

## SPORTSPEOPLE

Odds &  
INS

By Skip Myslenski &amp; Linda Kay

Allen Meyer and his daughter, Aliza, were watching a television show for hearing-impaired children when they saw something on the screen that would alter Meyer's world. "These were stories about famous deaf people, living and dead, and one was about Dummy Hoy," Meyer recounts. "I'm a passionate baseball fan, and there I was sitting next to my beautiful deaf daughter, and I was just astounded that I didn't know this story."

## The learning process

Meyer lives in Lake Zurich and sells mannequins and store fixtures for a living, but after he came across the story of William Ellsworth Hoy—the deaf outfielder who played 14 years in the major leagues—he decided to do something he had only dreamed about. He put together a documentary for cable television dealing with the subject of nonverbal communication. Recalling that WGN's Chuck Swirsky had once mentioned on radio that he knew how to sign, Meyer called the sportscaster and asked him to appear on the cable program. Swirsky complied, and he related the story of Dummy Hoy.

## That story ...

... is certainly a captivating one. Hoy began his career in 1886 with a minor-league team in Oshkosh, Wis., and was the only member of that club to go on to the majors. He played for several teams in the big leagues from 1888 through 1903, and Meyer's research indicates that his performance with the Cincinnati Reds puts him among the greatest outfielders in the history of that team. Hoy joined the White Sox in 1901, the first year of the American League, and, amazingly, was the first player to ever come to bat for the team: The box score for that day shows that Billy Hoy went 1-for-5. Even more compelling is this: To deal with his deafness, Hoy invented the umpire's signs for a ball, a strike, safe and out.

## Curtain call

Meyer felt Hoy's marvelous story merited wider attention, and with the blessing of Hoy's relatives, decided to go a step further and make a movie for television. He needed a collaborator, and so he again phoned Swirsky, who referred him to Michael Nowak, a radio engineer for Wally Phillips' show as well as an actor and director. "We met in August of 1985 and wrote 'The Signal Season of Dummy Hoy' together," says Meyer. The play opens Wednesday at the Commons Theatre.

## Playbill

"The White Sox are contemplating holding a 'Dummy Hoy' night at Comiskey Park. ... Swirsky and 'GN's' Dave Eanet have cameo roles in the play on May 17. They play sportscasters (what else?) who trail Hoy in his later years. Don Drysdale has also been asked to appear in a similar role. ... Professional sign language interpreter Patti Shore Kaden, who in the play symbolizes Hoy's inner thoughts, served as the personal sign language interpreter for Marlee Matlin on the set of 'Children of a Lesser God.' ... Hoy was married to Anna Marie Lowrey, a deaf woman respected for her work with other deaf individuals, including Helen Keller. ... Hoy died in 1961 at the ripe old age of 99. A few months before his death, he threw out the first ball at the fourth game of the World Series between Cincinnati and the New York Yankees. Reporters then addressed him as Mr. Hoy, but he replied: 'Call me Dummy, as always.'"

## Back again

Ken Harrelson was busy honing his golf game at Butterfield Country Club on Tuesday, but the afternoon before he had made the familiar drive from his home in Lisle to Comiskey Park. It was the same trek he took as a White Sox broadcaster, and then as the team's head of baseball operations, but here he was doing it for the first time since he cleaned out his Comiskey office last October. "I'll tell you what. It really hit home on the drive," he would say later while preparing for his job as a Yankee announcer. "I was really looking forward to coming back, rather than being reluctant, hesitant. But I had some funny thoughts. I thought of Jessie in the Bard's Room. Gus, who tends bar there. People like that who I had great relationships with while I was here. Those memories tremendously outweigh the negative ones."

## Medical update

Harrelson, of course, is now part of the menagerie that broadcasts Yankee games, and one of his occasional partners in the booth is Hall of Famer Mickey Mantle. The former Yankee center-fielder already has made two on-air appearances since he was hospitalized with chest pains in mid-April, and the Hawk reports: "He's tremendous. He does a good job as far as content, and his health? Well, they went in with a catheter and said he's got the heart of a 20-year-old. He has no blockages or anything."

## News, notes and nonsense

Sox players and coaches attend a benefit cocktail party for the ChiSox kids at Dika's Thursday night from 6 to 9. ... The class of '27 from Morton High School holds its 60th reunion Wednesday at Alessandro's Banquet Hall in Cicero. Morton won the National Interscholastic Basketball championship that year, beating six out-of-state teams in five days at the University of Chicago gym. Coach Karl Long is still playing golf several times a week in Florida at age 93.

And finally: Stan Mikita drops by Reilly's Daughter in Oak Lawn Wednesday night, and unlike last week's guest, he'll sign autographs. Jim Harbaugh, who bravely showed up last week despite a bad case of a chicken pox, apologized to the youngsters in the crowd but said he was afraid to get too close.

## If Packers go 16-0, how will they pay bills?

The Green Bay Packers on Tuesday reported a club record net income of more than \$3 million in fiscal 1986 despite a 4-12 record, which was the National Football League club's worst mark since 1958, when it was 1-10-1.

In fact, the Packers' net income has exceeded \$1.5 million for four straight years.

The last bad year for Green Bay was 1982, when losses of more than \$2 million were reported.

Curiously, the '82 season was the last time the Packers finished with a record above .500 and made the playoffs.



Matthew "Pop" Shortell, 64, of Ansonia, Conn., is honored as Sports Nut of the Year in a contest sponsored by Fisher Nuts. He officiated more than 30,000 events in 1987, including 11 basketball games in one day.

## Horner adjusts quickly, hits a home run in debut in Japan

Former Atlanta Braves infielder Bob Horner, making his Japanese baseball debut, hit a two-run home run Tuesday to lead the Yakult Swallows to a 5-3 victory over the Hanshin Tigers.

The 29-year-old Horner, who became a free agent after the 1986 major-league season, signed a one-year contract with the Swallows on April 14 for an estimated \$2 million.

In his first game, in front of a

crowd of 52,000 at Jingu Stadium, he walked, beat out an infield hit, homered and grounded out. He was taken out in the eighth inning.

Horner, who played third base, said: "When I hit the ball, I thought it would be a double at least. I am happy that I could hit a home run."

"I would like to have time to study more about Japanese baseball and to help the Swallows

move up in the standings."

Yakult is fourth in the Central League.

It wasn't Horner's first appearance at Jingu Stadium. He played there in the U.S.-Japan collegiate baseball championships in 1976 and 1978, when he was attending Arizona State.

Swallows manager Shuzo Sekine said: "He hit the ball smoothly. He runs fast and has a good batting eye."

## The city that works knows how to play, too

Spring is upon us, and here's news from Rand McNally for Chicagoland's weekend warriors who feel they have to head for Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana or Downstate Illinois to find meaningful outdoor activities.

In its 1987 Sports Places Rated book, Chicago is the No. 1 year-round metropolitan area in the U.S. for recreational sports. Here are the top 10 cities, with selected comments:

- Chicago** ...The city has always been exceptionally sports conscious, fiercely supportive of its teams, and at the forefront in providing sports facilities.
- Los Angeles** ...ranks only No. 5 in public swimming pools, but with so many in backyards it's understandable.
- Detroit** ...only Sports Place besides Chicago to receive a No. 1 ranking in two categories ...
- New York** ...if we rated the participatory sports of fast walking, taxi dodging, jostling and crowd-bucking, [it] would win on the merits of Manhattan Island alone.
- Long Island** ...like New York City, it falls flat on its face in terms of ski facilities with not a one.
- Dallas** ...it would not have made the Top 10 had it not been for ... swimming pools [more than 100 public]. They are so intent on swimming that during a heat spell a few years ago large blocks of ice were thrown into the pools on a daily basis.
- Miami** ...It is astounding that it has only four public tennis courts. ... Where Miami racks up points is with public golf facilities.
- Philadelphia** ...A well-rounded sporting environment for those who want to get into it themselves ... health clubs and fitness centers are just beginning to catch on.
- Houston** ...One of the most rapidly expanding sports places in the country. ... The only area in which it does not score well is skiing.
- Washington, D.C.** ...this sports place provides sports facilities for several million ... and it does a commendable job. [However] it has only two municipal golf courses [for 3 million people], totaling 45 holes.

## At 5-5, she's someone he can look up to

Women have surpassed men in college basketball in one department.

The basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mass., has handed out its Naismith Awards to honor the sport's shorter competitors. Wake Forest's Ty Bogues and Southern Cal's Rhonda Windham were recipients.

Bogues is 5 feet 3 inches, and Windham is 5-5. A Hall spokesman said it's the first time that the woman was taller than the man.



Chuck Long

"We know down the road it's going to be Chuck Long, unless he falls flat on his face. We've got to make a total commitment now. Otherwise, we're just putting it off."

—Lions coach  
Darryl Rogers,  
naming the former  
Iowa star the No. 1  
QB in mini-camp  
over Eric Hipple  
and Joe Ferguson

## There's the camaraderie, the parties—and Grandma

Basketball's paper chase:

■ Derrick McKey, Alabama's star center, said that because he enjoys being with friends and wants to get closer to earning his degree, he probably will play for the Crimson Tide another season.

There had been some speculation that the Southeastern Conference's Most Valuable Player might forgo his senior season and make himself available for the National Basketball Association draft, in which he would be regarded as a top prospect. Underclassmen must declare themselves available for the NBA draft by midnight Friday.

"I like going to college and being around the fellows," said the 6-foot-9-inch McKey, who last season led his team to a 28-5 record, best in the school's history, by averaging 18 points and 7 rebounds. He said he would miss school and his friends if he turned pro.

"I've talked to my mother and my coach," he said. "Neither has put pressure on me to make a decision. I've known all along what my mother wanted me to do: get a degree."

"They say you can always leave and come back to school and get your degree, but it's not the same as the regular season."

■ Charles Smith, Pitt's 6-10 All-Big East center, said he will pass up the draft and remain in college for his senior season.

Smith, labeled a certain first-round draft choice by NBA scouts, said he changed his mind at least a dozen times before finally making "a very difficult, very hard decision with my heart instead of my mind."

"Also, I'm on time to graduate, and I do want to graduate from college. I know that if I had turned pro and gone to work, it would have been difficult to graduate."

■ Charles Barkley, who left Auburn after his sophomore year to play pro basketball and is starring for the Philadelphia 76ers, will return to school this summer to work toward a degree in business. But he's not happy about it.

"I don't see why anybody earning \$2 million a year has to go back to school," he said. "So why is he going?"

"Because my grandma said I have to."

## ABC gets rights to Big 10 basketball

ABC has reached a four-year, \$10.7 million agreement with the Big 10 that gives it exclusive network rights to conference basketball games beginning with the 1988-89 season.

The deal also awards ABC the right-of-first refusal to a postseason conference tournament if the Big 10 decides to start one.

Here are other details of the agreement:

■ During the 1987-88 season, CBS will carry 11 Big 10 appearances and ABC seven. (Each conference team in a telecast counts for one appearance, and so, for example, a North-western-Indiana game counts as two appearances.) CBS' deal is worth \$1.8 million next season, the last of its current contract with the Big 10. The conference does not yet have a deal with NBC for '86-'87.

■ During each of the first three seasons when ABC has exclusive network rights to the conference, it will telecast a minimum of 20 appearances.

■ The rights' fee ABC is now scheduled to pay the Big 10 will increase if it begins the much-discussed postseason tourney, which still must be approved by various conference bodies.

■ And the conference still will be permitted to telecast games over non-network outlets even during those seasons ABC has network exclusivity. As a result, additional games will be aired by ESPN, by the Big 10's own production company and by individual schools' outlets.

"This deal provides us great stability after all the debilitating effects of deregulation," Big 10 commissioner Wayne Duke said Tuesday. "That stability and the financial resources it gave us provided the impetus to do what we did."

"It's nice to be able to sit back now and not have to worry."

## BRIEFS

■ Reggie Rogers, the Detroit Lions' No. 1 draft choice, is being sued for breach of contract by New York agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, who claim they should have the right to represent him in contract negotiations. Rogers was served with the \$1 million lawsuit as he walked off the practice field Monday at the Lions' mini-camp in Tampa. The lawsuit was filed in the civil division of the state Supreme Court in New York. The suit names Rogers and his current agent, Steve Zucker. Jerry Vainisi, the Lions' attorney, said Walters and Bloom had given Rogers a check for \$15,000, but Rogers returned the check, with interest, when he agreed to use Zucker as his agent.

■ The Dallas Cowboys' top draft pick, Danny Noonan, says he used steroids for several days to help him regain weight lost after getting sick in Japan. The 280-pound defensive tackle from Nebraska was among 20 players who tested positive for anabolic steroids at the NFL scouting combine in January, officials said. Noonan told the Dallas Morning News his steroid use began upon his return from the Jan. 11 Japan Bowl all-star game and ended by Jan. 28, the day when 330 players arrived in Indianapolis for the league's most important scouting session. He said it was the first time he used steroids.

■ The Cincinnati Bengals said running back Stanley Wilson is ineligible to participate in any team activities for an unspecified length of time, by order of NFL Commissioner Pete Rozelle. Television and newspaper reports have said Wilson recently failed a drug test. He denies the reports.

■ Free-agent quarterback Ron Jaworski worked out with the Miami Dolphins in the latest stop on his tour of NFL teams.

■ Micheal-Ray Richardson, the former New Jersey Net banned by the National Basketball Association for drug abuse, has filed a medical malpractice suit claiming Dr. Russell Ferstandig gave him improper treatment that caused him to relapse into drug use.

■ The Sting began its on-field restructuring by releasing veteran midfielder Nickie Klincarski and rookies Elias Zurita and Randy Prescott. Sources indicate the later two may wind up in preseason training in October, vying for spots on an anticipated Sting reserve team.

■ Jan Stephenson will not play in this week's LPGA tournament in Suffolk, Va., because of injuries she suffered in an automobile accident in Florida Saturday night.

■ Top-seeded Martina Navratilova struggled to a 7-6 [7-4], 7-6 [7-3] victory over Sabrina Goleis in the second round of the \$150,000 Italian Open in Rome. No. 2 seed Steffi Graf cruised past Petra Huber 6-2, 6-2, and unseeded Judith Polzl upset No. 6 seed Bettina Bunge 4-6, 6-3, 6-4.

■ After being delayed for 1½ days by rain and wet courts, the \$615,000 Tournament of Champions finally got underway in New York with No. 2 seed Yannick Noah, No. 6 Martin Jaite and No. 8 Jakob Hlasek posting victories.

■ The Phoenix City Council has approved an agreement with the Phoenix Stadium Development Group for construction of a downtown sports stadium. The "conceptual agreement" paves the way for the city and the developer to begin preparation of finance and land-acquisition plans for the \$650 million project.

■ Ray Mancini says he wants to come out of retirement to fight World Boxing Council lightweight champion Hector Camacho, according to the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Mancini retired two years ago but has been challenged by Camacho. "No, I don't want to fight no more," Mancini told the newspaper. "But for Camacho, for this kid, I'll do it."

■ The U.S. Amateur Boxing Federation announced that Richmond, Va., (June 6) and Tampa (June 12) will host the 1987 Heavyweight Invitational Series, featuring athletes from the U.S. and Soviet Union.

■ Patrick Tompkins, who averaged 17 points and 16 rebounds a game at Waukegan East this season, has signed a national letter of intent to play basketball at Wisconsin.

■ Softball star Lisa Ishikawa threw her fifth no-hitter of the year, as Northwestern beat De Paul 2-0. She fanned 18.

Compiled by Mike Conklin, John Dowd and Rich Strom from staff, wire reports.

## TANK McNAMARA



## GIL THORP



## GIL THORP



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