University of North Dakota on October 7 and Nebraska-Omaha and Canisius/Alabama on October 19-20.

MacGillivray said, "We had a very competitive camp and these pre-season games gave the players a chance to make an impression on our coaching staff. We had some great battles and we believe these games provided an opportunity for players to show their skills in game conditions."

**At the start of the Canada West season, 26 players (15 forwards, eight defencemen, three goalies) made the Bisons lineup. The nucleus of the team stays in tact with Bison players who dressed last season - all three goalies, five defencemen and 11 forwards still on the team.**

**Key veterans back in the Bisons fold this season are team-leading scorer Chris Falloon** (11g, 18a) while **captain Rob Smith** led Bison defenceman in scoring with nine points (2g, 7a) and **Stewart Thiessen** was second at eight points (3g, 5a). Goalie **Steve Christie** was 5-2-0 with 2.99 Goals Against Average and .897 Save Percentage in ten Canada West hockey games. He was fifth in average in the conference. **Krister Toews** was tenth with a 3.49 GAA in 20 conference games. Toews started nine of ten conference games in the second half of the season.

MacGillivray had a solid recruiting class as he looked for more scoring (Manitoba ranked second lowest in conference goals with 77) and players who 'played a more physical brand of hockey.'

**Leading the newcomers are several experienced Western Hockey League (WHL) players.** On defence, **Stephan Lenoski** played for two different WHL teams during the 2006-07 and skated for three seasons with Brandon. **Myles Rumsey** was the team captain for the Swift Current Broncos during the 2006-07 season and played there for the last four seasons. The Calgary Flames selected Rumsey in the seventh round (#221 overall) in the 2005 NHL Entry Draft. **Dalyn Flatt** played with the OHL's Brampton Battalion and Owen Sound Attack during the 2006-07 season. Prior to his OHL stint, Flatt played three seasons for WHL's Saskatoon and Kootenay. Flatt was selected by the New York Rangers in the third round (77th overall) in the 2005 NHL Entry Draft.

**On the forward line, Mark Olafson** played in the WHL for four seasons with two different teams and the Washington Capitals selected Olafson in the ninth round (279 overall) in the 2003 NHL Entry Draft. **Mike Hellyer** was the team captain for Prince Albert during the 2006-07 season and played there the last four seasons. **Kyle Howarth** played with the MJHL's Selkirk Steelers and led the league as the

top scorer during the 2006-07 season. Prior to last season, Howarth played three years at the Western Hockey League (WHL) level with Medicine Hat, Spokane and finished with Prince Albert.

**MacGillivray stated, “We have challenged the players to push themselves during training camp. We have improved depth at all positions and are excited to start the season. Our goal is to make the playoffs and try to finish as high in the standings. All Canada West teams are good and every game will be a test. The players and staff don’t want to miss the playoffs again this season.”**