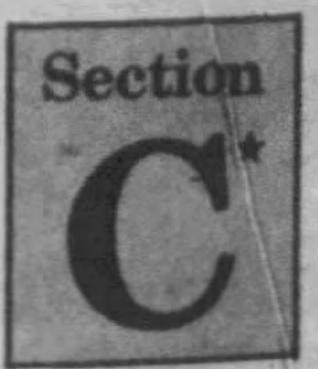
Financial

Weather





Bird watching a playoff plus

resuming he was watching, Bob Knight must have pulled up his red sweater, glared at his big screen TV and said (we're paraphrasing, of course), "Isiah, didn't we go over passing drills at Indiana?"

Perhaps Knight covered passing fundamentals after Isiah Thomas his sophomore year to play in the National Basketball Association.

Actually, Thomas has distinguished himself in the NBA scoring, dribbling, defending, passing, creating. He's an All-Star and holder of records. Turns out he didn't need more than two years of grooming in college.

Thomas is a very good player, a smart player who knows when to pass the ball and when to keep the ball. He knows it's dangerous to pass a ball toward the opponent's goal at any time, particularly with the game on the line.

But his in-bounds toss intended for Bill Laimbeer late in Tuesday night's Game 5 of the Eastern Conference series was awfully curious. Even the stars make mistakes, but it sometimes takes another star — an even greater star — to force the BIG mistakes.

Larry Bird is that kind of star.

BIRD MISSED a shot with less than 10 seconds remaining that would have put Boston ahead. Actually, Bird's shot didn't have a chance. Three Pistons stood in his path to the hoop, one of whom rejected his shot not long after it left Bird's hands.

Bird could have sulked, could have wandered back to mid-court and allowed Detroit to run out the clock and take a 3-2 series advantage. Lesser players might have been tempted to do so.

But where was Bird? Of course, in position to make a crucial play an incredible play — that probably will be the key to Boston reaching the NBA championship series. He not only swiped Thomas' ill-advised pass, but fed Dennis Johnson beautifully for the winning basket. Bird's theft might rank up there with John Havlicek's steal of Philadelphia 76ers pass that locked up the 1965 Eastern Division championship for Boston.

championship basketball.

That's Celtic basketball. That's

BIRD IS THE one reason I'll be watching the NBA playoffs from here on out. Until now, I felt compelled to watch the NBA only because it's in my job description to keep informed on sports.

The NBA is boring, at least until the playoffs. I can think of many reasons I have not tuned in:

• Good pro basketball is far less interesting than good college basketball. More specifically, the NCAA tournament is far more intriguing than the NBA playoffs.

• The pre-championship series playoffs are a mere formality. Don't the Celtics and Lakers always meet in the final?

 Skip Caray announcing basketball is worse than Skip Caray announcing baseball.

• If I wanted to see a fight, I'd rerun the Leonard-Hagler bout or watch the Stanley Cup playoffs. Doesn't it seem like Laimbeer or Danny Ainge is involved in every NBA scrape?

 The Celtics whined too much about their injuries.

The Los Angeles Lakers are disgustingly dominant and the championship series will be theirs. Even some Celtic fans believe it to be so.

YOU HAD TO feel for the Pistons Tuesday night. Thomas made an awfully difficult jumper over Jerry Sichting to put Detroit ahead by a point and when Bird's drive to the basket failed, it appeared Boston would suffer a rare, crucial home

With Game 6 scheduled for the Silverdome, it looked like the Pistons might knock off the weary Celtics and earn the right to become the Lakers' victims.

It may still be so, but Larry Bird's steal and assist did more than give Boston a win and a 3-2 series lead.

· Specifically, it did two things. It took a whole lot of sting out of Detroit, and it was another of example of Bird's greatness.

The latter was the more interesting. For a change, it made the NBA playoffs worth watching.

Game 5 is gone, but not Detroit's self-confidence

BOSTON (AP) - Stunned by a last-second loss, the Detroit Pistons returned home disappointed but not defeated in their NBA playoff series with the Boston

"It hurts, but I know our basketball team. We will come back," Pistons' guard Isiah Thomas said. "We'll bounced out of his recliner, be fine in Detroit. I have no doubts."

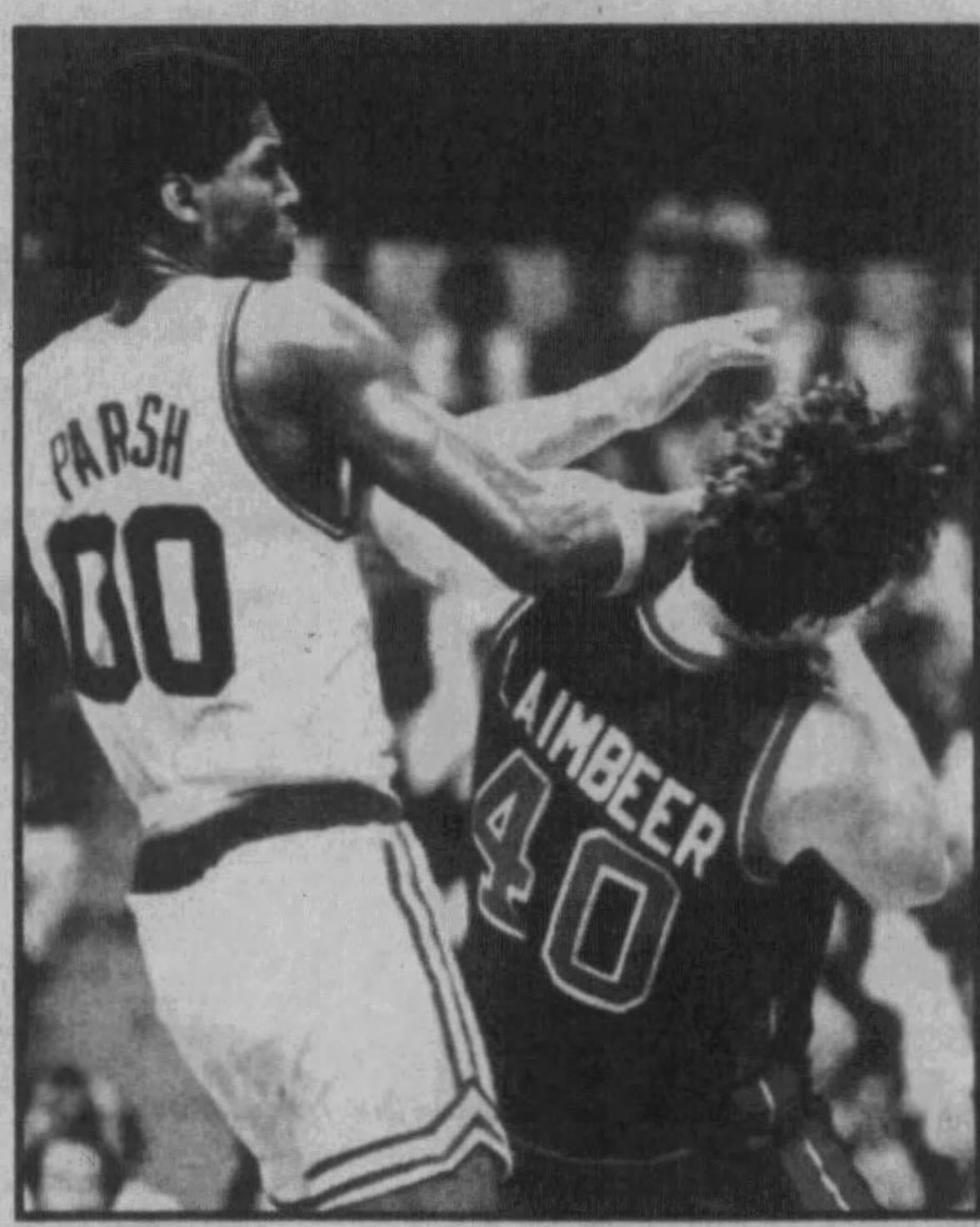
They better be fine for Game 6 tonight when Boston, which leads the Eastern Conference final 3-2, can clinch a berth in the championship round against the Los Angeles Lakers. That opportunity appeared to be Detroit's until the last five seconds of the fifth game Tuesday night.

The Pistons were ahead 107-106. Thomas, who had decided to leave Indiana following no turnovers in his previous two games, was inbounding the ball from the sidelines in the backcourt after it went out of bounds off Boston's Jerry Sichting.

> "We needed a great big play," Celtics' forward Kevin McHale said. They got it from Larry Bird. He cut in front of Bill Laimbeer, intercepted Thomas' lob pass and fed the ball to Dennis Johnson, who sank the winning layup

> with one second remaining for a 108-107 victory. "I'll put that on top" of all Bird's outstanding plays, Boston assistant coach Chris Ford said, "because Larry makes a great defensive play and then makes a great

> > • Please turn to 2C: Pistons



AP photo

EXPENSIVE PUNCH: This pounding of Detroit's Bill Laimbeer cost Boston Celtics center Robert Parish a \$7,500 fine and a one-game suspension for Game 6 tonight at the Pontiac Silverdome. Parish reinjured an ankle in Game 5 and wasn't expected to play tonight anyway.

State meet holds similar meaning for 3 area preps

By J.R. Ogden Gazette sportswriter

The state track and field meet means different things to most participants.

But for three Gazette-area preps, the trip to Des Moines Friday and Saturday has similar meaning. All three - Rob Wise of West Liberty, Robert Cook of owa City Regina and Jeff Wallerich of Sigourney -

Wise won last year's Class 3A 200-meter dash in 22.72 seconds and was fourth in the 100 dash. Cook, the

will be trying to add to their gold collection.

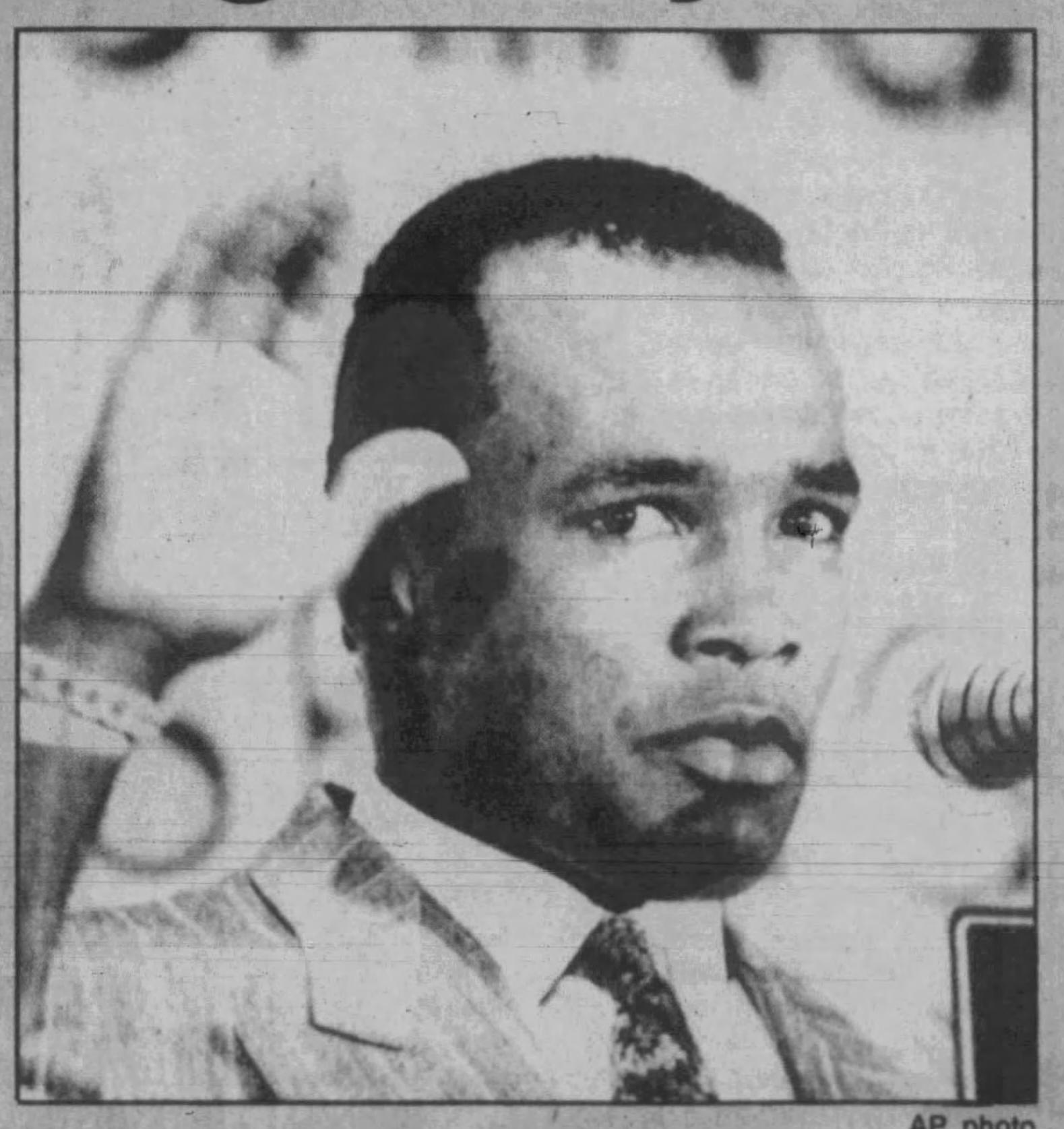
Qualifiers, meet schedule in Fine Print / page 6C

only junior in the bunch, won the 2A 800 run in 1 minute, 59.4 seconds. Wallerich won the 2A 200 dash in 1985 and was fourth in the 100 and fifth in the 200 last

All three have had to handle the pressure of being a state champ the entire season, and all have responded well.

• Please turn to 5C: Preps

Sugar Ray retires - again



AP photo

Sugar Ray Leonard gestures during Wednesday's news conference at which he announced his retirement from boxing.

Leonard: 'There's no one out there to give me that motivation' to fight

WASHINGTON (AP) - Sugar Ray Leonard retired from boxing again Wednesday, saying his victory over Marvelous Marvin Hagler had satisifed the burning desire that had driven him back to the

Hagler's camp asked Leonard to reconsider and give Hagler a chance to regain his middleweight

It was the chance to fight Hagler on April 6 that brought a financially sound Leonard out of his second retirement because meeting Hagler "was something I had to do." He won a split decision in the Las Vegas, Nev., bout and became the World Boxing Council middleweight champion.

"There's no one out there to give me that motivation," Leonard said at a press conference. "For me to perform, it takes a stimulus.

"Hagler was motivation for me. Hearns was motivation for me. But that doesn't stand anymore. . . I'm going to try to retire, to give it a shot.

"It's over now. That burning desire that I complain about has been taken care of, so I'm retiring. Right now, I'm at peace of mind." Leonard, 31, said he has no desire for a rematch

• Please turn to 2C: Leonard

Harmon seking immunity

Ex-Hawkeye back expected to testify in Chicago probe

ATLANTA (AP) — Running back onnie Harmon of the Buffalo Bills has formally requested immunity from prosecution in a Chicago federal grand jury's investigation of New York agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom, The Atlanta Constitution reported.

Harmon's attorney, Martin Rauch, has asked for immunity after the U.S. attorney's office in Chicago handling the case informed him that Harmon is subject to indictment for fraud and tax evasion because of his dealings with Walters and Bloom, the paper said in its Thursday editions.

Harmon, a former University of wa running back, is among 60 athletes who have been or will be subpoenaed to testify before the grand jury. He could be called June

9 or June 16, The Constitution said. Harmon owes Walters more than \$54,000 in money advanced to him dating back to his junior season at the University of Iowa, according to a suit Walters has filed against the player for breach of contract.

The dispute between them will be tried in a National Football League Players Association grievance hearing June 10 that could lead to the union's decertification of Walters' agency.

asks for immunity because the D.A. is threatening everybody," said Rauch, who met last week with U.S. Attorney Anton Valukas and Assistant U.S. Attorney Howard M. Pearl.

"It's not just Ronnie. Other attorneys are doing the same thing. When they go in there, that's the first time these athletes are told, 'You may be subject to prosecu-

Attorneys who have spoken with Valukas or Pearl have reported athletes are being told they are subject to one year of imprisonment for fraud and tax evasion, The Constitution said.



Gazette photo by John McIvor

Reds shortstop Brian Robinson (1) awaits a sliding David Morrow (35) of Burlington on Morrow's unsuccessful stolen-base attempt in the second inning Wednesday night.

Rain halts Reds, Expos in 12th

By Al Hall

Gazette sportswriter

Cedar Rapids and Burlington played 11 innings without deciding anything in Midwest League baseball at Memorial Stadium Wednesday night.

Burlington did its part in the top of the 12th

by scoring two runs, but Mother Nature intervened with one out in the bottom of the inning, carrying through on her game-long threat by dumping a heavy rain and sending both teams scurrying for shelter. The game was suspended with one out in

the Cedar Rapids' 12th and Brian Robinson on "Basically, everybody who goes in first base after a single. It will be picked up tonight at 7 with the regularly scheduled nineinning game to follow.

The Reds got outstanding pitching in this one, but left 10 baserunners stranded, four in scoring position.

The telltale play during regulation came in the fifth, when the Reds completed a comeback from a 2-0 deficit but missed a chance to tie.

Robinson reached base to start the Cedar Rapids fifth on one of Burlington third baseman Jeff Oller's three errors. After Keith Lockhart struck out, Brooks Shumake singled. Robinson scored and Shumake moved to third

on Cal Cain's single. Don Wakamatsu then lofted a soft fly ball into short center field. Burlington center

fielder Cory Viltz made the catch and gunned down Shumake, who had tagged, with a strong throw to the plate.

Viltz walked to open the game, stole second and moved to third on Robert Gaylor's sacrifice. He scored on Cedar Rapids pitcher Dusty Rogers' wild pitch.

Burlington's Doug Duke cracked a lead off homer in the second and David Morrow singled later in that inning. Those proved to be the only hits off Rogers, who turned in a sterling seven-inning stint.

In seven innings, Rogers recorded 10 strikeouts. He closed his night by retiring the last 16 Burlington batters he faced. He left after the seventh with a sore neck.

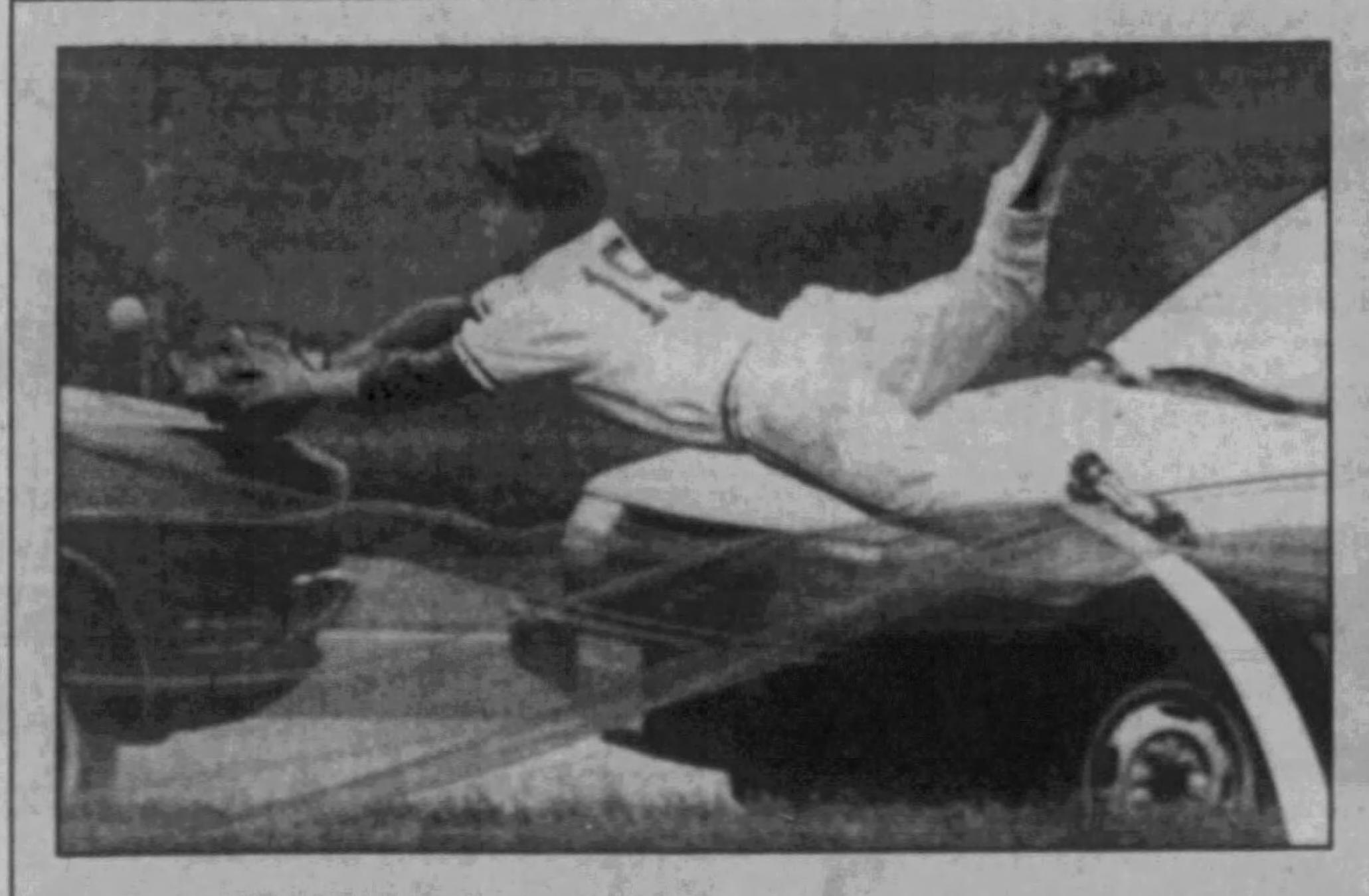
"It just doesn't feel as good," Rogers said of pitching well with no decision. "It doesn't feel the same.

"In the early innings, I didn't have much control. Then my arm loostened up. I don't keep track of stats during a game but the home run really fired me up."

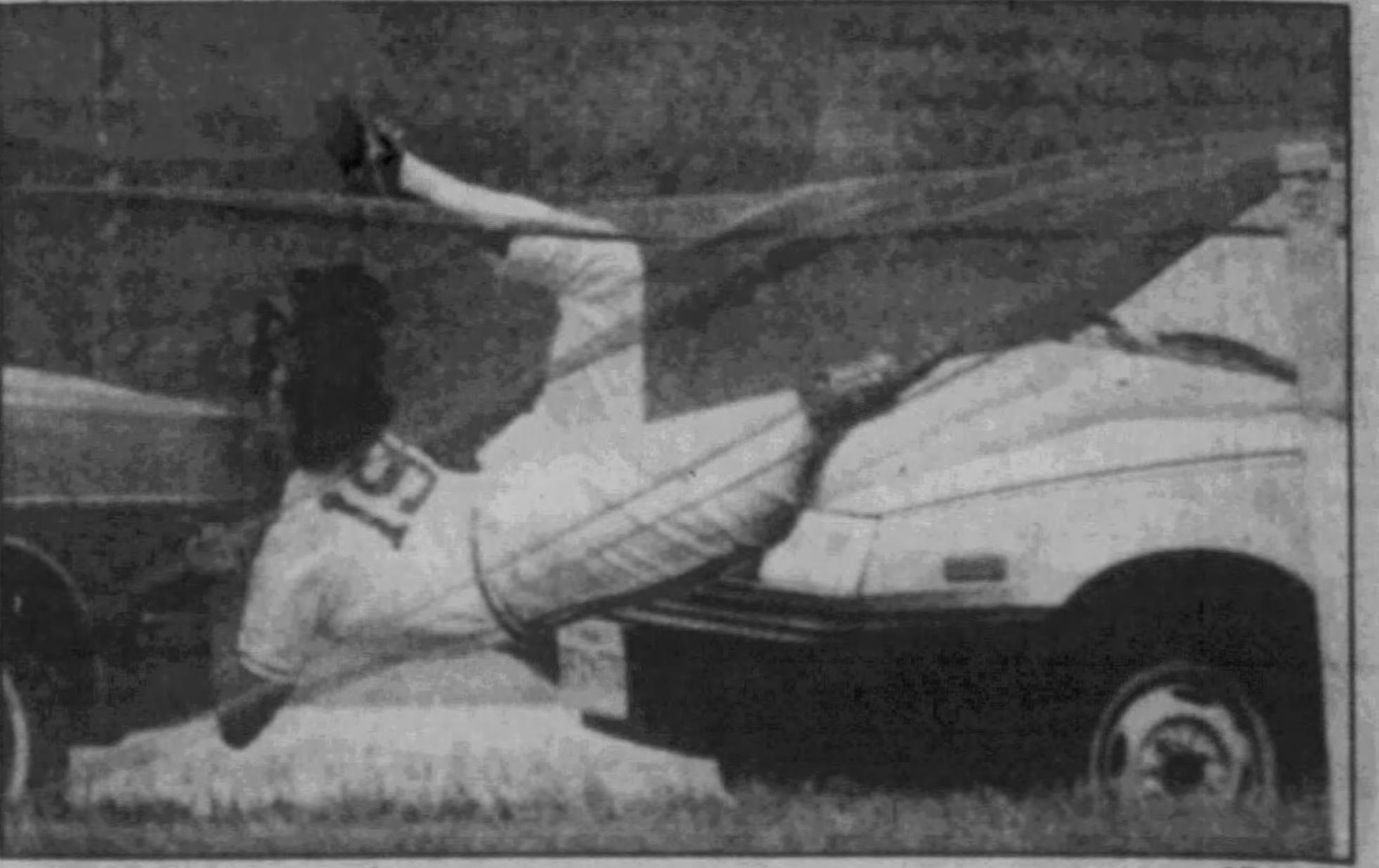
Frank Silverio led off the Cedar Rapids third with his third home run of the season.

Phil Dale pitched three innings of two-hit relief for Cedar Rapids, striking out four. Scott Willis came on in the 11th and stands to be the loser if the score holds up.

Jose Alou slapped a two-run single to right to give Burlington the lead in the top of the



A VALIANT EFFORT, BUT... Jeff Simmons, the left-fielder on Maryland's Mount Saint Josseph High School's baseball team, gives it his best effort, flying through and over the outfield fence while trying to catch a seventh-inning three-run



AP photo

homer by Don Nace of Calvert Hall High during a Maryland Scholastic Association playoff game. Saint Josspeh's won the game, 7-5, but all Simmons got for his trouble was a trip to a local hospital, where he was treated and released.