

Evert's brilliance fades into shadow

NEW YORK - No tears, no anger. Just nothing. Nothing there for Chris Evert, even after she'd lost. What it was, she said, was a case of growing old, and what can you do about that? "I've had some awful days this year," she said. But only this one came in the U.S. Open.

Evert walked straight off the tennis court Wednesday to take a seat behind some microphones and answer questions about her loss to 11th-seeded Lori McNeil in the Open quarterfinals. Such circumstances never before applied to Evert, who as a child of 16, ribbons around her ponytail, reached the semifinals at Forest Hills. There she lost to Billie Jean King.

Evert had been in the Open semifinals every year since. She'd won the thing six times. Wednesday she was beaten by a woman who was 7 years old in 1971. And when someone asked why she seemed so composed in defeat, Evert laughed.

"Well, what do you want me to do? Start crying in front of all you people?" she said. "I don't seem really upset because . . . I'm just not as consistent - you can't be physiologically or whatever - as I was when I was 17, 18 years old."

Losing to Lori McNeil is defeat; losing to Billie Jean King in 1971 was, in perspective, a victory. When we play it back in memory, it is accompanied by a fanfare of trumpets. For now we know it was dawn's first light. And we know the dawn became a day so golden the beauty was unique. We saw Chris Evert win everything. From '71 through '86, as she grew from ribboned ponytails to jet-set romances, we saw her do work unprecedented and inimitable.

Familiar litary of aging athletes

Five years ago, Martina Navratilova sprinted to center stage. Evert seemed left hopelessly behind. She was a baseline player whose weapons were rendered useless against the athletic, aggressive, serve-and-volley game of Navratilova.

In defiant answer to the challenge, Evert went to Nautilus machines to refashion her body. She became slimmer, stronger, quicker. She could not, however, remake her game. She grew up hitting two-handed on clay courts. Her address was "Baseline, World."

Through iron will and ferocious competitiveness, she raised the level of her play and perhaps was never better than in the early '80s against Navratilova.

But if she were better than most, Evert was not as good as the best. She hasn't won Wimbledon since '81, hasn't won the U.S. Open since '82 (in that time losing four finals to the best, Navratilova.)

Now Chris Evert is 32 years old, and now the shadows are lengthening on her long golden day.

She came straight off the court Wednesday after losing to McNeil, plunked down in the interview room chair and said she'd come in because she didn't want time to think about how poorly she had played. She wanted no tears.

Her answers to questions fit the familiar litany of athletes grown old. "A bad day . . . felt flat . . . I didn't have my timing and I just wasn't smooth, and I wasn't flowing." She said, "As hard as I tried, I couldn't get my body to do things I wanted it to do. I couldn't run that extra step. I couldn't be as quick, reflex-wise, as I wanted to be."

'My passing shots just left me'

Lori McNeil is 23 years old. She once stood in line to get Chris Evert's autograph. The daughter of a former NFL defensive back, Charlie McNeil, she came to this day's work with crackling vitality and a serve-and-volley game that so baffled Evert she had to confess the embarrassing truth.

"No one else really takes my first serve and comes in like Lori did," Evert said. "She rushed me and took me by

surprise." The Open statisticians reported that McNeil came to the net 90 times and won 46 points. For Evert, the numbers were four and one.

Against such aggression, a baseliner's only answer is passing shots of such precision the aggressor is left flat-footed at the net. Such passing shots have been Evert's signature for nearly two decades. Not on this day.

"My passing shots just left me," Evert said. "My bread-and-butter shots are my groundstrokes, and I wasn't even winning points from the baseline. I didn't feel that

even one thing was really working." It was a three-set loss. The last set ran out at 6-4, but it wasn't that close. For Evert, a numbing loss. For McNeil, a memorable victory because, as she said, kindly and accurately, "Chris has so much history behind her."

THE FINAL SACK



JOHNNY CRAWFORD/Staff

Quarterback Turk Schonert prepares to check out of the Atlanta Falcons' Suwanee complex Wednesday after his release by the team the day before. Schonert said he expects to return to the Cincinnati Bengals, who traded him to the Falcons two years ago. Story, Page 14-E.

Miller deal off again

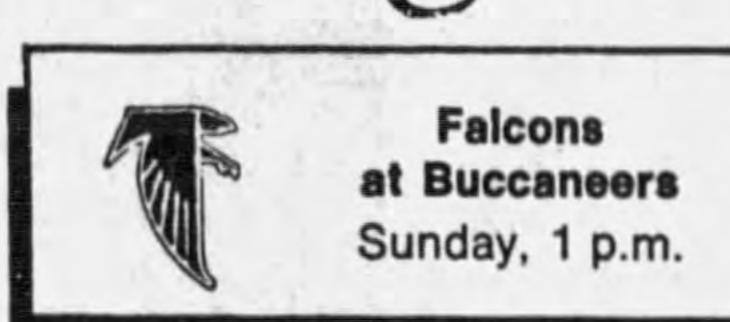
'Beefed-up' Falcons offer rejected by quarterback

Falcons Beat, Page 11-E Schonert heading to Bengals, Page 14-E By Glenn Sheeley Staff Writer

The Atlanta Falcons thought they had No. 1 pick Chris Miller signed Wednesday when they beefed up the incentive package of their \$1.9-million, four-year offer, but all they really had was the groundwork for

more disappointment. Early in the day, Falcons chief financial officer Jim Hay felt the team and Miller were "closer to an agreement than ever before." By dinner time, talks had broken off for the second time in a week as agent Mike Blatt and Miller pondered an offer submitted 22 hours before, rejected it and asked for it to be revised.

Miller and his agent wanted the Falcons to upgrade their signing bonus from



\$750,000 to \$800,000 and to place about two-thirds of the amount in an annuity to dispense for both tax and future income advantages. But Hay and executive vicepresident Taylor Smith refused the proposal, saying the club no longer considers annuities financially wise "because they aren't deductible" and because of a general feeling they "had stretched far enough."

As a result, Blatt said Miller was returning to Eugene, Ore. Hay said beginning today the offer to Miler was off the table and being reduced by about \$26,000 per week - roughly 1/64th of the proposed \$750,000 bonus and 1/16th of the proposed \$225,000 first year's salary.

See MILLER, Page 14-E

Upset by McNeil, Evert is history at the U.S. Open

Surprise winner earns shot at No. 1 seed Graf

Scores, Page 10-E Lendl blows out McEnroe, Page 13-E By Rachel Blount Staff Writer

NEW YORK - From the moment her backhand volley skipped across the grandstand court past Chris Evert, it was clear Lori McNeil would have a difficult time understanding the magnitude of what she had done.

McNeil, the 12th-ranked player in the world and the 11th seed at the U.S. Open, beat third-seeded Evert 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 Wednesday to end Evert's streak of 16 consecutive appearances in the semifinals of the Open. But she didn't hurl her racket or cry or jump or scream. She simply shook Evert's hand, gathered her equipment and walked away with a giddy grin that said everything.

McNeil will play No. 1 seed Steffi Graf, a 6-4, 6-3 winner over fifth-seeded Pam Shriver, in the semifinals Friday at the National Tennis Center. Second-seeded Martina Navratilova, who beat No. 8 Gabriela Sabatini 7-5, 6-3 in the last women's quarterfinal Wednesday, will meet No. 6 Helena Sukova in the other semifinal.

In men's quarterfinal action Wednesday, top-seeded Ivan Lendl beat No. 8 John McEnroe 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 in a surprisingly lopsided match, while No. 6 seed Jimmy Connors defeated No. 13 Brad Gilbert 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-0.

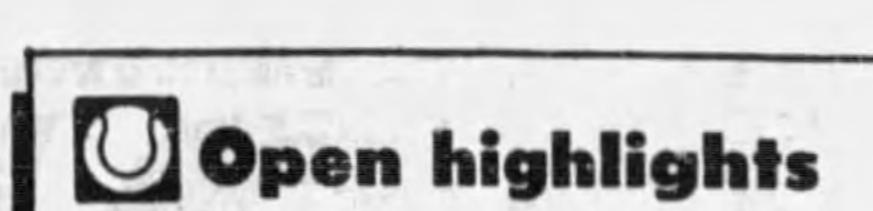
In fourth-round play, No. 2 Stefan Edberg beat Jonas B. Svensson 6-2, 7-6 (10-8), 6-3; No. 3 Mats Wilander beat Ken Flach 6-3, 6-3, 6-3, 7-6 (7-4); No. 5 Miloslav Mecir beat Mark Woodforde 6-4, 3-6, 6-2, 6-2; and Ramesh Krishnan beat Andrei Chesnokov 6-4, 6-1, 6-2.

"The effect of beating Chris Evert hasn't really hit me yet," said McNeil, 23, of Houston. "I'm excited that I won. Chris has so much history behind her. But now, I have to put it behind me and get ready for my next match. I guess maybe next week, when everything's over, I'll realize what I've done."

The loss marked the first time in her career that Evert had failed to make it to the semifinals of the Open. It also ended her streak of 13 straight years in which she had won at least one Grand Slam tournament. Evert, who has reached the semifinals of 48 of 50 Grand Slam events in her career, is 92-11 in 17 years at the Open.

McNeil, who has been on the pro tour since 1983, has not won a tournament in 1987 and has won only two in her career. Her previous best in a Grand Slam was an

See OPEN, Page 13-E

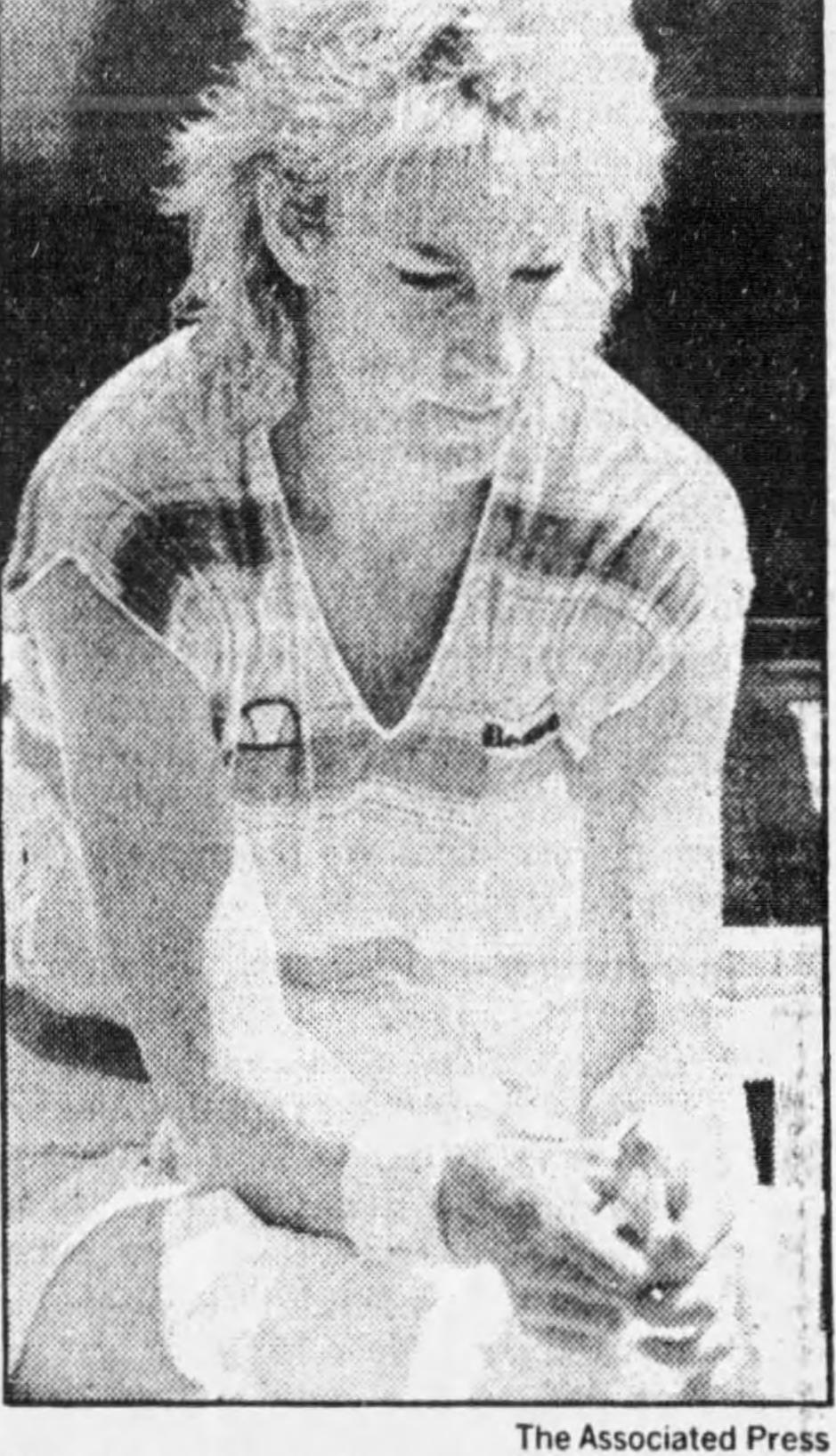


Men's quarterfinals

Ivan Lendi def. John McEnroe, 6-3, 6-3, 6-4; Jimmy Connors def. Brad Gilbert, 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-0.

Women's quarterfinals

Lori McNeil def. Chris Evert, 3-6, 6-2, 6-4; Steffi Graf def. Pam Shriver, 6-4, 6-3; Martina Navratilova def. Gabriela Sabatini, 7-5,



For first time in her career, Chris Evert failed to make U.S. Open semifinals.

Tide ends its efforts OFF TATOR A

Bama reaches conclusion an appeal would be futile

> By David Davidson College Editor

TUSCALOOSA, Ala. - Overwhelmed by the complexities of trying to regain basketball player Derrick McKey's eligibility for the 1987-88 season, the University of Alabama

has abandoned all thought of an appeal to the NCAA. "A full explo-

ration has been made of the facts surrounding this case," said Alabama athletic director Steve Sloan, "and we are discontinuing our ef-



executive director Steve Morgan and SEC commissioner Harvey Schiller were notified Wednesday of the school's decision.

"Basically, we came to the conclusion we would not win the case," Sloan said. "It is too difficult to retrace the steps in this particular

Alabama's decision comes a day after the University of Texas elected not to pursue an appeal for reinstating high jumper/defensive back James Lott for similar reasons.

McKey, a 6-foot-9 center who was the SEC player of the year last season as a junior, was declared ineligible May 8 after it was learned he had accepted money from — and signed a contract with - agents Norby Walters and Lloyd Bloom. Both actions violated NCAA rules and subjected McKey to automatic ineligibility.

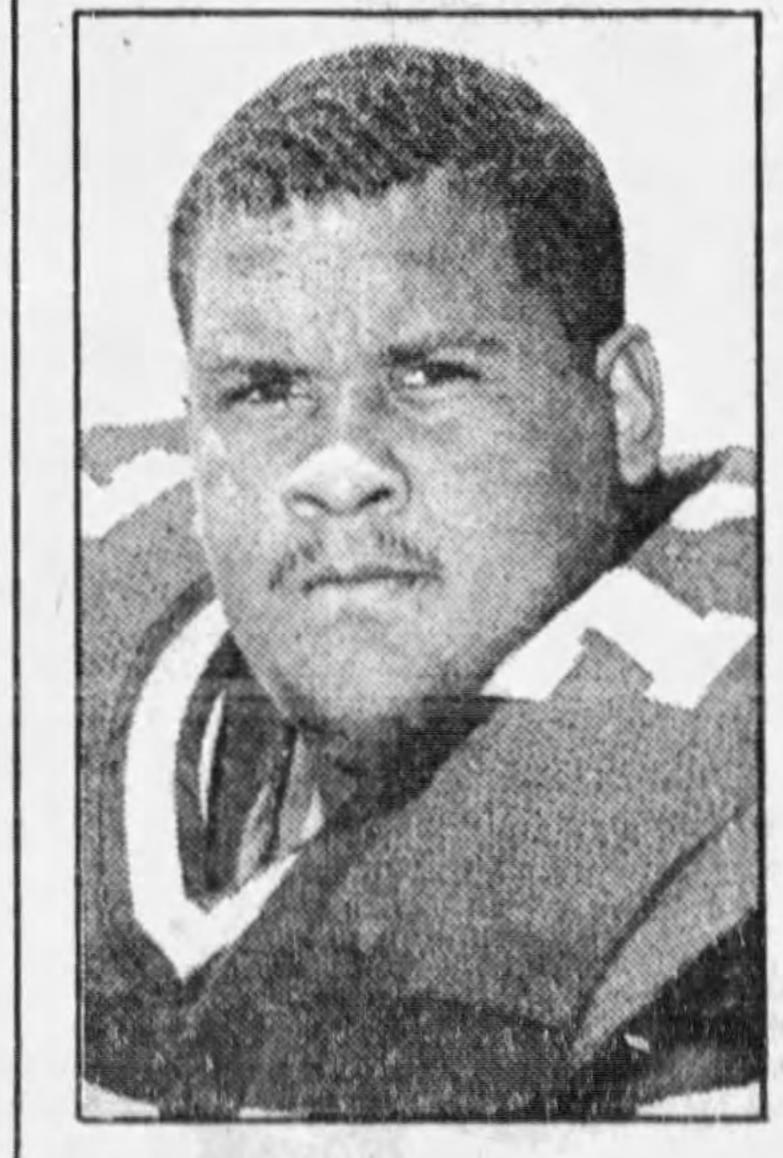
Assuming there was no way to have his eligibility restored, McKey retained New York attorney/agent Norman Blass to represent him, then submitted his name for the NBA draft on June 22. Those actions also violated NCAA rules.

McKey was taken on the ninth pick of the first round by the Seattle SuperSonics.

The case was further complicated when McKey borrowed money from Blass to pay for disability insurance and borrowed money from a Seattle

See McKEY, Page 13-E

Tech's '86 recruiting crop goes sour



Spencer Slocumb

Nine of 26 football signees have left the Jackets behind, largely because of the school's academic requirements

Tech Notebook, Page 6-E By I.J. Rosenberg

Staff Writer When Spencer Slocumb arrived at Georgia Tech in the summer of 1986, he was thought to have all the ingredients to become an outstanding college lineman. He was big, strong and fast for his size. One problem, though: Slocumb soon real-

ized he didn't want to be at Tech. Academically, he was overwhelmed, he said. And to be honest, Slocumb said, "I didn't want to play major-college football.

"When I was in high school, everybody was talking about how great I was," said Slocumb, who came out of Macon Central High School as one of the state's top prospects. "So there was all this pressure to go to college, to be a big college football player. But that just wasn't for me. And I think there were others in that class who felt the same way."

Nine of Tech's 26 signees in 1986 are no longer in the program. Seven have left on their own, one has been dismissed, and another, Randy Baldwin, never arrived. He did not meet NCAA academic requirements last fall, attended Tennessee Military Institute, reapplied to Tech this summer, then withdrew his application.

In addition to Slocumb, other '86 recruits to leave voluntarily were running back Felton Tucker; defensive backs Kevin Burley, Doby Rogers, and Bobby Highhouse; linebacker Shane Curry and lineman Richy Popkin. Running back Gene West was dismissed from the team for not attending class.

With the exception of Highhouse, who left last September, and Baldwin, all of the players de-

See TECH, Page 10-E

McEnroe bows out meekly to Lendl in quarterfinals

By Rachel Blount Staff Writer

NEW YORK — This was supposed to be one for the ages, a classic battle to rank up there with the likes of Ali vs. Frazier, Celtics vs. Lakers, Alydar vs. Affirmed.

Instead, Ivan Lendl turned his U.S. Open quarterfinal match against John McEnroe into an old-fashioned blowout. On the two-year anniversary of his ascent to the No. 1 spot in the world rankings, Lendl overpowered McEnroe 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 Wednesday night before a record 21,016 fans at the National Tennis Center.

Lendl will face No. 6 seed Jimmy Connors, who beat No. 13 Brad Gilbert 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 6-0, in the semifinal round Saturday. Lendl leads the series between the two 18-13 and has won the last 13 matches. Connors last defeated Lendl in 1984 at the Tokyo Indoor to win his last singles title.

"I played solid," said Lendl, who controlled the match from beginning to end. "I don't think it was the three best sets I ever played; it was at night, and I don't like playing under the lights. But I'm very happy I won in straight

"He played a great match," McEnroe said. "He just outplayed me. It wasn't like I played bad; he was just very, very good. He hit a lot of lines, he was very tough ... he just played an excellent match."

McEnroe's finest moment of the match may have been the first game, when he won four straight points to take a 1-0 lead. Both players held serve through the first six games, with McEnroe scoring on an aggressive net game and Lendl staying even on flawless passing shots and winners at the lines.

Then, McEnroe let down slightly, and Lendl's strong serve gave him the set before McEnroe had a chance to recover. Lendl scored the first of four service breaks to go up 4-3, then an ace and a McEnroe volley into the net put him ahead 5-3. McEnroe lost his serve and the set - when he went long with an overhead and into the net with another volley.

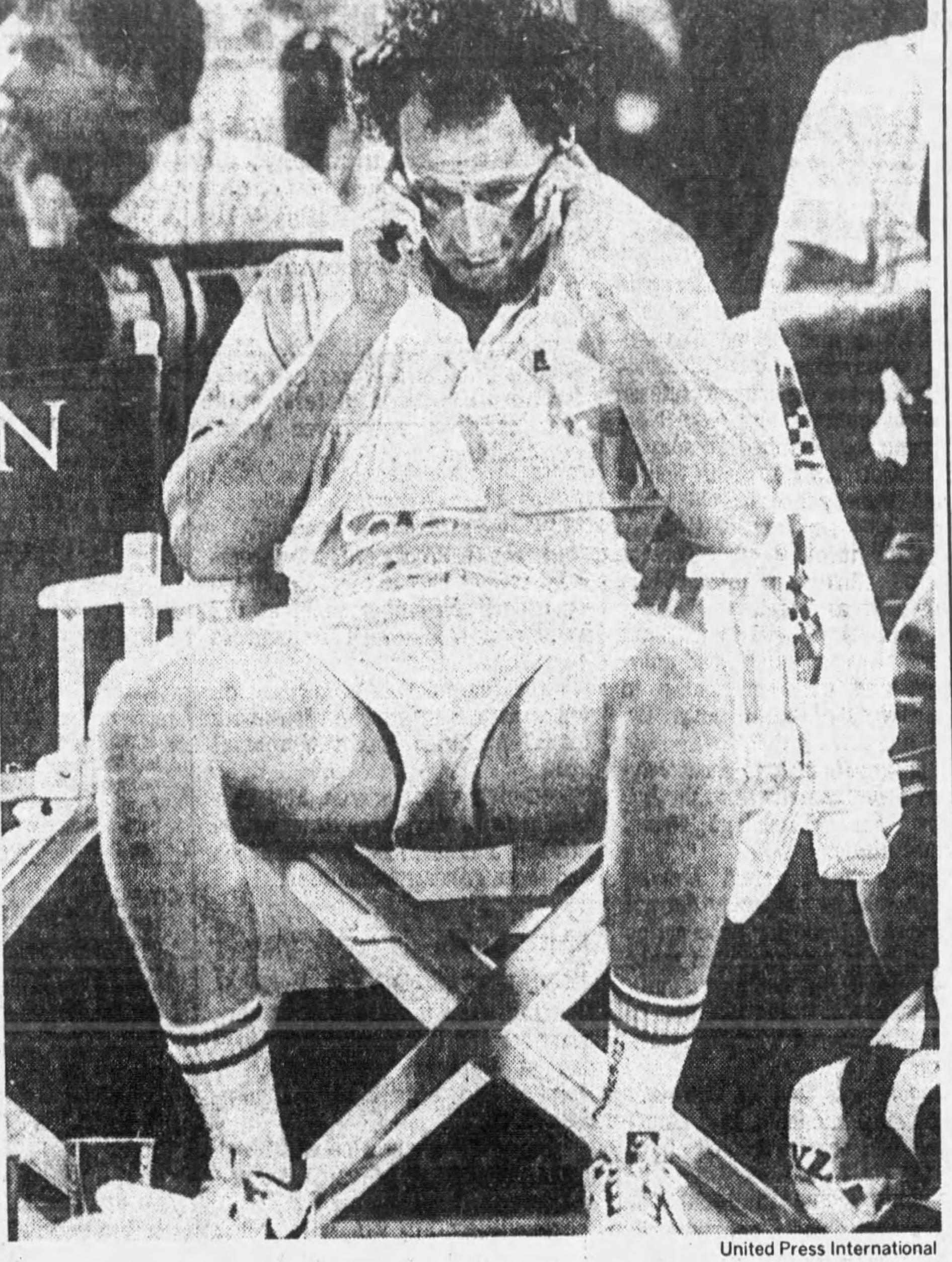
Lendl took the first game of the second set with four straight points, then broke serve again and won the second game when he lobbed a McEnroe forehand back to the baseline. Lendl took the third game on four straight points, and McEnroe simply put his hands on his hips and growled in frustration.

"I was hitting it heavy and deep," said Lendl, who won seven straight games at the end of the first set and the beginning of the second. "He was coming in on easy shots, and I was passing him."

Lendl, who never lost service in the match, served eight aces and put in 62 percent of his first serves. McEnroe wasn't nearly as effective; he double-faulted seven times and managed only a single ace.

McEnroe was quickly broken in the third set, when he had Lendl down 30-0 in the third game and let him off the hook with a double fault that lost him the game. Lendl breezed through the rest of the match, winning it on a crosscourt forehand that landed just under Mc-Enroe's racket.

"I wanted to do the best I could," McEnroe said. "But in the third set I got distracted. I served well in the first two games, then I double-faulted and lost my serve. I got distracted, and I let it affect me. After that I couldn't get going."



John McEnroe takes a break during match with Ivan Lendl, but it was Lendl who came up with all the service breaks in their U.S. Open quarterfinal.

High Schools

Coaching matchup of Creel, Hixon features 568 wins

The two winningest coaches in state history, with 568 victories between them, will square off Friday when Woodward Academy hosts Westminster. Westminster's Wayman Creel has recorded 298 wins, while Woodward's Graham Hixon has 270. But Hixon holds a 3-1 edge in the personal battle between the two, which began only after Creel came to Westminster. Creel won for the first time 34-14 last year. ... Valdosta has 270-pound fullback Lawrence Sharpe, who scored two touchdowns in last week's 40-7 opening win over LaGrange, but Clarkston also has a hefty running back of its own. The Angoras have fullback Walter Tate (6-2, 260), who rushed for 101 yards in a 9-3 win over Stone Mountain. Both beefy ballcarriers are just juniors. . . Jerry Smart, in his first year as head coach at Henderson, is glad his Cougars have the week off after opening with a 26-0 loss to Dunwoody last Saturday. After managing to run just 19 offensive plays and gaining just 16 yards, Smart says his team "may need a whole year off." ... Stone Mountain punter David Cavender set a school record with a 73-yard punt in last week's 9-3 loss to Clarkston. For the game, Cavender averaged 41 yards on nine kicks.

- Compiled by Steve Figueroa

Open

From Page 1-E

appearance in the Wimbledon quarterfinals last year, and she was 0-2 against Evert going into the match.

tested in the tournament, wasn't scoring 16 winners at the net in the prepared for McNeil's fierce net second set and 21 in the third. game and came into the match looking flat. While McNeil rushed the net 90 times and came away in only 63 percent of her serves in with 46 winners, Evert scored on just one of four chances at the net, and her normally steady baseline play deserted her, causing 23 unforced errors on her ground strokes.

"It was just one of those matches you hope doesn't happen in a Grand Slam tournament," Evert said. "I couldn't get anything going. didn't even hit my groundies well. My bread-and-butter shots weren't working, and that's what happened. It was the worst day I had in the

whole tournament." Although Evert controlled the first set, breaking McNeil's serve twice and putting in 84 percent of her own first serves, she felt uneasy and tried to avoid going to the net. in addition, her usually dependable ground strokes landed wide and long with surprising frequency.

Evert's troubles convinced McNeil to stick with her net game, forcing Evert to either come to the net or beat her with passing shots.

"It took me a little time to get my rhythm," McNeil said. "I couldn't decide whether I wanted to come in on every return of serve or whether I wanted to stay back and mix it up. And you can't be indecisive against a player like Chris. You have to do one or the other.

"I decided after the first set to come in every time, and I started doing that the second set. When I kept coming in, I think she felt more pressure. She couldn't come up with the great passing shots she would normally. Once I won the second set, I had no doubt."

As the match wore on, McNeil But Evert, who had not been came to the net more and more, Meanwhile, Evert's serve went the way of her ground strokes. She put the last two sets and double-faulted five times, including three in a row when she was leading 2-1 in the

That ended any hopes Evert had of winning. She failed to hold serve even once in the third set, and while McNeil scored on crosscourt volleys and passing shots, Evert repeatedly hit into the net and long.

"She took my serve and took the ball on the rise and rushed me," Evert said. "She took me by surprise. And I missed a lot of shots. Whenever I had a deuce or a set-up, I just didn't have good feel."

It also was a bad day for Shriver, who had the right strategy but faulty execution against Graf.

Shriver, who had been playing some of her best tennis of the year at the Open, attacked Graf at the net and gave her plenty of the volleys and topspin shots she hates. But Shriver scored on only 45 percent of her shots at the net.

"It's a new sort of hurt," Shriver said. "I don't think I ever really thought I could do it before, but today I went out there honestly thinking I could win the match. I played it right, and I just missed on some opportunities.

TATOTEC

From Page 1-E

bank (with Blass' assistance) to pay for a luxury car.

McKey began to reconsider when the NCAA two weeks ago handed down conditions under which University of Pittsburgh defensive back Teryl Austin, also suspended for dealings with Walters and Bloom, could have his eligibility restored.

That raised hopes at Alabama that McKey might also have an opportunity to regain his eligibility.

Alabama coach Wimp Sanderson admitted he was never "overly optimistic" that McKey could get his eligibility back even though hopes were raised by the Austin case.

"But," he said, "there was a chance. We crossed some bridges, but some were just too difficult to it"

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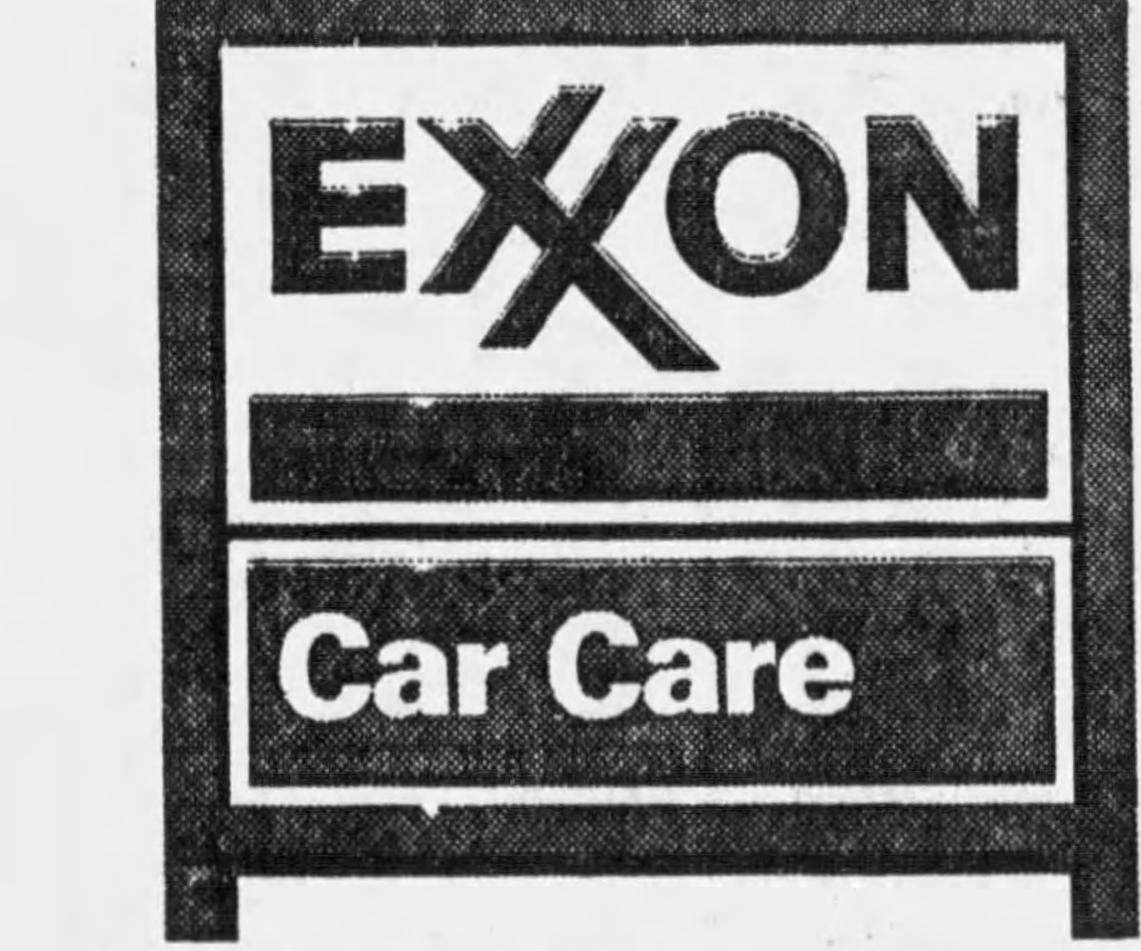
cross. In the end, the question remained: Could anything be done to restore Derrick's eligibility? They (NCAA officials) said no. It was pretty much an open-and-shut case."

Before his association with Walters and Bloom was made public, McKey had announced his intention to return to Alabama for his senior

Last week, he enrolled in classes as a scholarship athlete with the blessing of the NCAA, since he would have to be in school in the event the NCAA restored his eligi-

Sanderson said McKey now will drop those courses.

"I did as much wrong to make Derrick ineligible as a person could do, without intending to," Blass said. "Those things were done under the assumption that there was no way his eligibility could be restored. But nevertheless, we did them. Once we were into it, we were really into



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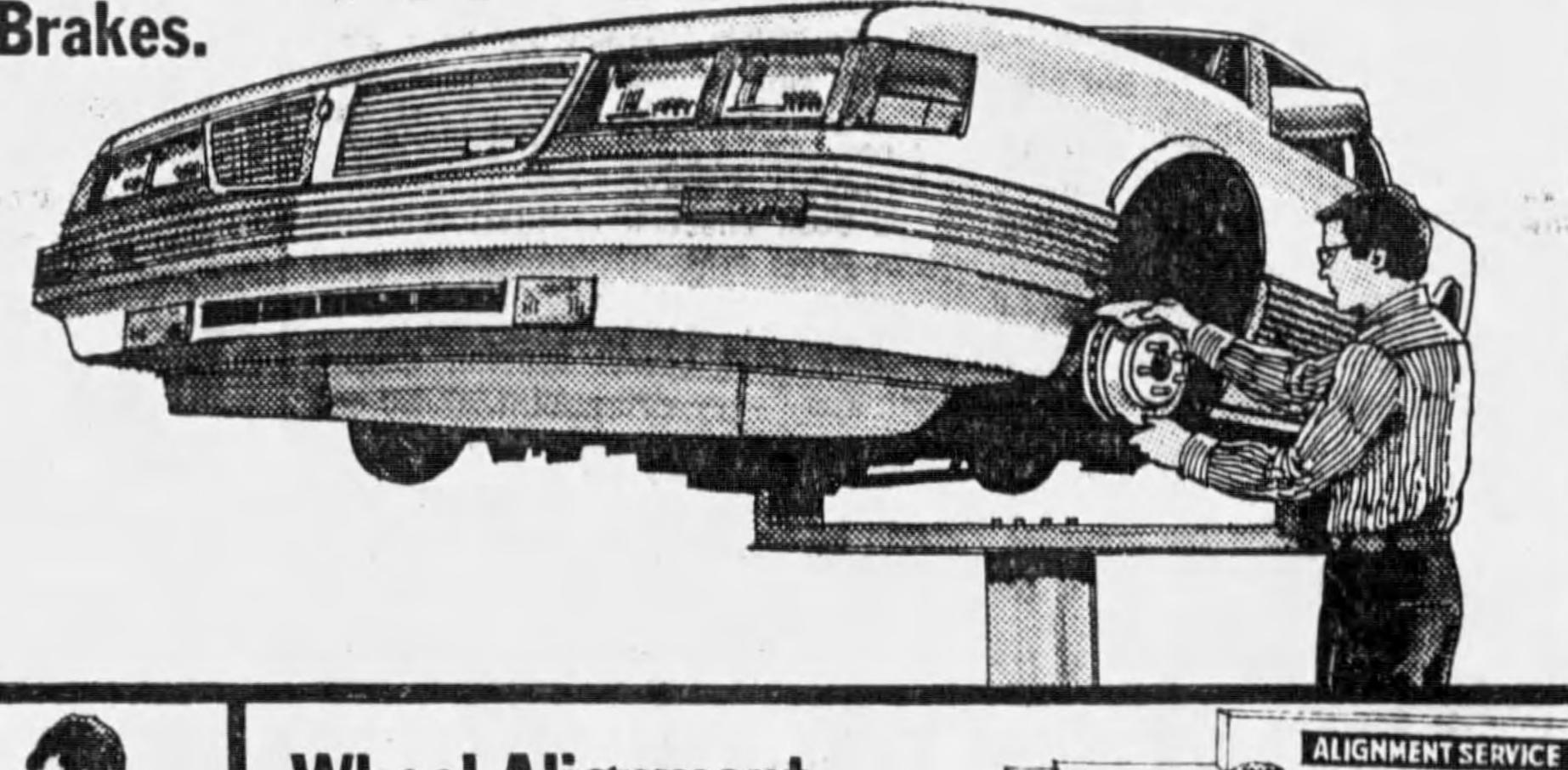
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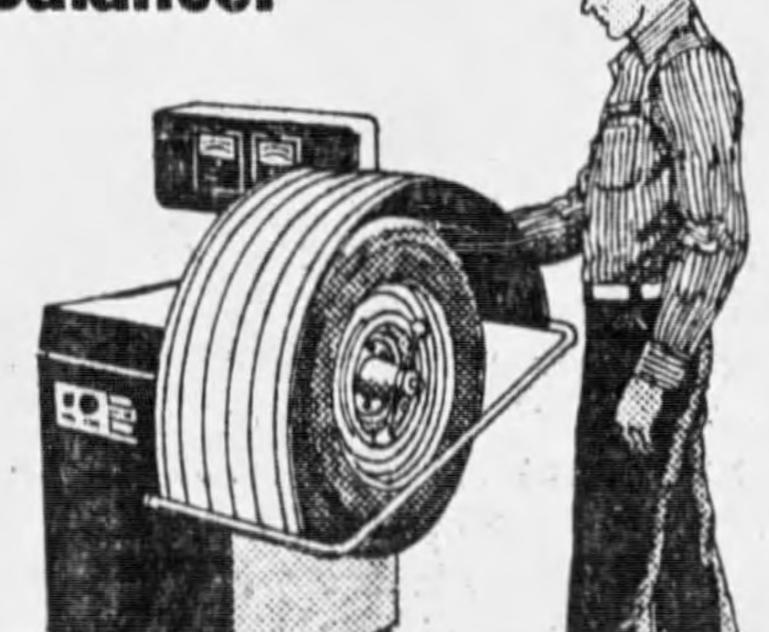
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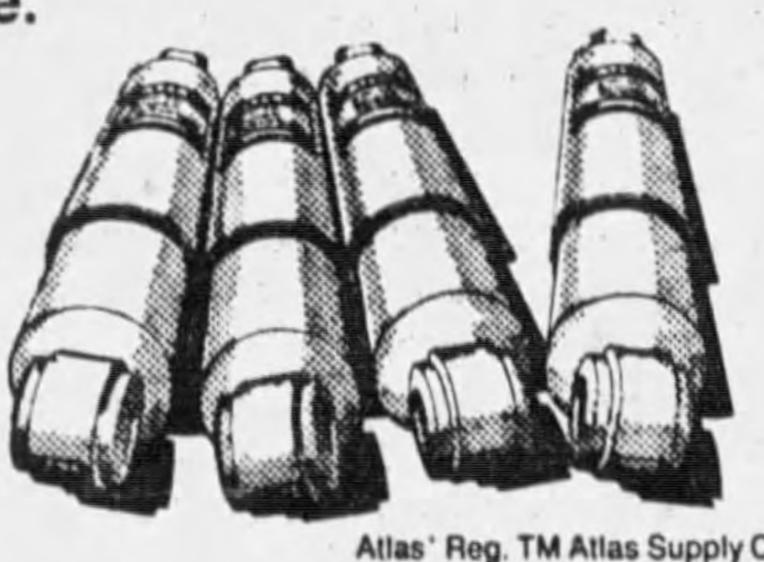
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