

By Skip Myslenski & Linda Kay

The bats were positioned side by side on a table, and each bore the name of the man who once swung it. Jody Davis. Keith Moreland. Ron Cey. Bob Dernier. Larry Bowa. Leon Durham. Gary Matthews. Ryne Sandberg. They were the eight starters who took the Cubs to the top of the National League East in 1984. They did it at about the same time that factory worker Mike Wittkowski won \$40 million in the lottery, which, up to that point, was the largest lottery prize in history. Last week, those two disparate events became entwined, when, for sentimental as well as philanthropic reasons, Wittkowski laid claim to the bats at a Cubs Care auction to benefit cancer research at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. The multimillionaire paid a rather modest \$1,000, and as he eyed his new possessions with obvious delight, said: "I waited for these. I kind of thought about bidding on Andre Dawson's bat, but I'm from the old camp." Wittkowski said he planned to display the bats in his pool room and have a friend who is a carpenter build him a rack. It won't be fancy, and it won't be off limits to those visiting his Palatine home. "I want people to take them out and look at them," he said.

A fight with no name

Since no title is at stake Monday night, promoters of the bout between Gerry Cooney and Michael Spinks have creatively labeled it the Peoples Championship. But wait a minute. Now comes a bulletin from the fledgling Universal Boxing Association that says UBA plans to recognize Monday's victor as its heavyweight champion of the world. UBA president Dick Burton admits that the organization came into the picture rather late and therefore won't be able to officially sanction the bout under its existing rules and regulations. Nevertheless, the winner will get the UBA championship belt—for what it's worth.

A ritzy night

The War at the Shore can be seen on dry land at several closed circuit outlets around Chicago Monday night, but perhaps the most intriguing place to view the Cooney-Spinks fight will be the ballroom of the Ritz-Carlton, where a black-tie optional dinner comes before the main event and hours of dancing come after it. Adding more dash to the evening is the scheduled appearance of former mayoral candidate Eddie Vrdolyak, who'll officiate at a pre-fight auc-

Bigger isn't better

Much has been made about the size advantage Cooney has over Spinks: Cooney is 6 feet 7 inches and weighs 238 pounds, while Spinks is nearly five inches shorter and 30 pounds lighter. But differences between heavyweights have not proven significant through the years. James J. Corbett weighed only 178 when he became the first heavyweight champion of the gloved era to knock out the John L. Sullivan, who weighed 212. (He did it, by the way, in the 21st round). According to Corbett, who made the comments 60 years ago: "Little men whip big men because the real advantage in ring encounters is with the little fellows. This may seem a rather startling statement, but it is true. The matching of a big man with a much smaller man forces the big fellow to fight from an unnatural and unfamiliar position and so kills off much of the real effectiveness of the big

Takes all kinds

Fifteen years ago, ABC Sports director Terry Jastrow bought and wore a 1972 U.S. Open golf shirt the Monday before that tournament opened at Pebble Beach. Six days later, ratings-booster Jack Nicklaus was the tournament's champion, ABC concluded a successful telecast and a tradition was born. Yep! You guessed it. Jastrow has worn that shirt on the Monday—and only on the Monday—before the Open opened ever since then, which means he will be slipping into it again today. So happy crystal anniversary, golf shirt.

Understand thy neighbor

Volunteers working at the Pan Am Games have an opportunity to broaden their horizons considerably. The Hispano American Multi- Service Center in Indianapolis is offering to teach Spanish to any volunteer who cares to learn. The Center's program encourages participants to explore the culture behind the Spanish language, which is also an aim of the organizers of the Games. They've scheduled a Latin American film series leading up to the event to run in concert with a Latin American art exhibit at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

News, notes and nonsense

Pele holds a soccer clinic in Coveleski Stadium in South Bend, Ind., during the International Special Olympics' Summer Games in August. Pele also serves on the coaching staff for the Games. ... Wayne Presley and wife Susan, Steve McMichael and wife Debra, Maury Buford and wife Dana, Shawon Dunston and his fiance, and Lee Smith and wife Diane play "The Newlywed Game" Tuesday night at Shennanigan's to benefit Cubs Care. ... Now that Bryant Gumbel is officially set as the prime-time host of NBC's Olympic telecasts from Seoul, you can anticipate these other assignments: Dick Enberg, the network's signature sportscaster, will handle gymnastics and some basketball and serve as a roving "Venue Host," who shows up at the site of the day's top events. And Bob Costas, NBC's other high-profile announcer, reportedly is in line to serve as late-night host.

And finally, thunder and lightning forced 1,500 guests under a giant circus tent during the Cubs Care benefit at Wrigley Field last Thursday. In the midst of the heaviest downpour, the band resorted to a bit of whimsy and struck up "Stormy Weather."

Live! From Merrillville! It's Mike Ditka!

By Mike Conklin

On cue, he popped out of the red, velvet-like curtains, walked to the microphone in the spotlight and, for the next 90 minutes, had the audience eating out of his hand.

"And now, direct from Lake Forest, heeeeeere's Mike!!"

Mike Ditka has been in front of many different groups in many different settings, but Friday night the coach showed that the Bears have not left every rhinestone unturned in their quest to dazzle America.

This time, the coach was performing in the Holiday Star Resort in Merrillville, Ind.—a regular Midwest stop on the entertainment map for big-name nightclub stars.

What next, John Madden and the Monotones? Ray Meyer and The four Seasons?

"I'm not going to sing and dance. I hope none of you were deceived about that," said Ditka, schmoozing in the Holiday Star's VIP Lounge shortly before going on stage. "Maybe if you play a polka, I will."

Sandwiched between Holiday Star dates for Kenny Rogers and Three Dog Night, the Bears coach, at \$10.95 a non (or \$8.95 a youth), drew a curious crowd of 1,800 to see him on the same stage where Tom Jones makes 'em swoon and Liberace made 'em smile.

"Mike Ditka Speaks on Being a Winner Through Attitude, Character & Enthusiasm," read the newspaper ads.

Or ACE, already available in video. This live performance wasn't Hal Holbrook doing Mark Twain, and it definitely wasn't Willie Gault in a cameo ballet appearance. He didn't use the Refrigerettes for a back-up chorus line, and, thank goodness, he didn't break any clipboards.

Did it play? Give the man four stars, judging from the rapt attention of what could have been a tough crowd. There were women in their best evening clothes sitting next to beefy, young sunburned football players in cutoffs and T-shirts. Two busioads of electronics salesmen were there from Elmhurst.

There were Pop Warner football coaches, dads with sons, educators, doctors, lawyers and plenty of "locally prominent people," according to one observer. It's even possible hotel guests attending the big Salvation Army convention may have snuck over, too.

At various points, they barked like junkyard dogs, laughed at the inside humor and interrupted with hearty ap-

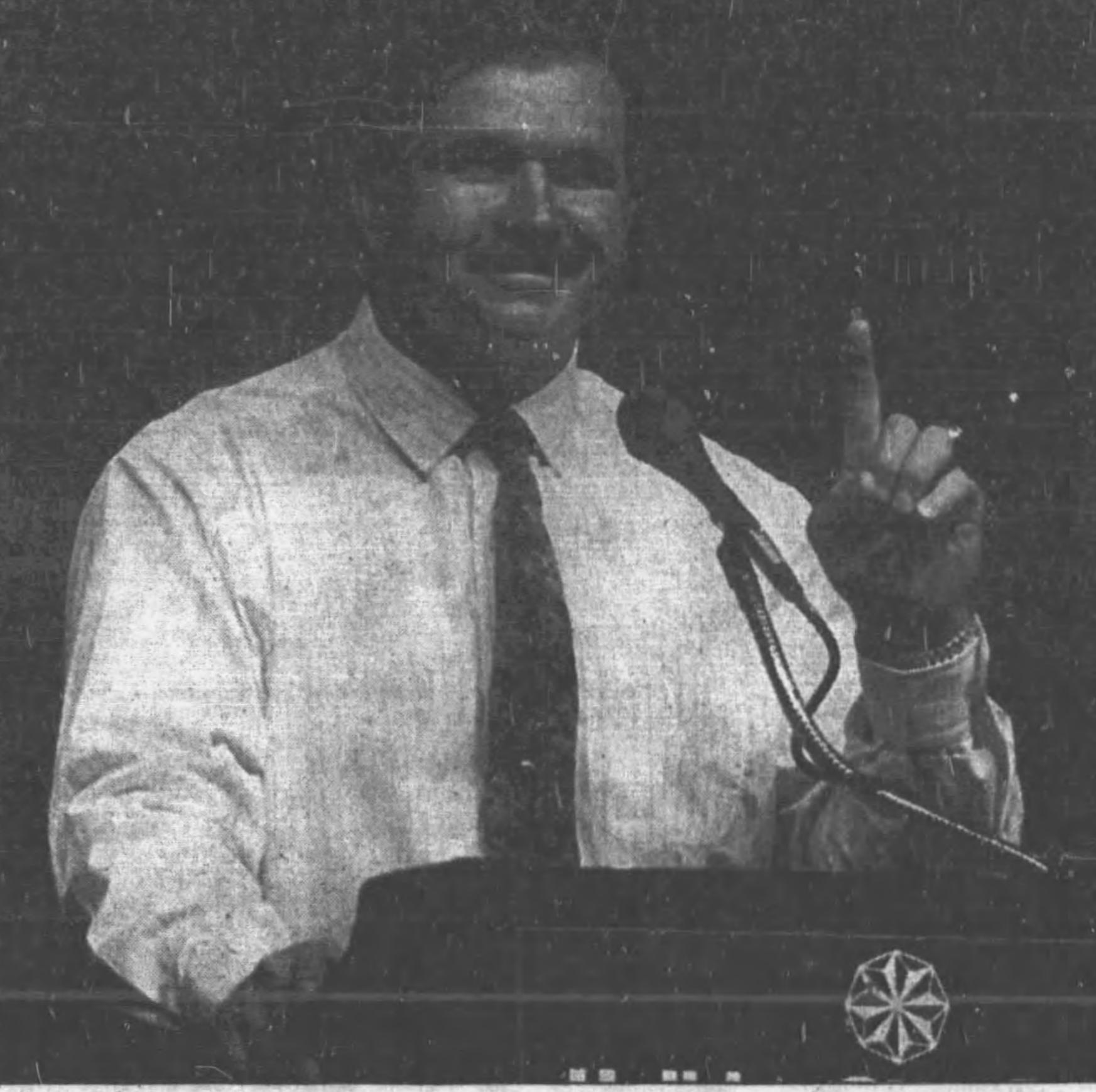
The women didn't toss room keys or undergarments on stage, but several did pass books up to the coach for auto-

When Ditka opened by comparing his hometown of Aliquippa, Pa., to nearby Gary, you could close your eyes and almost imagine he was guesting on

Johnny Carson. "How tough was Aliquippa? Our definition of quick hands was a guy who could steal hubcaps off a car that was moving." [Laughter.]

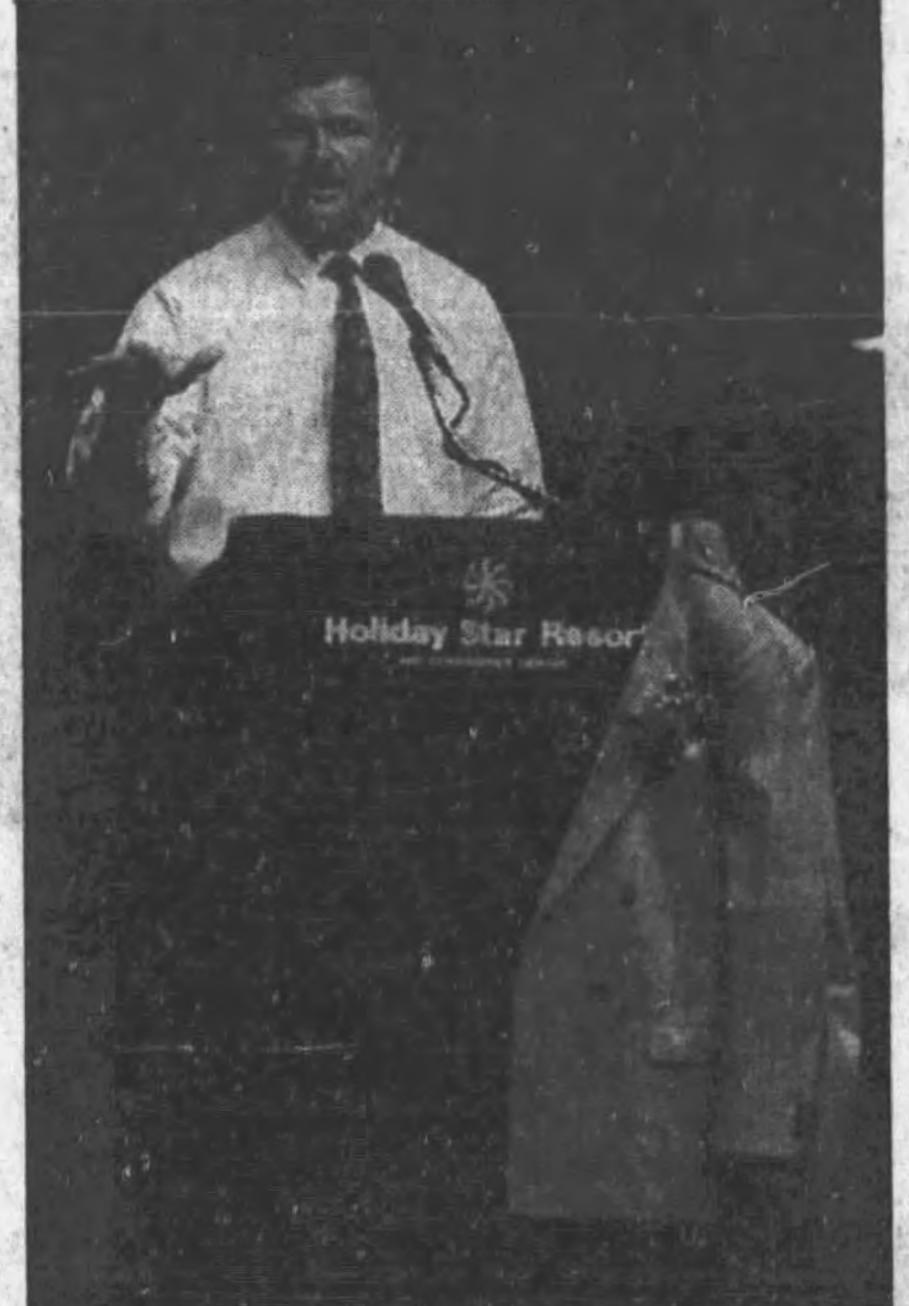
"There were some famous people who came from Aliquippa, just like you have Hank Stram and Tony Zale and so many other famous people who've come from this area. You might remember some from Aliquippa.

"There was a guy named Pete Maravich, who led the NBA in scoring. [Applause.] Then there was a guy who didn't play sports, but he made some



Tribune photo by Ed Wagner Jr.

Bears coach Mike Ditka: no song and dance, but still a hit in Merrillville.



"Success is not permanent, and failure is not fatal," Ditka tells crowd.

pretty good music. Henry Mancini. [Applause.] Actually, Henry's from West Aliquippa, but after he got famous we moved him into town. [Laughter.]

"Of course, the most famous football player from Aliquippa is a guy named Tony Dorsett. [Applause.] Ditka, Dorsett. A lot of people liked to compare us. I can understand that. [Snickers.]

"I thought about it a long time. You look at it this way: Both of our names started with 'D.' Before I changed barbers, we both had curly hair. [Laughter.] "We're both Ukrainian. [Laughter.] See, Tony's real name was

Dorsett-ski. [Laughter.] We both attended the University of Pittsburgh. And we both worked for the Cowboys.

"I've analyzed this over the years, and let me tell you the differences between Ditka and Dorsett. It's simply 17 greater and a million-and-a-half dollars. You figure out who's got which." [Laughter.]

For 50 minutes, Ditka, rarely looking at a note, was as smooth as a long run by Walter Payton. The coach kept it rolling with anecdotes, jokes, and observations that were informative, funny and poignant.

He got preachy—"Tough times don't last, just tough people." "Success is not permanent and failure is not fatal."and it worked. "I read the Boy Scout Creed when I was 9 years old, and it makes more sense to me now."

Ditka never clubbed anybody over the head with his politics or religion, but by quoting George Halas, Vince Lombardi, Abraham Lincoln, Lee-Iacocca and Ralph Waldo Emerson he got his feelings across.

Naturally, every reference to Jim McMahon drew a response.

"This is my sixth year with the Bears. Jim McMahon has been with the Bears six years, too, and people say we don't communicate. That's not true. We've talked four times." [Laughter.]

"Everybody asks me: What kind of a relationship do you have with Jim McMahon? I say it's strange and wonderful. He's strange and I'm wonderful." [Laughter.]

"I'm going to tell you one story, and Jim knows I tell this story and he doesn't mind it. 1985 was such a great year for the Bears [Applause. Cheers.] ... and you remember one game that I really think was the catalyst. It was the third game, and it was on a Thursday night against Minnesota.

"You'll probably remember it as the greatest-coached game in the history of the NFL. [Laughter.] You're going to

remember that I held Jim McMahon out until midway in the third quarter until we got down by nine points. Then I got very smart and put him into the game and he threw three touchdown

passes and we won the game. [Applause. Cheers.] "Then we come back to Soldier Field to play the Washington Redskins and we beat them 45-10, and Jim McMahon throws four touchdown passes. He completes 75 percent of his

passes and there's no turnovers. "This guy, for two weeks, he's the best quarterback in football, and nobody can argue that point.

"Then, you may not remember, but the next week we go to Tampa Bay to play the Bucs, and Jim overthrew Willie Gault for two touchdowns. He fum oled and lost the ball twice. And he threw three interceptions.

"We're behind by 10 points at halftime. We come into the locker room, and I'm not a guy who minces his words. [Laughter.] I walked up to Jim and I said: 'You stink.' [Laughter.] "He didn't say anything. But he just kind of looked at me and it made me so darned mad and, of course, he had

"I said, 'Jim, can you explain to me how you can be the best quarterback in football for two weeks and now for one half you're the worst?' He never said a word. He just looked at me. "I said, 'Jim, you're either ignorant

those stupid sunglasses on. [Laughter.]

or apathetic,' and he just kept looking at me. Finally, I said: 'Jim, which is it? Are you ignorant or apathetic?'

"Well, he kept looking at me and then he said: 'I don't know and I don't care.' [Laughter.]"

Ditka opened the last 40 minutes to questions from the audience. Some highlights: On his relationship with Bears Presi-

dent Mike McCaskey: "I think he's a fine man, and he's my boss." [Laugh-

"I wouldn't have gotten rid of Jerry [Vainisi], I know that." Our defense last year wasn't as

reckless as Buddy's [Ryan]." "I would've kept Brian Baschnagel as a coach, but I don't sign the

No one worked harder than George Allen's staff. I didn't say George Allen. I said his staff."

On McMahon's comeback: "I'd bet on him. He wants to prove a lot of things to a lot of people, especially On Walter Payton's role in '87:

"We'll run a lot of two-halfback of-

fense, and once in a while we'll use him as a fullback." "If they [NFL players] go on strike,

it would be a big mistake." "We'll have five quarterbacks in

camp, and we'll keep three." "I hope the [new] stadium doesn't leave the city. If you take it out to the

suburbs, you'll have problems." Ditka may not be ready to tackle Las Vegas, but Chris Ferraro, Holiday Star's assistant general manager, said

he's encouraged to try more appearances by sports stars. "It would have to be someone special, like Mike, who's got both the

credentials and the ability to pull it off," said Ferraro. "One person we're interested in is Bobby Knight. We've had some talks."

And now, direct from the chair factory, heeeeeeeere's Bobby!!

BRIEFS

Boris Becker rallied to beat Tim Mayotte 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4 Sunday and reach the final of the Queen's Club tennis tournament in London. Becker will play Jimmy Connors Monday for the title. . . . The men's and women's finals of the Scottish Grass Court Championships were canceled because of rain in Edinburgh. Anders Jarryd led Andres Gomez 3-2 when play was stopped. The women's final between Gabriela Sabatini and Lisa Bonder never got started. Ivan Lendl, who was scheduled to play in one of the semifinals, withdrew because of the flu. ... Pam Shriver rallied to beat Larissa Savchenko 4-6, 6-2, 6-2 and win the Edgbaston Cup for the fourth consecutive year in Birmingham, England. . . . Top-seeded Kent Carlsson beat Emilio Sanchez 6-2, 6-1 in the final of the Bologna (Italy) tournament.

Ex-Grambling tight end Arthur Wells has been subpoenaed by a federal grand jury in Chicago investigating racketeering, extortion and fraud in sports agentry, according to the New Orleans Times-Picayune. Agents Norby Walters, Lloyd Bloom and Terry Bolar are targets of the investigation. Wells said Bolar made payments during the 1986 college season to him and two teammates, including defensive end Sean Smith, who was drafted on the fourth round by the Bears. Smith said George Martin received the Byron honor. . . . Former Green Bay Packers



Danny Van Haute is treated for his injuries after falling during the U.S. Pro Cycling Championship in Philadelphia. Tom Schuler won, beating Cesare Cipollini. Ex-champ Eric Heiden dropped out during the race.

the FBI questioned him in May but that he hasn't been subpoenaed. "I met Bolar on a personal basis. I did some favors for him, he did some favors for

White Humanitarian Award at the National Football League Players Association awards dinner in Chicago. Former Atlanta center Jeff Van Note and Cincinnati tackle Anthony Munoz were the New York Giants defensive end other finalists for the public-service

linebacker Ray Nitschke says he doesn't appreciate the way Brian Bosworth is trying to dictate his future in the National Football League. Seattle chose Bosworth in Friday's supplemental draft. He said he prefers to sit out a season rather than play for the Seahawks. He wrote to all but five teams, telling them he wouldn't play for them. "I don't like him telling franchises he won't play for them," Nitschke said. "He should be happy anybody wants him. I like people that are more dedicated and keep their mouth

Jim Cleamons, 36, has resigned as an assistant basketball coach at Ohio State to pursue other interests. The resignation takes effect June 30. . . . Argyris Kabouris sank two free throws with four seconds left in overtime to give Greece a 103-101 victory over the Soviet Union to win the European Basketball Championship in Piraeus,

The professor who won a lawsuit charging Georgia with favoring athletes has given the school high marks for changing its ways. "The news has changed from the scandal to congratulations," said Jan Kemp, who won a \$1.08 million settlement after she was fired in 1982. Kemp won her job back, and she returned to work last July.

TANK MCNAMARA













