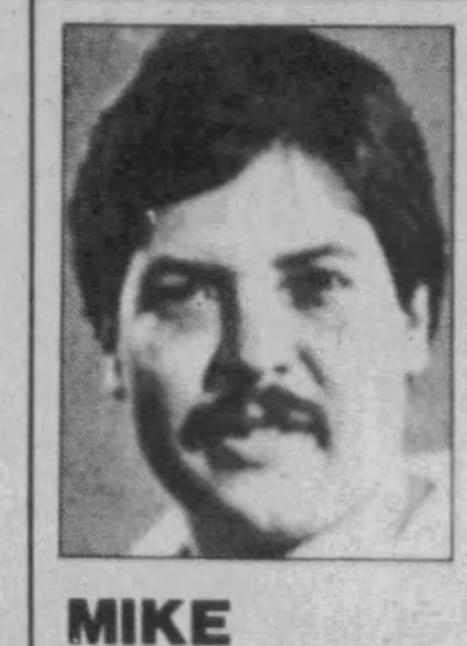
MINOR-LEAGUE BASEBALL

Davis no 'sure thing' in minors, says the 'Chief'

incinnati Vice Presi-_dent/Player Development Sheldon "Chief" Bender was in Cedar Rapids town this week to sign a two-year extension to the player development contract with the local ballclub and observe the C.R. Reds in action.

Seven former Cedar Rapids players are on parent Cincinnati's current roster, six of whom played here with the Reds. One of those six, Eric Davis, is swinging one of the hottest bats in baseball.



KOOLBECK

Gazette sportswriter

Davis hit .276 with 15 home runs and 53 stolen bases here in 1982. It is not out of the realm of possibility that he will hit 50 home runs and steal 100 bases for Cincinnati this season.

Despite the success he is now enjoying, Bender wasn't so sure about Davis coming up through the organization.

"When you think back to Eric Davis, he wasn't that outstanding in this league," said Bender of the man who currently leads the major leagues in home runs and RBI.

"People don't realize the way we struggled with Eric Davis. We had him two years in a rookie league (Eugene of the Northwest League) where he really had to get his feet on the ground and now he's a superstar.

"I've heard scouts say, 'We always knew he'd be a superstar.' Well that's not true at all because he struggled. He could have easily gone the other way. He came from a bad area in Los Angeles, the Watts area, and if he weren't handled properly he might now be in jail."

One player who had superstar written all over him when he was here is Kurt Stillwell, currently splitting time at shortstop on the big club with Barry castoffs of most of the other ballclubs."

Stillwell, 21, was the subject of much trade speculation over the winter. With Cincinnati hurting for starting pitching, is Stillwell trade-bait?

"No. Not if I have anything to do with it," said Bender. "I told (Cincinnati) in no uncertain words that you don't find the talents of a young infielder like a Stillwell very often.

"And you never know what you're going to get in a

"I would say a Larkin, a Stillwell, a (Kal) Daniels, a Tracy Jones — those kind of kids are too hard to come by and you spend too many long hours working with them to have them ready."

BENDER'S JOB is evaluating and developing talent. With over 40 years experience, he knows the game quite well.

Does he see any future major leaguers among the current Cedar Rapids Reds?

"It's hard to say at this particular stage," he said. "You can see some of the young kids, like the kid who pitched (Wednesday) night — (Scott) Scudder.

"He was our No. 1 draft choice last June. You can't find a kid with a better arm. He was throwing in the 90s and he's come up with a better breaking ball. He's a terrific athlete and made a couple of great fielding plays.

"I can envision him being a potential 20-game

winner for the Reds in the future - three, four or five years from now.

"(Cedar Rapids has) a fine center-fielder in Francisco Silverio. He can really go get the ball. If he can cut down his strikeouts, he's got a chance to develop.

"(Right-fielder) Donnie Brown, another young kid, has a chance to develop."

BENDER WAS candid about the stand owners took with free agents this past winter.

"One thing ownership did, they stayed together on this free-agent group, which you have to admire them for, I think," he said. "Not getting involved with bidding contests or long-term contracts. They've been stuck so much over the years and they're still paying off. They are so much in debt to players who are out of baseball now that they finally

got together. "When the Players Association forced them to open their books and they saw the losses that they couldn't write off on their other businesses, why it was ridiculous."

The question of collusion among the owners was raised by Major League Players Association president Donald Fehr. Bender didn't admit or deny that

"The Players Association claimed there was collusion among ownership. I won't say it's collusion, but I think they finally used a little common sense. They all agreed this is the only way to go. And the farm system is the way to develop in the future."

BENDER DOES not believe the talent pool to be deep enough to support expansion at the majorleague level.

* * *

"You can have players out there, but how good is the talent?" asked Bender.

"All you have to do is look back over the years and see how long some of these expansion clubs stayed down. It's a hard go when you're just getting the

CINCINNATI MANAGER and all-time major league hits leader Pete Rose became eligible to be activated to the active roster Friday. Bender doesn't see that happening soon, though.

"He says he does not plan to get back on the field and he has never worked out at all," said Bender.

"He still would love to play, that's Pete Rose. He still feels he can hit any pitcher around. But I think he feels that with the talent we have, he isn't needed up there.

"If it ever comes to a point in the season where he felt in his own mind that he could add something to the ballclub and take the place of someone who wasn't doing the job, he's the kind of a guy that, give him two or three weeks and he'll get himself in shape and get in there."

FINALLY, BENDER had this observation on the record numbers of home runs being hit in the major leagues this season.

"(St. Louis Manager) Whitey Herzog took a baseball from last year and one from this year and dropped them on the ground and they bounced to the same height.

"He then unraveled both balls down to the hard rubber core and dropped both of those. This year's

ball bounced 12 inches higher. "Now that's just one ball . . ."

Burrell lends insight into the real Ronnie Harmon

onnie Harmon, according to public perception, was a marvelous college football running back who wore nice clothes, drove a nice motorscooter, flashed a nice smile and accepted a nice chunk of money that he wasn't supposed to.

But what was Ronnie Harmon really like during his playing career at Iowa? Did he socialize with teammates? Did he attend class? Was he a loner? Was he one of the boys in the dormitory? Did he come off as a guy who would accept

a fistful of dollars? Perhaps only Harmon or Harmon's closest friend could answer those questions with utmost accuracy. Still, some of his teammates can speak to those questions with more accuracy than you and I. These teammates haven't said a whole lot since Harmon and Devon Mitchell were found to have accepted money from agent Norby Walters during their playing career.

MARK

Gazette

DUKES

sports editor

Given a forum, Doug Burrell will talk a lot about Ronnie Harmon. Burrell, defensive end from Cedar Rapids, played in 23 of 25 games for the Hawkeyes in 1984 and '85. He doesn't pretend to know everything there is to know about Ronnie Harmon, but he knows enough to believe Harmon has taken a bad rap.

"A lot of people don't understand Ronnie Harmon Burrell said. "Ronnie is different. He would say things like, 'If I wasn't a football player, a lot of people wouldn't even care who I was.'

"If you have a picture of Ronnie that he was weird, that's not true. He was intelligent. Ronnie was one of the most intelligent people I've met. He's level-headed and he knows what he wants. In a sense, he was like Larry Station. Both of them were private people. Quiet.

Burrell lived on the same floor of the same dormitory as Harmon and Harmon's roommate, brother Kevin Harmon. Burrell and Ronnie Harmon took the same communications class. Burrell and Ronnie Harmon, like other teammates, engaged in occasional small talk.

That's why Burrell can't believe Harmon took money illegally. He can't believe people think Harmon deliberately fumbled four times in the 1986 Rose Bowl. He can't believe people are suspicious of Harmo because of the way he dressed.

"I'm not surprised it happened, but I'm surprised it happened to them," Burrell said of Harmon and Mitchell. "I lived around them and didn't see any change in them. I never saw an agent around, either.

"Before the 1985 season, a lot of guys had scooters and motorcycles. I remember them (lowa officials) going around asking how guys got the motorscooters.

"I know Devon had a used Volvo for a couple years, but it had New York license plates on it and he's from New York, so I didn't think anything of it. Everybody

had a stereo, too, not just them.

"All the New York guys had those gold chains and name plates when they came in as freshmen. (Former Iowa guard) Tom Humphrey had 'em. I remember (defensive end) Richard Pryor had a lot of stuff when he came in. They said they got it on the streets of New York, that it's real inexpensive back there."

What really burns Burrell is that some people blame Harmon for Iowa's 45-28 loss to UCLA in the Rose

"Iowa fans are turning on him and it's kind of disgusting," Burrell said. "I don't think Ronnie would throw the game with his parents and brothers and everybody in the stands. Ronnie had a lot of pride. It was his chance to showcase his talent.

"I remember talking to Ronnie at the banquet after the Rose Bowl. He wasn't thrilled at all. He was really down. The way this agent has talked, if Ronnie threw the Rose Bowl, the agent would be telling us. It's a ridiculous statement.

"If you talk to most of the guys who were on the team, they don't blame him for anything."

Doug Burrell included.

Around the horn • Iowa faced some weird offensive formations when it played at Hawaii in the last regular season football game of 1984, and it may get a look at others in the 1987

Tenneseee, the Hawkeyes' opponent in the Kickoff Classic Aug. 30 in East Rutherford, N.J., has been experimenting with an offensive set that utilizes four wide receivers.

The Volunteers will have exceptional talent at the receiving position next fall, but little depth at tight end. Consequently, the coaching staff has been looking at the multiple-receiver alignment since before Tennessee's

appearance in the Liberty Bowl last year. "There's nothing set," Tennessee tight end coach David Cutcliffe said. "It's not something we can major in because there's obviously not much of a run package

available. "Still, there are certain down-and-distance situations - maybe third and a ton - when you say, 'Why not put four wide receivers in there and try to move the ball down the field to one of them?'

"We're just trying to get our best athletes and fastest people in the ballgame at one time. Obviously, we can put four guys out there who can scare a secondary

Iowa pulled out a 17-6 victory at Hawaii in 1984. Dick Tomey, then coach of the Rainbows, occasionally used an offensive set that had three receivers line up behind one another on one side of the field.

• Former Cedar Rapids City Amateur golf champion Dan Naughton made news earlier this month in Kankakee, Ill., when he scored a double eagle.

Naughton scored a hole-in-one on the 263-yard par-4 second hole at Kankakee Elks Country Club, where he is assistant pro. Naughton had a 7-under-par 65.

Ruth was fourth in the 3,000

Raffensperger, who is being

groomed for the decathalon, was

fourth in the javelin and has a

season-best of 188-10, but "he

shows potential of being a 210-plus

thrower for us. Remember, he's only

Bartelt, a junior who set a school

record in the indoor season with a

1:10.79 clocking in the 600, "had a

good season, not a great season,"

Bucknam says. Bartelt, a three-time

400 dash champ as a prep, was

fourth in the 400 at the AMCU meet

bunch, was second in the steeple-

chase this year after winning the

Gearhart, the only senior in the

and ran a 48.21 this season.

league title last spring.

been throwing it two years."

UNI closing in on competition

Homegrown talent Panthers' secret to track success

By J.R. Ogden

Gazette sportswriter Northern Iowa is getting closer to being the best in Iowa by using the best in lowa, says third-year UNI

track coach Chris Buckman. Whether or not the Panthers can close the gap between them and Iowa State, however, is another question.

"The only thing that is holding us back now is our limited funds," says Bucknam, who has successfully recruited some of the state's top talent the past three seasons and currently has 33 lowans on his 43-man roster. "It takes money to be good.

"In the last two years, we've pulled a lot closer to (ISU) and have passed Drake and Iowa as far as total team strength. We are definitely the number two team (in lowa and we threaten the number one team, which is lowa State.

"Because of the fact that we are the least funded (in the state), I don't know if we can reach that point (of being the best). In a span of three or four years, we might be the best for a year or two."

"If we went in to a dual meet with Iowa State right now, there would be some hellish races," Bucknam says. "They just have more depth than we do."

The state's four major universities - UNI, Drake, ISU and lowa don't compete in a scored meet, so there always will a question as to who is the best. "Drake doesn't want to do it and

Iowa is a little hesitant," says 8 meet from the area are John Ruth Bucknam, who would love to have and Mike Raffensperger of lowa

such a meet even if it means City, Brad Bartelt of West Branch finishing fourth. "If anyone should and Steve Gearhart of Waukon. be hesitant, it should be me. But I say bring them on." steeplechase and was the second

Although it finished third at the man of UNI's conference runner-up recent AMCU-8 Championships in cross country team. "He's got a lot Macomb, Ill., Bucknam says this of potential. He just one of those year's team is just as good as last guys that it's going to take a few seasons, which won both the indoor years." and outdoor conference titles.

"It's been a good season for us performance-wise," he says. "The AMCU is just getting tougher. I think next year is going to be our best ever, however."

The Panthers' top performer this season has been sophomore Jeff Burris, who is just one-tenth of a second away from qualifying for the NCAA Division I Championships in the 800-meter run.

Burris, who has a season-best of l minute, 48.21 seconds, has two more chances to qualify, at Saturday's Iowa Open in Iowa City and the Central Collegiate Championships, May 29-30 at Chicago.

The NCAA meet is June 3-6 at Baton Rouge, La.

"We've got some guys that are approaching (the qualifying standards), but none yet," says Bucknam. Several former Gazette-area preps have helped the Panthers this

Joel Hartman, a sophomore from Cedar Rapids Kennedy, won the AMCU-8 400-meter intermediate hurdle title and has a season-best of

52.5. The school record is 52.0. "He'll have a shot at getting in the 51s for sure," Bucknam says. "He's really looking good."

Blake Wilkinson, a soph from C.R. Jefferson, was fourth in the 400 hurdles, and has a season-best of



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Huskers break Cyclones' hold on Big 8 track title

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP) — Nebraska, spurred on by several double-winners, became the first school in conference history Saturday to sweep the men's and women's competition in the Big 8 outdoor track and field champion-

The Cornhusker men snapped the

four-year victory string by lowa State. The Cyclones finished fourth, with distance specialist Raf Wyns capturing the 1,500 and 5,000 meter runs. In addition, the Cyclones' Fuzz Ahmed won the high jump. ISU's women were sixth, and led by junior Natasha Thomas' victory in the 400meter intermediate hurdles.

Kansas's men were third with 97 points. The Jayhawks were followed by ISU with 86; Missouri, 68, Oklahoma, 54, Colorado, 31, and Oklahoma State, 16.

The Huskers, who also swept both divisions in the Big 8 indoor meet, had not taken home a men's outdoor crown in 21 years.

MUSTANGS: Headed for NAIA national tourney

From page 1C

the sixth and a rip to center in the seventh. They had runners at second with one out in the fifth and sixth, and with two gone in the seventh. Apparently rattled by illegal-pitch

calls, Keniley walked two Mustangs

in the first, and an illegal-pitch call

put Bev Klein on third. But she was out trying to score on Sherry Zieser's grounder to short. In the Mount Mercy second, Mary Goad grounded a two-out single past Keniley after the Saints' only

Jenny Zeiser flied to left. again until the sixth. Their failure to capitalize "could have been a nightmare" for Coach Bob Timmons.

Senior left-hander Ann Lammers led off with a shot that caromed off the St. Francis first baseman's foot for a double.

GOING BY THE book, Timmons

would have had Sherry Zieser

away. She did, directly to the left-

fielder. Carol Heaverlo followed

with what could have been a run-

producing fly to center.

"If I had it to do over again," Timmons said, "I'd sacrifice. But Sherry had been hitting the ball hard all series. So had Heaverlo. didn't want to give up an out."

Recalling Friday's second game, which St. Francis won with a twoout single on an 0-2 pitch in the last of the seventh, Timmons saw another nightmare portending with two out in the last of the seventh Saturday, when the Saints' Kathy Birsa singled - her second hit of

the day — and stole second. error. That opportunity died when But Campbell, who fields her The Mustangs didn't threaten position extremely well, erased the prospect with a reflex play on a hard, face-high one-hopper.

> Of her big hit, Jenny Zieser said simply, "It was about time." She was 2-for-9 in the series. "I knew all I had to do was hit a

deep fly," laughed Sherry. "It was too easy." "The kids came through," Timmons understated. "I'm very sacrifice. Instead, he had Zieser hit , pleased by their total team effort.

> They moved the ball (no strikeouts). They just wouldn't quit." An estimated 300 spectators root

ed the Mustangs on at sun-drenched Harley Steel Field, and Timmons was quick to thank them.

"The fans' support was unbelievable," he said. "The student body, the parents, the staff — all year long. It's a great tribute to the kids. It makes the coaches proud.

"It's very exciting to be making our first trip to the finals. Both of these teams should go. St. Francis is a national tournament team."

After Friday's twin-bill, St. Francis Coach Dick Smith praised Campbell as "an All-American all the way." Saturday he said, "A great ballclub beat us. They had to play great to beat us. We wish them all the best in Kearney."

Smith's team finished 37-14, including 23 games against NCAA Division I teams.

The suspense Saturday was tougher on former Mustang Rhonda Burke, now working for a collection agency in St. Louis, than on the fans in the stands. Burke totaled 10 telephone calls to the pressbox for series updates, the last call spanning the last two outs.

HOW THEY'RE DOING

Notes on the college progress of former Gazette area high school athletes.

OWA COLLEGES — Dallas Bogner, sophomore from Cedar Rapids Prairie, earned his second varsity letter on the Central College men's tennis team. Bogner won singles and doubles titles this year in the Iowa Conference meet.

M ARKANSAS SCHOOLS - Ron Hillers, senior from Maquoketa Valley High School, was a member of the Arkansas State football team last season which reached the Divisions I-AA championship game. Arkansas State is at Jonesboro. MINNESOTA SCHOOLS -

Scott Munsell of Cedar Rapids plans to attend Southern Methodist University next fall. Munsell has been attending Shattuck-St. Mary's High Schools in Faribault. He has been medalist on its golf team in six meets during the team's 10-2 sea-

■ MISSOURI SCHOOLS — Matt Parker, freshman from Cedar Rapids Washington, earned a letter as a member of the men's swimming team at Southwest Missouri State in Springfield.

Kathy Kelsey, senior catcher from Cedar Rapids Jefferson, finished her softball career at Northwest Missouri State with school career records for doubles (16) and RBI (64). She batted 210 this season for the Bearkittens, 28-25.