

SPORTSPEOPLE

Odds & **INS**



By Skip Myslenski & Linda Kay

An offer he couldn't refuse: Rocky, er, Cobra, er, Rambo called, and that is why Lyle Alzado will not be the guest analyst Sunday night on ESPN's telecast of the Raiders-Cowboys game. Alzado—the former defensive end of the Raiders, Browns and Broncos—originally was set for that role, but he bowed out last week after he was offered (and had to report for) a role in whatever "Rambo III" ends up being officially called. His replacement: Another former defensive end for the Raiders and the man many consider an original Rambo, John Matuszak.

Quite a memory

Before we were marooned in Indianapolis, we mentioned here that Comiskey Park announcer Bob Finnegan would be taking on the same duties at Dyche Stadium this fall during Northwestern's football games. That brought a letter from Gary Bailey of Menomonic, Wis., who recalled listening to Bert Wilson do Cub games in the mid-to-late 1940s. But Bailey then went on, "When the Cubs had a traveling day, the station would carry a 'Game of the Day,' and a Bob Finnegan would recreate this game off a ticker-tape in the studio. Is this the same Bob Finnegan?"

It might be, it could be ...

"Oh, my, it is," Finnegan replied in his familiar mellifluous tones. "I had just gotten out of the Navy and off the Armed Forces Radio Service in the Aleutian Islands when I worked with Bert." The setting, Finnegan recalled, was a room in the WIND studios then in the Wrigley Building, and the game would be any of those being played that afternoon. "We'd get a small tape off a spool [which, in code, gave the play-by-play of the game], then try to make it sound like we were there. Not to fool anyone—they all knew we weren't—but to entertain. We had two records. One of regular crowd noise that we used pitch after pitch, then another of crowd noise recorded at a higher pitch that we would use, say, for an extra-base hit. There were times, though, when the service broke down, and then you had to add some balls and strikes until it got straightened out. And when you were the only announcer and a game went 2½, 3 hours with live commercials, it gave you a good workout. It was hard to come up with that many different ways to describe a ground ball to third."

The reaction

"The whole bubble will burst in college athletics if this prevails. This is another step toward destruction," said one athletic director, and another added: "This is a grave danger to all athletics. It's a very disturbing thing. It's the parents eating their young, so to speak."

"This could eliminate all superstars from college competition," said one college coach, and another suggested pro scouts be kept off campuses before he added, "The real solution to it is for those pros to act like decent people."

Even "the normally serene commissioner of the Big Eight" (as one magazine described him) was outraged enough to declare: "All they are ever thinking about is their own selfish interests. We in college athletics should show up the pros for what they are. I'm for going to war against them, using legal and all other means."

All that furor came in April of 1971 ...

In the present

The NFL holds a well-publicized supplemental draft on Friday that includes Ohio State's Cris Carter and Pitt's Charles Gladman, who lost their remaining college eligibility after accepting money from agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom. "I think the NFL has opened up a whole new can of worms with this decision," said Ohio State coach Earle Bruce, and—after barring pro scouts from his training camp and campus—Pitt coach Mike Gottfried added, "We're not going to cooperate with them anymore."

"What has happened is a major setback for the relationships between college football and the NFL," said Ohio State Athletic Director Rich Bay, and Michigan football coach Bo Schembechler added that the decision opens the door for college players to "rob, steal, commit murders and rapes."

This, too, will pass

We have nothing but contempt for Walters, Bloom and others agents who operate similarly, but Carter and Goldman were barely out of diapers when a judge's ruling in the Spencer Haywood case effectively forced the NBA to abandon its four-year rule and to draft college undergraduates who sought entrance into the league. But—in case you haven't noticed and in spite of all those doomsayers—that decision had such a deleterious effect on college basketball that each of the teams that appears in the Final Four now receives a modest \$1 million.

P.S. That college coach who urged pros to act decently in 1971 was John McKay, who went on to be the first coach of the Tampa Bay Bucs. And that normally serene commissioner of the Big Eight was Wayne Duke, who is now the normally serene commissioner of the Big 10.

And finally ...

... Ooops! Swedish prime minister Ingvar Carlsson will be visiting Chicago next month as part of an official state visit, not on behalf of Scandinavian Airlines and the Swedish Tourist Bureau as we mentioned Wednesday. Carlsson is traveling to the United States at the invitation of President Reagan and will stop in Boston and Washington, D.C. as well as in Chicago during his stay in this country.

When it comes to sponsorship, cyclists can bank on him

Behind every large corporation's involvement in a sports event, there usually can be found a chief executive officer with a particular interest in the activity.

Meet Loren E. Smith, who has been CEO for Citicorp Savings of Illinois for less than a year and already he has the company sponsoring one of the most ambitious Chicagoland bike races in years.

It's next month's Citi-Circuit Bicycle Challenge, a three-day series for pros with races in Downers Grove, Evanston and Chicago. "Let's hope the weather gets better," said Smith.

The Michigan native can't control Mother Nature, but he has had plenty of experience at sponsoring cycling events while working his way up corporate ladders in marketing.

Last summer, as general manager for Citicorp's Northeast Division, Smith was a mover-and-shaker behind a highly successful pro race on New York City's streets.

"The race played very nicely into our [Citicorp] strategy," he said. "We believe in ourselves as a retailer as opposed to a bank. As such, we have to offer services."

The timing appears excellent for a company to get interested in cycling, which has experienced great growth in the last year.

In New York, Smith helped organize large, regular citizen rides encompassing all the city's boroughs. The upcoming Citi-Circuit will conclude Sept. 13 with a large noncompetitive, family-oriented rally in downtown Chicago.

"A broad cross-section of people ride

bikes," he said. "It cuts through a very wide age spectrum. It is a natural for us to get involved."

It is also fun for Smith.

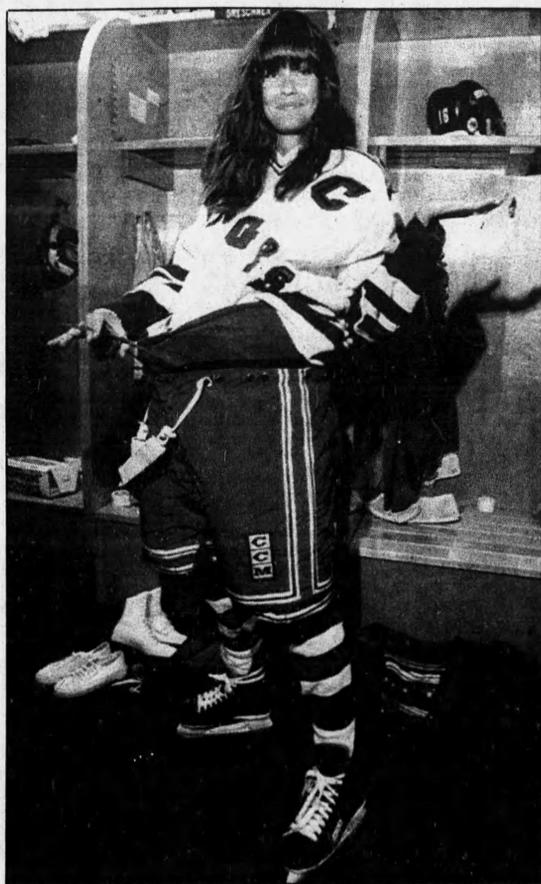
A fitness buff who was a miler in high school and college, he turned to cycling after years of running in marathons and other road races. "The older I got, all that orthopedic trauma began to take its toll," he explained.

He lives in the Lincoln Park area, but still manages to get in at least a hundred miles a week of biking in addition to running several miles in the morning. "I'm part of that crowd you see on weekends riding up Sheridan Road on the North Shore," he said.

Smith expects to be back on track after returning from vacation—a bike trip in Michigan.



Citicorp's Loren E. Smith is a CEO who likes to spin his wheels. Well, in a manner of speaking.



Now tell the truth—at first you thought this really was New York Rangers captain Ron Greschner, right? Well he won't mind sharing his uniform. That's his wife, model Carol Alt, trying it on for size at Greschner's hockey camp in Rye, N.Y.

Only 9 months to go before the next Indy 500

Good news, Baltimore. The Colts are in trouble with ticket sales in Indianapolis. Three consecutive losing seasons apparently have taken their toll.

For the first time since 1984, when Robert Irsay moved his National Football League team from Baltimore in a midnight switch that infuriated fans in the Maryland city, the Colts are advertising on billboards, radio and television and in newspapers to attract spectators.

It is a far cry from the first season in Indianapolis. In '84, Colts' season tickets were in such demand that the team held a lottery to determine who would get them. The 20,000 people not fortunate enough to get season tickets went on a waiting list.

Capacity crowds of more than 60,000 greeted the Colts for preseason and regular-season play in the first year. Attendance dipped slightly through three losing seasons, reaching a low of 52,783 for the

closing home game against Buffalo last season.

Now, the waiting list has been exhausted. "We have plenty of seats for our two preseason games," Larry Hall, the team's ticket manager, said Wednesday. "Ticket sales for the opening game of the regular season [against Cincinnati] are very tight, and we have tickets for all of our other home games."

"We've still sold over 50,000 season tickets. That's not a big dropoff in terms of percentage. We previously sold around 55,000."

Hall thinks the 1987 schedule, which has the Colts playing only seven of its 16 games against teams that were in the playoffs last year, may be another reason for the drop in ticket sales.

Then again, Indy residents could be just knocked out from all the Pan Am Games excitement.

Teacher sees red over hiring of pro

A Springboro High School teacher in Ohio is challenging the appointment of Cincinnati Reds outfielder Dave Collins as the school's head basketball coach.

Springboro social studies teacher Dave Stuckey filed a lawsuit in Warren County Common Pleas Court, alleging that as a certified teacher he should receive preferential consideration over Collins.

Collins was hired for one year by the Clearcreek school board on Aug. 10.

"On their own merits, Collins has no experience in the school district and he has no certificate," said Thomas Phalen of Cincinnati, Stuckey's attorney. "Dave Stuckey has both the certificate and experience in the school district that's quality experience."

The lawsuit alleges Stuckey has applied unsuccessfully for the job twice since May.

Phalen said the position should not go to Collins simply because he is a pro athlete.

Collins, a Springboro resident, played with the Reds from 1978 to 1981, then played with five other clubs before signing with the Reds again July 2. He previously worked as head basketball coach at Mason High School in southern Warren County.

At SMU, this team has the horses

With no football at Southern Methodist University this year, an enterprising club is trying to replace the team with polo ponies.

The Willow Bend Polo and Hunt Club has invited about 1,600 fraternity and sorority members to polo matches this fall, and those games, along with other events, will try to fill the void left when SMU's 1987 and 1988 football seasons were canceled in the wake of a recruiting scandal.

Polo is the most unusual alternative planned for SMU students facing their first fall without football. School officials and student groups have arranged "a full smorgasbord of programs," said Jim Caswell, dean of student affairs.

Officials hope concerts, plays, lectures, soccer matches and other events will leave no one "feeling lonesome for taking the bus to Texas Stadium," where SMU played its home football games, Caswell said.

'At the time, we were just four guys doing their jobs. We weren't vicious. We weren't antagonizing Joe. And we weren't thrilled about what happened. It wasn't like jumping up and down after hitting your first oil well in the fields.'

—Umpire Steve Palermo, talking about discovering sandpaper on Twins pitcher Joe Niekro

Nebraska makes a pitch in Hall of Famer's behalf

If you're a baseball fan and a sucker for those "historical site" signs along the highways, you'll be in seventh heaven the next time you're tooling down U.S. Hwy. 281 in Nebraska near St. Paul.

A state historical marker is going up later this year to tell the story of Grover Cleveland Alexander, a member of the baseball Hall of Fame who was born in the central Nebraska town of Elba and lived much of his life in St. Paul.

Alexander is "a Nebraskan who hasn't re-



Alexander



Reagan

ceived the fame he deserves," said James Hanson, director of the state's historical society.

Hanson said Alexander's life was a fascinating story of baseball successes and personal problems, including alcoholism and epilepsy.

The pitcher, who had a career record of 373-208 from 1911 to 1930, died of a heart attack in 1950 in a rented room in St. Paul.

Furthermore, President Reagan, in his acting days, once portrayed Alexander in a movie.

BRIEFS

■ Steffi Graf of West Germany and Ivan Lendl of Czechoslovakia were seeded No. 1 Wednesday for the U.S. Open tennis championships, beginning next week in New York. Defending champion Martina Navratilova was seeded second by the U.S. Tennis Association. Chris Evert, a six-time Open champion, was seeded third. Lendl is the top male seed for the second year in a row. Sweden's Stefan Edberg is No. 2, followed by countryman Mats Wilander. . . . The USTA plans to move the U.S. Clay Court Championships from Indianapolis to Wild Dunes, S.C., the Indianapolis Star reported.

■ Texas Atty. Gen. Jim Mattox and the Methodist bishops' committee that investigated SMU's pay-for-play football scandal have negotiated an agreement that will give Mattox access to the committee's files. Mattox is trying to determine whether any civil or criminal laws were violated.

■ Phoenix Suns General Manager Jerry Colangelo is trying to organize a group of investors to exercise an option he holds on purchasing the NBA team, the Phoenix Gazette reported. "It's true the owners are not shopping the team around or are necessarily anxious to sell," the Gazette's source said, "but there is every indication they are ready to listen seriously to a bid by Colangelo." . . . Purdue senior basketball players Jeff Arnold and Dave Stack have been declared academically ineligible for the first half of this season. . . . Indiana guard Tony Freeman, expressing a desire to be closer to his Chicago home, has transferred to Illinois-Chicago. . . . ESPN and the Big 10 extended their contract that gives the network exclusive national cable TV rights to conference basketball games through the 1990-91 season.

■ The Calgary Flames acquired the rights to free-agent defenseman Brad McCrimmon, 28. In exchange for McCrimmon, formerly with the Philadelphia Flyers, the Flames will give up first- and third-round draft choices—one in the 1988 entry draft, the other in 1989.

■ The next America's Cup regatta probably will be held in San Diego, said Gerry Driscoll, the chairman of the committee responsible for selecting the site of the next cup defense. Driscoll said the committee has decided not to consider other bids unless it determines that San Diego is incapable of hosting the event.

■ Authorities said that the thoroughbred Alysheba—this year's winner of the Kentucky Derby and the Preakness—tested negative for drugs in postrace tests after the Travers Saturday despite a rumor he had been medicated for a bleeding condition in violation of New York racing regulations, the Los Angeles Times reported. . . . Drug testing of jockeys, trainers, grooms and other licensees at Suffolk Downs is an unconstitutional invasion of privacy, a Suffolk County (Mass.) Superior Court judge ruled. Judge George A. Sullivan said such testing was "an invasion of major proportions." The state racing commission had put into effect last December a rule allowing random and probable-cause drug testing.

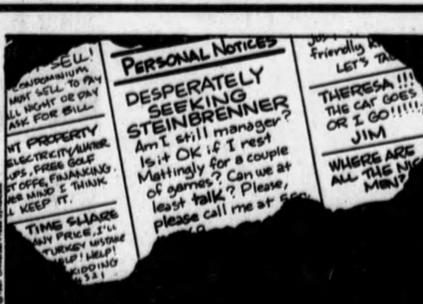
■ Japan's Nobuyuki Tawara won the gold medal in the professionals' sprint at the World Cycling Championships in Vienna. In the women's sprint, defending champ Christa Rothenburger of East Germany, world-record holder Erika Salumay and Natalya Krushelnitskaya—both of the Soviet Union—and Connie Paraskevin-Young of the U.S. reached the semifinals.

■ "Heroe," a 1986 World Cup film produced by Sting owner Lee Stern, is scheduled to make its Spanish-language debut Thursday night at the Mexico Theatre, 2135 N. Milwaukee Ave. The English-language version, with actor Michael Caine as narrator, will follow later this year.

■ Four people filed suit in U.S. District Court in Memphis, seeking an injunction to keep the Liberty Bowl from holding events until it installs handicapped seating as required by state law. Both the Sept. 6 NFL exhibition game between St. Louis and Kansas City and the Sept. 5 Memphis State-Mississippi would be affected.

Compiled by Mike Conklin, John Dowd and Bob Vanderberg from staff, wire reports.

TANK McNAMARA



GIL THORP

