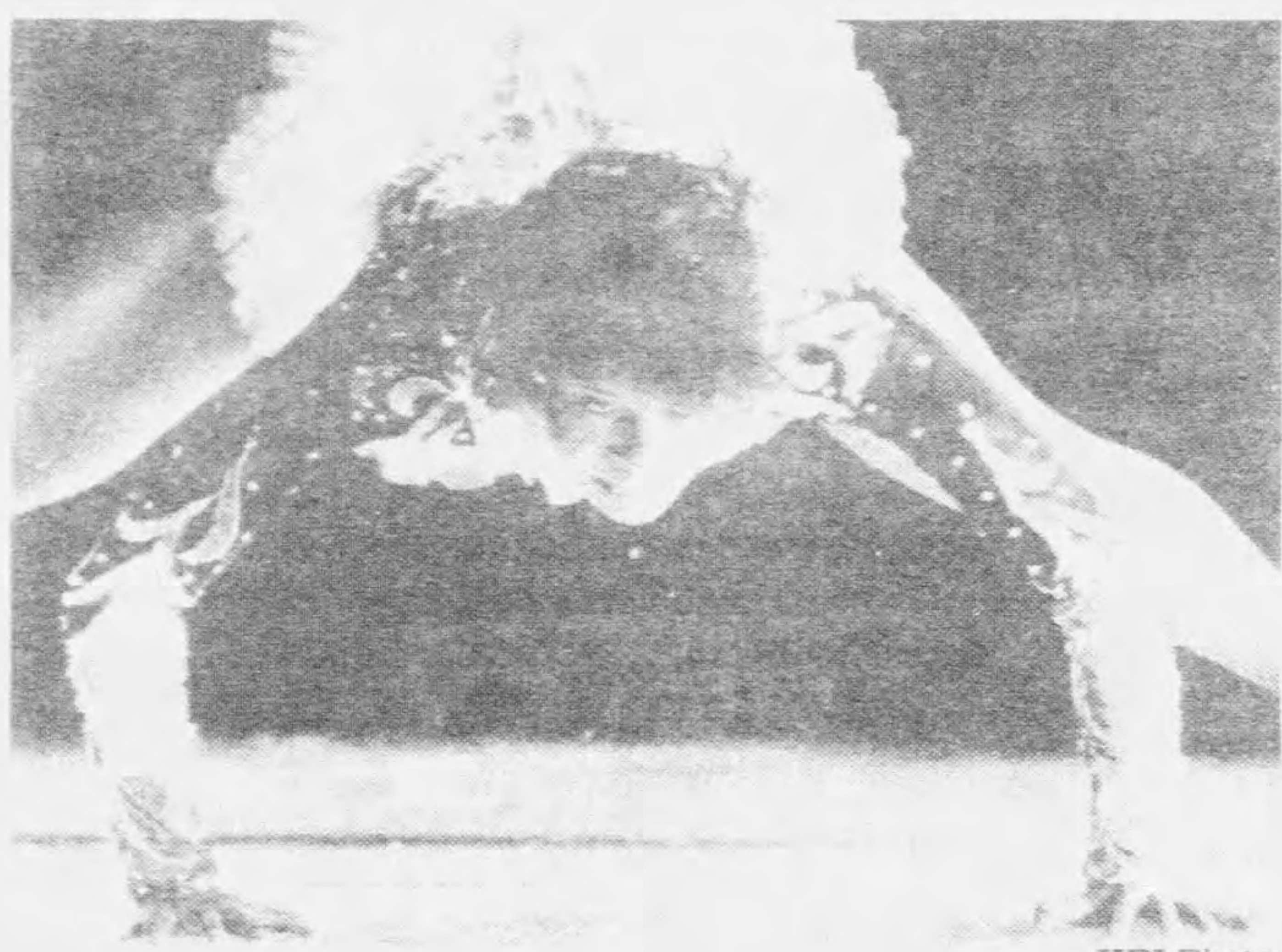


PEOPLE

PLACES & THINGS



UPI Photo

A pratfall on ice

As if helping to prove it takes more than grace and glamor, skater Debi Thomas of Palo Alto, Calif., grits her teeth as she falls to the ice during a parody of figure skaters at an exhibition in Seattle. She's really much better than this, a silver-medal winner in the recent World Championships.

Truly the finish line

Hagline finished in the money for the 50th time Monday, and it was the last time.

The 9-year-old gelding dropped dead as he returned to the finish line after being beaten by 1½ lengths in the first race at Pimlico. Owner-trainer Donald E. Campbell claimed Hagline out of the race for \$8,500. Under the rules of racing, Campbell took title to a dead horse.

Hagline, by Hagley out of Chorus Line, never figured to be a "big" horse, but finishing in the money 50 times is no little accomplishment. Forego finished in the money 50 times. Affirmed and Count Fleet between them finished in the money 50 times.

But Forego won \$1,938,957. Hagline won \$156,017 in 96 tries. He still was trying, striving to catch Mobjack Bay through the stretch. Hagline didn't make up any ground after the eighth pole, but he tried.

Hagline's \$1,980 for finishing second belongs to Arnold Heft, who claimed him for \$8,500 Jan. 31. Hagline was second twice and fourth twice in five races, so Heft made a marginal profit.

Hagline's body cooled in the cold rain while the tractor driver tried to line up the ambulance van so the body could be winched aboard. Finally, Dr. Patricia Brackett, track veterinarian, enlisted the aid of a pony rider who knew how to drive a tractor.

"We call him the Prince of Poland," trainer Gregory Wilson said of the pony man, "because nobody can pronounce his name Eddie Przybyla. He gallops horses for me."

While the body was removed, attendants held a euphemistic screen in place so patrons could not see that they were removing the body that had been lying on the track for 15 minutes.

It was removed in time for the second race.

— Jack Mann, The Baltimore Evening Sun

Sox aren't 'Shining'

Horror writer Stephen King, who won a bet last year with a sportswriter over the fortunes of the author's beloved Red Sox, is not so confident this year.

Last year, Bangor (Maine) Daily News sportswriter Bob Haskell had to eat a chicken dinner in his underwear on the newspaper's lawn after betting against the American League champion Red Sox in a wager with King. This year, the team has been hit with contract squabbles, including a three-week holdout by star pitcher Roger Clemens.

"I jump every time the phone rings, thinking it has to be [Haskell], asking me if I want to bet my pants against a chicken dinner again this year," King wrote in the Bangor newspaper. "I think they're playing with me," he said. "Like a cat with a crippled mouse."

King, author of "The Shining" and other thrillers, said the 1987 Red Sox team is "coming into the new season with the word LOSER pasted all over it."

Exclamation point

Dallas quarterback Danny White, who is negotiating a new contract: "The Cowboys are raising the price of hot dogs from \$1.50 to \$1.60 to pay me. They've raised ticket prices from \$19 to \$23 to pay Herschel Walker."

Edited by Paul Ballot

Fry: Harmon Didn't Break Rules at Iowa

Combined News Services

Iowa City — Iowa football coach Hayden Fry said yesterday he does not think former running back Ronnie Harmon broke any NCAA rules despite reports that Harmon accepted payments from professional agents while in school.

A university committee has been appointed to look into published reports last month that

Harmon, who is from Bayside, signed a contract with agents in March, 1984, and received \$54,000 in payments during 1984 and 1985 while he played football for the Hawkeyes.

"I'm not convinced that Ronnie has done anything wrong," Fry said at a news conference. "But the investigation will verify that. I'd be the last coach to ever think that any of our guys had done anything wrong."

Agent Norby Walters has said Harmon, now with the Buffalo Bills, received a \$2,500 bonus for signing a contract, cash payments and a loan for a Mercedes 560 SEC while at Iowa.

Martin Rauch, an attorney and agent hired by Harmon after he dropped Walters, was



Ronnie Harmon

quoted in a copyright story in the Atlanta Journal and Constitution as saying there was no question Harmon received payments going back to his junior year at Iowa. Harmon has refused comment on the allegations.

NCAA rules forbid a player from entering an agreement with an agent, accepting cash or discussing money terms before completing his college eligibility.

"Obviously, I'm right on top of all that," Fry said. "I have been instructed not to make any comments because the university has appointed an investigating committee which is right now in the process of interviewing various people to gather all the knowledge they can.

"Either the athletic director or the investigative committee chairman will have an official release, I'm going to estimate sometime next week. I'm just guessing at the time."

Walters and New York-based agent Lloyd Bloom have filed a breach-of-contract lawsuit against Harmon. Harmon reportedly signed a contract in 1984 that was postdated to Jan. 2, 1986, the day after the 1986 Rose Bowl.

The Bills selected Harmon in the first round of the 1986 NFL draft.

Walters said Harmon severed the contract about Aug. 10, a few days before he signed with Buffalo for a reported \$1.4 million.

Fry said he was surprised by the reports.

"Gosh, I guess so," he said. "We probably do as good a job of educating our players on what they can or cannot do or NCAA rules as any staff in America."

Officials Discuss Plans For a HS Final Four

From Staff and Wire Reports

Orlando — Television and prep sports officials are looking into a national "Final Four" for high school basketball teams.

Officials of CBS Sports and the National High School Athletic Coaches Association met in New Orleans during the collegiate Final Four last weekend to discuss a national high school showdown, The Orlando Sentinel reported.

"Everything is preliminary and we're really only talking concept right now," said Carey McDonald, executive director of the coaches association. "But the people at CBS appear to be very receptive. They like the concept and that weekend [between the NCAA Final Four and Masters] is a dead time for them."

The newspaper reported the tentative plan calls for a pair of Thursday or Friday night semifinals on a national cablecast, followed by the championship game Saturday or Sunday afternoon carried by CBS or one of the other major networks.

"It is an interesting concept and we are exploring it," CBS Sports programming executive Len DeLuca said. "Our sales and marketing guys love it. There are, however, a number of problems that must be solved. I have written a letter to Warren Brown of the National Federation of High School Athletics just to get the right steps started."

City coaches expressed some doubts yesterday that those steps would lead anywhere.

"It would be nice, but I don't know how they would be able to coordinate it, especially with the season as long as it is," Grady coach Jack Ringel said. "They would have to condense the amount of teams making the citywide playoffs. The season would be extended so they would have to cut back some place. But it's a beautiful idea because the kids would get a chance to travel. It would be a good experience."

But would there be time?

"I have to see what they're proposing," PSAL boys basketball commissioner Ed Michael said. "Right now, I don't think we can go any further

than we do with the state tournament. We don't have enough time to breathe in a 22-week season."

Hillcrest boys basketball coach Ken Gershon cited another possible problem. "I think the more you play up the top few winners, the more it's going to cause coaches to try and do illegal things [recruiting] to get into that position. The more we keep glorifying it, some of these guys feel to get to the top, they're going to do anything to get there."

McDonald said his group's intent would be for the money generated by a prep Final Four to be split among the state associations and local school districts of the participating teams. Many hurdles remain, including clearance from various state and national federations governing high school sports and the creation of an acceptable team selection process.

It's Win No. 20 For Columbia

Columbia pitcher Gary Goldenberg won his fifth game and the Lions improved their record to 20-3 yesterday with a 7-2 win over Fairfield. The score was tied after the second inning, but Mike Raemore drove in the winning run for Columbia in the third inning. Jay Dipasupio went 2-for-5 with a double for Columbia. Fairfield is 2-11 . . . Fordham withstood a three-run ninth-inning rally by Wagner to hold on for a 13-11 victory. Third baseman Jerry Curley was 3-for-4, including two homers and four RBI, for Fordham (9-3). Lenny Cancelleri had four RBI for Wagner (5-12).

Lacrosse. Tim McIntee scored his third goal of the game, with 58 seconds left, to give Post (2-3) an 11-10 win over St. John's (2-4). Mike Bolger had four goals and an assist for the Redmen.